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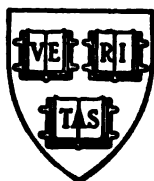
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# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

*First Session of the Tenth Parliament.*

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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*Fifty-ninth Volume.*

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### VOLUME LIX.

NOVEMBER 25 TO DECEMBER 22, 1887.

#### EXPLANATION OF ABBREVIATIONS.

**Int.**, Introduction of Bill.—**1r.**, **2r.**, **3r.**, First, Second, and Third Reading.—**Dis.**, Discharged.—**h.**, House of Representatives.—**l.c.**, Legislative Council.—**Adj.**, Adjournment or Adjourned.—**Amend.**, Amendment.—**cl.**, Clause.—**Com.**, Committee of the whole House or Committed.—**Recom.**, Recommended or Recommittal.—**Sel. Com.**, Select Committee.—**Conf.**, Conference.—**Cons.**, Consideration.—**Deb.**, Debate.—**Expl.**, Explanation.—**Instr.**, Instruction.—**m.**, Motion.—**Obs.**, Observation.—**q.**, Question.—**m.q.**, Main Question.—**p.q.**, Previous Question.—**Rep.**, Report.—**r.p.**, Report Progress.—**Res.**, Resolution.

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NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

First Session of the Tenth Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 25th November, 1887.

Second Reading—South Island Native Land Purchases—Sheep Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READING.

New Plymouth Recreation and Racecourse Reserve Bill.

SOUTH ISLAND NATIVE LAND PURCHASES.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he wished to explain the reasons for moving the motion. In doing so it would be necessary for him to go back as far as 1879. The Council was aware that a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the South Island Native land purchases; but the Commissioners appointed did not quite complete their work, because the Government of which Mr. Bryce was at that time Native Minister stopped the work of the Commission. The Commission, however, brought up a report embodying what they thought should be done. After that report was published petitions were addressed to both Houses of Parliament in 1882, and a report was presented on those petitions on the 30th August, 1882. He would not read the whole of the report, but would refer to the last clause, which was as follows:—

"Your Committee therefore consider that the most equitable, just, and practicable solution of the petitioners' grievance would be for the Government to allow the subject of the prayer of the petitioners to be inquired into and decided by a properly-constituted Court, with a clear understanding that whatever decision may eventually be arrived at be considered final, and, in the event of any additional land-

reserves being made by the Government to the petitioners, that they be inalienable."

In 1884 a petition was again presented, from Tare te Ihoka and Teone Topi Patuki and other Natives, praying that the report of the Commissioners might be carried out. The Committee then recommended that a Royal Commission should be appointed; and the Government, on the strength of these reports, appointed Mr. Mackay as Commissioner. He was appointed by His Excellency the Governor on the 29th August, 1886, and in April or May last Mr. Mackay sent in his report. It was this report that he wished to have laid upon the table.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That there be laid upon the table of the Council the report of Mr. Commissioner Mackay upon the South Island Native land purchases."—(*Hon. Mr. Taiaroa.*)

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said the Government, after very careful consideration, had come to the conclusion that the motion of the honourable gentleman should be acceded to, and if the Council agreed with that view the Government would be happy to place the report of Mr. Mackay on the table.

Motion agreed to.

SHEEP BILL.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—Sir, whilst I propose to ask the Council to pass the second reading of this Bill to-day, I will, at the same time, point out that there will be certain amendments in portions of it which I think it will be necessary to make, and I will indicate in the course of my remarks the direction they will take. The powers which are at present possessed for the repression of the spread of disease in sheep are not considered to be sufficient or thoroughly effective for the purpose, and in that respect we agree with the view that was taken by our predecessors in office. Without going into clause 2—which provides for an alteration in the names given to certain officers of the department—I will proceed to the 3rd

clause. There it will be found that it is proposed to get rid, in the present Act, of the word "negligently." The term in the present Act has been found to work in this way: Where convictions have been sought in most serious cases the presence in the Act of the term "negligently" has caused the failure of the proceedings. The 4th clause deals with the power I am about to describe. Up to the present time, where sheep have been destroyed in consequence of scab, it has been made, so far as I understand, the subject of arrangement between the proprietor of the sheep and the Government. It is proposed to take larger powers here, and to empower the Minister in charge to authorise, under certain circumstances, the destruction of the sheep, compensation being given to the owner of the sheep to the extent of one-half of their value, which is to be settled by arbitration. There is no doubt that the power sought is a large one, but it must be remembered that the proposal is not to interfere with the 23rd and 33rd sections of the existing Act, under which the owner will be called upon, in the regular way, to clean sheep as provided by the Act. And I apprehend that the power of killing the sheep will not be exercised until we give all reasonable opportunities that may be given for such an operation. At the same time, there is no doubt that in this clause the power to do so in the first instance is given, and it will be for honourable gentlemen to consider whether the powers we seek, considering the very important nature of the subject, are too large. In the 5th clause there is a point to which I shall have to call the attention of honourable members. The Inspector, on being satisfied that sheep on Crown lands only are infected with scab, is to report the fact to the Minister in charge. It is stated in the clause that he shall report to the Colonial Secretary; but I shall propose in Committee to substitute the words "Minister in charge." In this clause also it is made imperative on the Minister to have the sheep destroyed under these circumstances. The terms are, "He shall take steps to have the said sheep destroyed, compensation being paid in respect of such destruction." The power here is undoubtedly very large, and it is open to question, or, at all events, to consideration, whether that obligation on the Minister is more heavy than is desirable. There are many members in this Council who have had much experience in connection with sheep, and I shall rely very largely on their judgment in respect to the details of this Bill, and shall be glad to ascertain their views particularly on the necessity of the mandatory portion of the clause relating to the powers of the Minister in charge. There is another part of this clause to which I wish to call attention, and to which, it appears to me, I shall have to move an amendment in Committee. I may say at once that a wrong word has crept into the clause. It is proposed there that under the circumstances there shall be a revocation of the license. What I would suggest is that the license should be suspended. The object of the suspension is clear: it is to

*Hon. Mr. Stevens*

enable a certain and special time to elapse, in order that the run may become clean, before it is occupied again by sheep. That is the understanding I have. Of course it would be improper that the license should be revoked, because the license would not necessarily be in that case renewed to the actual owner. I shall therefore have to present in Committee an amendment which, I hope, will meet that case, and therefore I hope honourable gentlemen, in considering it, will be good enough to understand that the intention is merely to suspend the license during such time as may be necessary. The other more important part of the Bill will be found in clause 7. There it is intended to give power to relax, under certain circumstances, the provisions as to landing sheep at ports—not sheep from another country, but simply as between ports in New Zealand. I will give an illustration of the present inconvenience in working the Act in this respect. Take the case of sheep brought from Wanganui to Wellington. They can be brought across the country without being subjected to inspection, but they cannot be shipped from Wanganui to Wellington without being liable to inspection. Taking that as an illustration, it would appear that some such power as is proposed in the Bill should be given. It will be seen that in the clause provision is made for this, and for the case of the introduction of sheep from another port where the steamer has also shipped on board sheep introduced from another country. As to the rest of its provisions, the Bill does not propose to disturb the existing Act. I now move the second reading of this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. WALKER.—I do not rise to oppose the second reading of this Bill; but I must express my gratification at hearing the honourable gentleman in charge say that he is going to amend it in Committee, because I should have certainly felt bound to oppose clause 5 in Committee very strongly. I think that clause as it stands at present is one of the most brutally-oppressive clauses I ever heard of in my life. It is bad enough to be the proprietor of sheep that may have been "scabbed" from spite, but this would be the finishing touch to the injury. I am glad he is going to have that amended in Committee.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—In our former legislation in reference to scab in sheep we have taken the precaution in each case of referring the Bill to a Select Committee: in fact, in most cases it has been referred to a Joint Committee of both Houses. The subject has always been felt to be one of the utmost importance, bound up as it is with the interests of the colony to an extent which the outside public do not seem to have any idea of. The Bill is intended to modify some of the provisions of the existing Act, and in that respect it goes very far indeed. I think it may be desirable to amend the Bill in other directions than those indicated by the Hon. Mr. Stevens. At any rate, I think it would be a wise course to pursue to refer it to a Select Committee. My honourable friend has not indicated what changes will be effected by the alterations pro-

posed in clause 2. In the Act of 1878 certain extended powers were given to the Chief Inspector, and it is now proposed to extend those powers to all Inspectors. I do not know that it is necessary to maintain these distinctions, but the distinction was not introduced in the first case without very sufficient reason and very much discussion; and I think it is desirable that a Committee should go through the Bill thoroughly, to see that we are not introducing greater changes than are perhaps contemplated by the introducer of this Bill. I suggest that that course should be taken, and that the Committee should consist of gentlemen interested in the question. I think such a step would be regarded with more satisfaction by the public at large, and that the progress of the Bill through Parliament will not be retarded this session. Seeing the importance of the Bill, it would be a great pity if its progress were retarded.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I should like to say I am quite willing to refer this Bill to a Committee, as suggested, and I think it very desirable that the Bill should pass through their hands. There is no Committee at present set up which could satisfactorily deal with this subject, the nearest one to it being the Joint Rabbit Committee. I believe, under the circumstances, it would be better that I should move for a Select Committee of the Council only to consider the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. STEVENS, the Bill was referred to a Select Committee, consisting of the Hon. Mr. Acland, the Hon. Mr. Buckley, the Hon. Mr. Holmes, the Hon. Mr. Johnson, the Hon. Mr. Menzies, the Hon. Mr. Peter, the Hon. Mr. Reeves, and the mover.

The Council adjourned at fifteen minutes past three o'clock p.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 25th November, 1887.

Henry Price—Stamp Act—Wairarapa North County Council Empowering Bill—Otago Harbour Board Bill—Pukekohe Borough Bill—Gisborne Harbour Board Bill—New River Harbour Board Loan Bill—Bible-reading in Schools Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

HENRY PRICE.

Mr. T. THOMPSON brought up the report of the Public Petitions Committee (M to Z) on the petition of Henry Price, of Dunedin, stating that the Committee had no recommendation to make.

Mr. LARNACH wished to make a few remarks on this case. It was a very hard one, and he should like to direct the attention of the Government to it. Here was a man who had been eight years in the Government service in connection with the railways, who had got out

of the groove of general labour, and who, no fault having been found with him during his long term of service, had lately received notice of dismissal—no doubt in consequence of the retrenchment measures. It appeared to him (Mr. Larnach) that some provision would have to be made for such cases as that of this man, who was unaccustomed to other work than platelaying, who was a widower with a family of four children, for whose looking-after he had to pay, and who was now thrown out of employment through no fault of his own. Most likely, beyond suffering very great inconvenience, in his case it might lead to, at times, almost starvation; and he asked the Government to seriously consider the matter before the session ended, and try to make some provision for cases of that kind. Otherwise such a state of distress would reign throughout the colony that it would be something more than serious.

Mr. BRUCE said it was possible, as the honourable member for the Peninsula had just remarked, that some provision might have to be made in these cases; but, seeing that no provision had been made, it was impossible for the Committee to recommend this case to the favourable consideration of the Government. In fact, the regulations of the Government service had been strictly complied with in this case, the man being discharged owing to reduction in the number of hands employed. Those discharged were the least efficient, though, other things being equal, married men received the preference in being retained; but in this case those retained were very much more efficient than the petitioner, who was discharged. Under these circumstances it was impossible for the Public Petitions Committee to arrive at any other conclusion, though they very much sympathized with the petitioner and recognised the hardship of the case.

Mr. T. THOMPSON need say very little on the matter, as the honourable member for Rangitikei had very fairly put it to the House. He would only add—as to the clause of the petition which said that single men were kept on, whereas this petitioner, who had a family, was discharged—that it was found that only one single man had been retained, and that was owing to his being an exceptionally good man at the work at which he was employed, while, on the contrary, this petitioner was rather unsuitable.

Mr. BARRON could not help remarking that there seemed to be some little difference between the treatment of persons in the circumstances of this petitioner and those who occupied higher positions in the public service. In these times of retrenchment, no doubt the House ought to do all it could to strengthen the hands of the Government to put an end to all unnecessary extravagance; but of these cases a number had been brought under the notice of many honourable members, in which a man, after many years of faithful public service, but who had occupied only a subordinate position, received a week's or possibly only a day's notice to quit; whereas those in more

responsible positions at higher salaries got long notice when their services were to be dispensed with, often receiving long leaves of absence, and then getting retiring-allowances; and, in some few cases, due to the system in the Civil Service of the colony, they got pensions. It had been suggested to the Government the other day—and he was surprised they did not see the desirability of adopting the suggestion—that they should set aside grants of land for labouring-men discharged from the Government service through no fault of their own, to enable them to get some place on which to make their homes and find work to do. There were extensive areas of Crown lands unoccupied, for which no better use could be found than that of putting people in such circumstances on them. He suggested to the Government that they should at once make some provision which would enable these men to be treated with something like fairness, and which would prevent them from thinking that, simply because they occupied only subordinate positions, they could be treated in a manner altogether different from that accorded to heads of departments and other officers. Any one who knew anything of the Government Buildings here could point out, not one, but half a dozen officers in the receipt of high salaries whose services could be dispensed with immediately; but, if they were dispensed with on the ground that their services were not required, they would get leave of absence on full pay, and retiring allowances, and all sorts of other considerate treatment that was not extended to poor men who were in the position, unfortunately for themselves, of receiving only daily or weekly wages.

Mr. TAYLOR was glad the honourable member for Caversham had dealt with this question in the direction he had done. He himself held that it was most improper that these invidious distinctions should be made between one man in the Service and another. Simply because one man happened to occupy a low position and had no friends, he got no consideration; and, in view of the small amount of pay such a person received for his labour, it was a gross injustice to place him on a different level from that occupied by a man who had hundreds a year. The man drawing the lower pay was not in a position to provide for himself, and the others were. It seemed to him that to those who had much much was given, but from those who had little even that little which they had was being taken away; and he hoped the Government would put a stop to that policy. He trusted the Minister for Public Works, who, he believed, sympathized with these men, would deal with them as indicated by the honourable member for Caversham, for they were really the persons who deserved most consideration on the part of the Government.

Major ATKINSON thought the honourable gentleman who had just sat down was rather under a misapprehension as to the treatment which was accorded to different members of the Civil Service. All persons in the Civil Ser-

vice got retiring allowances and pensions, according to the rank they held and according to the nature of the agreement under which they entered the Service; but most of the persons in the Railway Department were not entitled to the same privileges, because they entered the Service on the condition that their engagements might be terminated on three months' notice, on a fortnight's notice, and some of them on a week's notice. Everything depended upon the manner in which they were engaged. Of course it was for the House to say if it wished everybody to get a retiring allowance; but, so far as he understood, the inclination of the House went in the other direction.

Sir G. GREY did not think that answer quite met the case. What was wanted was some provision under which men who were about to leave the Service might make homes for themselves on the land, and so provide for their families; and the Government might easily meet that need by making regulations this very session. The land was there; these people were in distress; they were liable to be dismissed day by day; and, if the colony could afford millions of acres for a foreign company, or if it could afford land to provide great runs for people of wealth, who had occupied them for years on their own terms, the least the House could do was to provide that the poor of New Zealand should have some refuge left to them on the face of the earth where they might make homes for themselves and bring up their families in comfort. There was power to do this, and, if there was not, everything could be done next week that would be necessary to make provision of that kind.

Mr. TURNBULL said this was only one out of a great many cases which would have to occupy the attention of the House. The Government proposed to reduce the expenditure on working railways by £23,000, and, instead of dealing with these cases in an isolated manner, the House should wait until the Government showed by their estimates how they proposed to make these reductions, and then deal with the whole question as it affected those who would be thrown out of employment.

Mr. LEVESTAM said the Premier had told them that all Civil servants were treated alike; but he was not quite correct in that. There was a District Engineer in Nelson dismissed some time ago. He had occupied the position for fifteen years, and yet there were objections to his getting his compensation. It seemed that, in the first instance, his engagement depended upon his success. As he retained his position for fifteen years, and as he had first-class testimonials from his superior officers, it could hardly be doubted that he was successful; and, furthermore, the letter in which the Government intimated dismissal was framed in such language as to leave no doubt that he had been a successful officer. Yet difficulties were raised to his receiving retiring allowance, and for six months he had received nothing; but he (Mr. Levestam) believed that hopes had now been held out to him that he would get his allowance. But it

Mr. Barron



was a hardship to a man that, on losing his situation, he should be kept waiting about month after month for what he was entitled to. It kept him chained to the place, so that he was unable to look for employment. He hoped that the Government would now make a speedy settlement in this case.

Major ATKINSON said the case to which the honourable gentleman referred was a peculiar one. The Civil servant referred to was under the age at which he would be entitled to a pension, but was not in good health, and the question arose whether he was entitled to a pension. There was a good deal of diversity of opinion on the matter; but it had now been determined that he should get a pension, as provided by law.

Mr. BRUCE would like to ask the honourable gentleman whether the Government would take into consideration the question of providing some fund for the relief of disabled railway employés. Those were principally the men who were appealing to the sympathies of the Committee at the present time.

Major ATKINSON said there was no doubt that proper provision must be made next year to meet these cases, and when introducing the Civil Service Bill he would endeavour to meet the difficulty.

#### STAMP ACT.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said the Premier had made reference on the previous evening to a mistake in a Stamp Act said to have been caused by him (Mr. Stewart). He should like the honourable gentleman to explain the particular circumstances that occurred.

Major ATKINSON said he had no wish to enter into the matter, and he should be glad to withdraw the remark and apologize to the honourable gentleman, if that would satisfy him.

Mr. W. D. STEWART thought that was scarcely a fair way to meet him. A definite charge had been made against him. The honourable gentleman would scarcely have made it unless he had believed it, and he asked the honourable gentleman, as an honourable man, to state on what he had founded the remark. He emphatically denied any mistake.

Major ATKINSON said he had referred to what occurred when a Bill was going through Committee. He thought that the honourable gentleman had better have left the matter as it was. However, if the honourable gentleman desired he would hunt the matter up and give details.

#### WAIRARAPA NORTH COUNTY COUNCIL EMPOWERING BILL.

Mr. BEETHAM, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said the Bill was a very simple one. Some years ago the Government of the day proclaimed a road and railway reserve through the Forty-mile Bush district three chains in width. The railway had passed this part where it was proposed to lessen the width of the reserve, so that there was now no longer any reason for such a reservation. The settlers

in the small Township of Eketahuna wished to lessen the width of the roadway, and the Bill would enable the County Council to dispose of the land for a width on each side of the roadway of three-quarters of a chain. He would not detain the House, but when the Bill was in Committee he would propose two or three amendments that would give effect to the suggestions of the Committee on Local Bills.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON asked the Government for an expression of opinion on this Bill. It dealt with a very important question, and one which the late Government were advised was subject to serious objection, and might lead to very great trouble. The matter had been under the consideration of the Government for some years past. He thought no such power as was asked for in this Bill should be granted to any local body. He understood that the Bill applied to a portion of the reserve which ran through a township. The township might largely increase in the future, and in that case they would have a wide road on both sides till they came to the township, and then a narrow neck through the township itself. He did not want to raise any particular objection, but thought the question was one that should receive very careful consideration before such a precedent was established.

Mr. BUCHANAN would like to say that what was provided by this Bill was absolutely necessary—that was, that a street which was three chains in width should be narrowed. Imagine a small bush township with a street three chains wide running through it, the land being of the roughest description! How were the settlers on each side of this wide street to make it a practicable street? and what necessity was there for anything like three chains in the width of a street in a small township? If townships, either on Government or private lands, were properly laid out, would they find such a thing as streets three chains in width in them? He was sure they would not. In this particular case it was not proposed to narrow the street to one chain, which was the usual width in such townships, but only to a chain and a half. He could assure the House, knowing the locality and knowing the necessity of narrowing the street, that it would be doing a good work, and doing what would be in the interest of the settlers themselves, by granting the power required. He therefore hoped the second reading of the Bill would be passed.

Mr. FISH thought the Bill was most objectionable, and one that certainly ought not to be allowed to pass. In the first place, it proposed to close a portion of a road, or to narrow a wide street, which, he thought, should not be done; and, secondly, it proposed that the land so taken from the road should be sold only to those persons upon whose land it abutted, and that not at a fair and reasonable price, but at the price at which the land was originally purchased. Now, it might be that the land had been purchased for 10s. an acre originally, and that its present value was £5 an acre; yet the Bill proposed that this land should be

given only to the owners of the land fronting the road, and at the price at which their original sections were bought. He thought it must be conceded that this was a most vicious piece of legislation. But it did not stop there. This road belonged to the colony, and yet there was here an audacious attempt—if he might use such a word—on the part of the County Council to appropriate the proceeds of the sale of this land—to apply it to augment the county funds. That was a very peculiar mode of subsidising a local body, and he did not think it should be permitted by the House. If the County Council of Wairarapa was to have a considerable portion of land sold for its especial benefit, then why should not other County Councils have the same? It appeared to him that the Bill would affect the revenue of the country; for, assuming that the land ought to be sold, the money arising from the sale must of necessity be the property of the Crown. Then, the mode in which it was to be disposed of was by private sale; and that was most objectionable. If a portion of the road was to be sold, then it ought to be sold by public auction, and the owners of the adjacent land should compete for it. That was the only way of ascertaining the real value of the land at the present time, and it was the course that ought to be adopted. The honourable member for Wairarapa, if he had understood him aright, said the land here was hilly; but, so far as he had seen by going through the country rather hurriedly, a great portion of it, at any rate, was very level land. But whether it was level or not was beside the question. The principle of the Bill he believed to be vicious, and he thought the Bill should not be allowed to pass its second reading. If it got into Committee he should make the greatest efforts he could to alter the whole character of the Bill, and to endeavour to enforce that the land should be sold by auction, and that the proceeds of the sale should become the property of the Crown. This was another instance of an apparently harmless Bill being pushed through, to the detriment of the country generally, and with great unfairness to other local bodies. It was an insidious attempt to get an improper piece of legislation. In Committee he should oppose the Bill clause by clause.

Mr. HISLOP understood the honourable member for Kaiapoi to say that the late Government objected to the passing of this Bill; but he understood that the objections which had been raised to the Bill had been satisfied or withdrawn. With regard to the remarks made by the honourable gentleman who had last spoken, he might say that the objection to carrying out the suggestion that the land should be sold at auction was, that if that were done the persons who now had land abutting on the street might have the access to their sections taken away from them by persons buying this narrow strip, and they would thereby be placed at a very great disadvantage. As to the Bill itself, there was nothing vicious in the principle of it, unless that was declared to be a vicious

principle which was laid down in the Act of 1882, which gave County Councils power to close roads. It had been decided, in a case in which the Selwyn County Council was interested, that the power of closing roads which would be given to the Wairarapa County Council in this case was now vested in other County Councils; so that there was nothing exceptional in this measure. With regard to the appropriation of money, it was specifically appropriated by the Bill, whereas under the law as it now stood, the money could go into the funds generally. The objections the honourable gentleman had raised were really no objections at all. Regarding the Bill itself, he had intended to intimate, when the honourable member for Kaiapoi rose, that the Government did not intend to oppose the Bill, but that they would propose amendments in it. The principal amendment would be as to fixing the price. The price should be subject to its being agreed upon by the Property-tax Commissioner, or some other officer, though the Property-tax Commissioner would probably be the best person; and it should be not less than the price returned for the adjacent property under the property assessment. If that were done, he thought there was nothing wrong in the Bill. The road was unnecessarily wide, and, instead of being a benefit to the public, it was a great tax upon them, and therefore all the parties had agreed to the passing of the Bill.

Mr. W. D. STEWART, as Chairman of the Local Bills Committee, might mention that the various points which had been brought under the consideration of the House had been very carefully considered by the Committee, and the Committee had come to the conclusion that the Bill would result in no injustice whatever to any of the parties interested. The point was simply this—and the honourable member for Dunedin South would no doubt realise its force—that a street three chains wide, in such a place, was found to be inconveniently wide; and if they took the street-frontage from the adjoining proprietors they would do them a very serious injustice, and leave them without access to their properties. Then, the narrowing of the road might be a change which some of the parties did not wish for, and, if their street-frontage was taken away, they were fairly entitled to say that they ought not to suffer, and should have a frontage to the street, and were, at any rate, entitled to have the land as part of their sections, at something like a reasonable figure. He doubted very much whether they should be called upon to pay anything for the land, for the simple reason that it was not right to take away the frontage from any person whose land abutted upon the road without giving compensation. The owners of the land were not the parties moving in this matter; it was the County Council that wished to narrow the road for the purpose of economy, and he did not think they could legally take away the frontage of any person's land without giving him compensation, and it would be a monstrous thing if they were entitled to do so. The simple question was this:

Mr. Fish

What was the best mode of assessing what might be termed the value of the land? It would be unfair to fix the price at a figure which these people were not prepared to give, or to deprive them of their frontages. The remarks of the honourable member were evidently made under the impression that this land was of very considerable value. Supposing a small strip of this country were sold to an outsider at a price which these people could not give, they might thereby be deprived of their frontages, and compelled to sell their sections at a sacrifice. This Bill was not an unfair Bill, and he hoped it would be allowed to pass.

Mr. GUINNESS was sorry to think that the honourable gentleman, as Chairman of the Local Bills Committee, had not gone into the matter as carefully as he ought to have done. He (Mr. Guinness) submitted that it was a question whether this Bill could proceed any further, on the ground that it appropriated part of the colonial funds to the County Council; and he submitted that, before proceeding further, it was necessary to obtain the consent of the Crown to such an appropriation. That had not been done. He thought the Local Bills Committee had failed in their duty in not pointing that out to the House. He would like to hear Mr. Speaker's ruling on the question.

Mr. SPEAKER thought it would be necessary to get the consent of the Crown to the passing of clause 7, but that need not necessarily arrest the progress of the Bill at this stage.

Mr. HISLOP understood that the proceeds of such lands as these were not paid into the general funds of the colony, but into local funds. Although the road might be held by the Crown, it was not to be argued from that that the moneys arising from the sale of this land should be paid into the public fund. The management of the road was vested in the local bodies, which were entitled to the proceeds from it.

Mr. SMITH thought there was some little misunderstanding in reference to this Bill. He thought the honourable member for Dunedin South had not visited the place where it was proposed to alter this road. If he had done so he did not think that the honourable gentleman would have objected to the Bill. This matter had been taken up by the local body, and in consequence of the feeling that existed it was necessary that something should be done. Last winter this township was one of the places he had to canvass, and he found great difficulty in getting about. Only the centre of the road was formed, and the other portion of it was in a very bad state indeed. The township was likely to increase, and therefore it was advisable that this matter should be settled as soon as possible. It was said that the price for those portions of the road which it was proposed to sell should exceed that which was originally given: but that would be a most unfair thing. It would be most unfair to do anything that might deprive those people of their frontages; because they

would be put to very great expense in shifting their buildings. This would cost them very much more than the value of the land. The feeling in the locality was that, if a high price were to be placed on the land, it would be better to leave matters as they were. If the original price were charged people might then afford to shift their buildings and have their frontage to the main road. It was a very rough piece of country at present, and it was very difficult to get to the dwellings and business places in the township. It was proposed, therefore, to give the local body power to make the road a chain and a half wide; and he hoped that not only would the Bill be read a second time, but also that no alteration would be made in it in Committee.

Mr. SAMUEL said he had very carefully considered this Bill, and was of opinion that it was one the House ought to pass. There were certain peculiar inconveniences in the procedure under the Act of 1882, which might make it very inconvenient to the local body to proceed under that Act, and the object of this Bill was to get rid of those inconveniences. The proceeds from this land, if closed and sold under the Counties Act in the ordinary course, would go to the local body, and therefore there was no force in the remarks of the honourable member for Dunedin South as to the unfairness of providing by the Bill that the County Council should get the proceeds of sale. The honourable gentleman's remarks were quite beside the question.

Mr. VALENTINE had much pleasure in supporting this Bill. The Committee to whom this Bill was referred inquired very carefully into the various circumstances in connection with the proposed disposal of this land, and were satisfied that the Bill was necessary in the interests of the settlers. It was the intention of the County Council to narrow this road, for the purpose of better securing the maintenance of it and, at the same time, affording better means of communication to the settlers. He understood that there were certain natural features in connection with this land which made the road rather difficult to get at. The roadways into the farms would be improved if the strip of land not required for this road were handed over to the settlers. He was assured by the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill that there was no intention to charge more than the upset price for the land, which, he believed, was something like £1 an acre. It would be very unjust indeed to the settlers now occupying these farms if they had to pay a "fancy" price for the land; and to take away the present frontages would be even a greater injustice than to raise the price. He hoped the County Council would get the powers they asked for in this Bill, for the better keeping of the road.

Mr. BEETHAM, in reply, believed the honourable gentlemen who were in favour of the Bill appreciated the intentions of the measure; but he was sure the honourable member for Dunedin South had not. That honourable gentleman could not possibly conceive the posi-

tion of the township, or he would never have made the remarks he did make. If the honourable gentleman would read the Bill he would see that it was simply a Bill to give the settlers what they had a right to demand. What the honourable member for Woodville had said was perfectly true, that only a width of 14ft. in the centre was formed, and the rest of the road, in winter-time, was a mud-hole. He should be glad as far as possible to meet the views of honourable members in Committee; his only wish would be to do justice to the colony, the district, and the Bill he had under his charge.

Bill read a second time.

#### OTAGO HARBOUR BOARD BILL.

Mr. ROSS, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he would occupy not more than a few minutes of the time of the House. This Bill, though a Harbour Board Bill, was not an empowering Bill; it authorised no borrowing, neither did it confer any additional endowments. On these grounds he anticipated no objection from the Young New Zealand party in the House. The object of the Bill was simply to rectify omissions in the Act of 1883, and to make some necessary provisions in connection with the election of members. Clause 6 of the Act of 1883 provided that "The first election of the elective members of the Board shall be held in November, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-three;" and clause 7 provided that "The elective members shall come into office on their election, and shall hold office from the time of their election until the election of members of the Board, to be held in November, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-five." No provision, however, was made for any subsequent elections. The Bill now under consideration supplied this omission. Another clause provided for the representation of the now-existing Dunedin Chamber of Commerce. By the Act of 1883 the Chamber of Commerce was authorised to elect a member of the Board. The interpretation clause of that Act, however, defined "Chamber of Commerce" to be "the present association in the City of Dunedin known as the 'Dunedin Chamber of Commerce.'" Since the passing of the Act of 1883 the then existing Chamber had been dissolved, and another Chamber of Commerce had been constituted and incorporated. This Bill provided that the authority to elect a member to the Harbour Board be conferred on the present association or on future associations which might succeed it. Another provision in the Bill substituted the second Monday in February for the second Monday in November: this is rendered necessary in consequence of the adjournment of this House which took place at the commencement of the present session having prevented this Bill becoming law in time to allow of the elections taking place in November. As the date must thus necessarily be altered, it was thought better to provide that the election should take place in February, on the same day as that fixed by "The Harbours Act, 1878," for holding Harbour Board elections in the colony. He

*Mr. Beetham*

would not detain the House longer, as other clauses in the Bill might be dealt with in Committee. He moved the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. FISH should not oppose this Bill, although, before the second reading was agreed to, he should like to say that he was very doubtful whether the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce should have special representation on this Board. It was a body which was constantly changing; it had exceedingly little weight in Dunedin, and recently it passed out of existence altogether. It was a body which was not fairly representative of the trade of the community, and it was notorious that it existed more for the dissemination of "cliquism" than for any useful purpose. He was free to admit that the gentleman who occupied a seat on the Board for the Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Donald Reid, was one of the best members the Board had; but he saw by the papers that Mr. Reid did not intend to continue his seat on the Board. He (Mr. Fish) very much doubted whether the Chamber of Commerce of Dunedin, or indeed any other Chamber of Commerce in the colony, should have special representation on these Boards. This particular Chamber was, he thought, the weakest one in any of the large towns of the colony. Although he would not oppose the Bill, he thought it just as well that Chambers of Commerce should not have special representation on these Boards.

Mr. ROSS wished merely to point out that this Bill did not interfere at all with the constitution of the Board.

Bill read a second time.

#### PUKEKOHE BOROUGH BILL.

Mr. HAMLIN, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said the necessity for it had arisen owing to the fact that "The Municipal Corporations Act, 1886," repealed the Town Districts Act. A petition was presented to the Governor requiring that the land set forth in the schedule to the Bill should be formed into a town district. At the present time the Road Board at Pukekohe was unable to pay proper attention to that growing township, and therefore a petition had been signed, praying that the township should be created into a borough under the Municipal Corporations Act. The Municipal Corporations Act provided that no borough should be formed unless there were a hundred householders in the township. Unfortunately, Pukekohe had not quite that number at the present time; but the township was rapidly increasing in population, and it was absolutely necessary for the health of the people that drainage and other works should be undertaken. The reason the Bill was asked for was that the Road Board did not pay proper attention to the wants of that particular spot: hence it was that they desired to be constituted a borough, so as to carry out drainage and other necessary works. He might state that during the election people, in going to the Courthouse, had to wade half-way up to their knees in mud and water; and that was not an unusual thing in that township.

Mr. FISH thought this was a very objectionable Bill. It sought to turn a small town into a borough, and he thought the policy of the House should be to prevent small places from assuming the more dignified functions of a borough. The honourable gentleman said there were only forty or fifty householders in this township.

Mr. HAMLIN.—I did not say that.

Mr. FISH said, at any rate there were under one hundred householders in the town; and, if that was so, surely it was premature to ask that the place should be made into a borough. In this case there seemed to be no provision for a petition sent to the Governor being advertised. The honourable gentleman had stated that one reason for bringing in this measure was that the Road Board did not give proper attention to the place. That was surely a fault that could be remedied by the people of the district bringing pressure to bear on the Road Board. As to drainage, surely a small hamlet like Pukekohe could not require much in the way of drainage. No doubt the thing was a very small affair altogether; it was so small that he thought the House should not be asked to legislate upon it, thus making a special case of it. He failed to see why the House should pass the Bill. It was one of the most notable instances of parish-vestry legislation that he had ever seen introduced into the House. He would oppose the Bill.

Mr. SAMUEL was strongly opposed to this Bill, and he hoped the House would not allow it to be read a second time. To allow the Bill to be read a second time would be to agree to the principle of the Bill, which was a departure from the principles embodied in "The Municipal Corporations Act, 1886." By that Act the Town Districts Act was repealed, and it was rendered no longer possible for these small places to form themselves into towns; nor should the House now permit them to form themselves into boroughs. He considered that one of the greatest evils in the colony was the desire of so many settlers in small districts to have municipal bodies, and to rush into public-works expenditure, and into loans. This was all of a piece with many other acts of small bodies of that description. People in business in small townships said, "Let us make this a grander place; let us get concrete footpaths, drainage, and waterworks." These people had frequently nothing to lose themselves, and they entailed heavy taxation on those who came after them to occupy the town. That had been one of the greatest evils the colony had laboured under—namely, the high rates entailed by the action of local bodies. He considered that the local government of the colony was greatly at fault, the bodies often carrying out their duties most inefficiently and extravagantly. The Bill seemed to have no excuse whatever on the face of it; and, if the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill wished to make it legal for small places to form themselves into municipalities, let him endeavour to amend the Municipal Corporations Act so as to make it possible for other small

places to do the same; but do not let the House—except for some exceptional reason—allow this Bill to pass, and thus make an exception of one case.

Mr. PEACOCK said the honourable member who had just spoken had expressed in a great measure his opinions upon this subject. He thought the House should be very careful in departing from the general principle embodied in the Municipal Corporations Act—that the machinery for a borough should only be brought into play where there was a sufficient number of inhabitants. In this case it was intended to get behind that Act, not only in regard to the number of inhabitants required to petition, but also in regard to the stipulation that the revenue from rates, on the ordinary scale of one shilling on annual value or three farthings on capital value, should not be less than £250 exclusive of subsidies. They should see that exceptions were not made without very good reasons being shown. He had heard no such reasons given in the present case. The honourable member for Dunedin South was, however, in error in stating that no provision was made for making public the fact of the presentation of the petition. The subsections of section 24 of the Act to be left out were (2), (3), and (6). Subsection (5) would still make it imperative that the petition should be publicly notified before presentation to the Governor. On the general principle that the House should not readily depart from the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act, or countenance very small bodies forming themselves into boroughs, he would oppose the Bill.

Mr. HOBBS could quite understand the honourable member for Ponsonby and the honourable member for Dunedin South, who came from large cities, not being able to grasp the position; and he could quite understand the honourable member for New Plymouth also not being able to grasp the position. There was every excuse for this Bill. The people had been clamouring for it for the last few years. He hoped the House, and especially the country members, would take a broader view of the matter, and not be influenced by the opinions of city members, who did not understand the circumstances at all. He always noticed that the city members were opposed to assistance being granted to local bodies in managing their own affairs. He hoped the House would give the people what was asked for in the Bill.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said this Bill was carefully inquired into when it came before the Local Bills Committee. The inhabitants of the place were unanimously in favour of the Bill. From the explanations given to the Committee it seemed that the part of the district referred to in the Bill was somewhat isolated, and had not that interest, so to speak, in common with the other portions of the district which it should have, and had not received that consideration as regards improvements and local expenditure which it should receive. He had gone into the matter very carefully, and he did not think an injustice would be done to any one if the Bill were allowed to pass.

Mr. HISLOP said, apart altogether from the principle of the Municipal Corporations Act, he did not see why this measure should be allowed to pass. He believed that the House had only on one previous occasion made a departure from the Municipal Corporations Act, and that was in the case of Campbelltown. But the circumstances which were shown to exist in the case of Campbelltown had not been shown to exist in this instance. He did not think that small localities should be encouraged to detach themselves from the local governing bodies. He did not think the House ought to allow this Bill to pass.

Mr. FELDWICK would not have risen had not the Colonial Secretary referred to Campbelltown. He (Mr. Feldwick) had a hand in the passing of the Bill which enabled Campbelltown to become a borough. Since then that borough had made astonishing progress, which fact alone would induce him to vote for this Bill.

Mr. LAWRY happened to be very familiar with the district dealt with in the Bill, and he could corroborate the remarks which had fallen from the honourable member for Franklin South. At the present time the place was, comparatively speaking, a small one, but it was situated in one of the best districts in the North Island. A number of the most *bonâ fide* settlers in the whole colony were settled there, and he looked upon the place as one destined to grow into a town of great importance. He did not believe in introducing exceptional legislation, but if it was justifiable at all it was justifiable in a case like this. He thought the honourable member for New Plymouth made a mistake in condemning these people for desiring to have footpaths, drainage, and so on. He had always looked upon these as necessities of life, and it was for that reason he would support the second reading of the Bill. Pukekohe was situated in a beautiful district, and, although some parts of it were practically waterless, still there were magnificent springs in the neighbourhood which might be utilised at little cost; and this could perhaps be best accomplished if it were formed into a borough.

Mr. GUINNESS thought it would be wrong to grant this concession to a small village like Pukekohe. The principle of allowing these small communities to establish governing bodies had been carried too far even in the Act of 1886, and it would yet be found that they would be a curse to the colony, not only in respect to the existence of so large a number of these small boroughs, but through the fact that they would stand in the way of the establishment of a proper system of local government to counteract the centralisation which was increasing year by year. He would therefore move, That the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Mr. TAYLOR said it seemed to him that this was a very important matter, and there was a very large principle at stake, notwithstanding what had been said by the Colonial Secretary to the contrary. It was a matter

which entirely affected the people living in the district, and, although there were not a sufficient number of persons there now to enable them to apply under the Municipal Corporations Act to constitute themselves into a borough, still the remarks made by honourable gentlemen who were intimately acquainted with the locality showed that before long there would be more than sufficient. The honourable member for New Plymouth objected to the establishment of small local bodies because they wanted to form footpaths; but he (Mr. Taylor) would like to know why they should not have footpaths as well as the people in the large towns.

Mr. SAMUEL explained that what he objected to was, that these small places wanted to raise loans to form footpaths and such things.

Mr. TAYLOR said those loans would be expended for the benefit of the people, and the large property-owners in the neighbourhood had quite enough power to protect themselves under the Municipal Corporations Act. He hoped the Bill would pass.

Mr. FISH did not think a single argument had been used to justify the House in passing legislation of this kind. It was really absurd that a small place with fifty or sixty houses in it should want to assume the functions of a Borough Council. It was entirely against the spirit of the Municipal Corporations Act. He thought the House would be acting most wisely in reading the Bill a second time that day six months, not so much on account of the trifling case now under consideration as to discourage honourable members from troubling the House with such matters.

Mr. HAMLIN said that most of the arguments used against the Bill had been raised by gentlemen who enjoyed all the benefits of having beautiful roads, footpaths, waterworks, and everything they wanted. Under this Bill no loan was asked for; and the people were ready to put their hands into their own pockets to do the necessary works, so as to benefit persons travelling through the district. He would like to see the honourable member for Dunedin South, the honourable member for Ponsonby, and the honourable member for Greymouth arrive at Pukekohe by train at about half-past six, and have to walk through the town; and if they did not come back to the House and say, "Pass the Bill at once—pass it through all its stages at a single sitting," he did not understand what the feelings of those gentlemen could be. The fact was that those honourable gentlemen seemed to think that this place was a suburb close to a large city, whereas it was thirty-one miles from Auckland by railway. The township was growing fast, and required some works to be instituted at once; and the Road Board there had such a large district under its control that it could not attend to the wants of the borough. The House was told that this would put a stop to a proper system of local government; but he would like to ask, who was it that assisted in

doing away with the system which had been in existence? Who slipped into the Municipal Corporations Act a clause repealing the Town Districts Act, so that even the Government did not know that that Act had been repealed until the 23rd December last? He had himself been in correspondence with the Government on this matter, and on that date he received an urgent telegram from them saying that he was to consider that all the correspondence which had taken place was withdrawn, as they had just found a clause in the Municipal Corporations Act repealing the Town Districts Act; otherwise they would have supported the application. That was the reason why this Bill was brought in. But they found that, whenever anything was brought in to benefit the people and do good to the country, there were none so ready to rush in and cry out about foolish people and silly people, and so on, as those who lived in large cities. He was sorry for people who took up that position, because the time might come when an opportunity would be afforded to people in the country of expressing their opinions on certain other matters. He felt inclined to quote an old fable, but perhaps he had better not, as it might compel Mr. Speaker to call him to order. He hoped the House would throw aside all the little special-pleadings which had been urged by certain honourable members, and would allow this Bill to pass. As he had said before, they asked the House for no endowment and for no loan. The land was of such value that there would be sufficient money raised to carry out in a proper manner all the works that were required.

The House divided on the question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

#### AYES, 38.

Beetham	Hobbs	Steward, W. J.
Bruce	Hodgkinson	Stewart, W. D.
Buchanan	Jackson	Taylor
Burton	Kerr	Thompson, R.
Carroll	Larnach	Thompson, T.
Cowan	McGregor	Valentine
Feldwick	McKenzie, J.	Vogel
Fergus	Mills	Ward
Fisher	Mitchelson	Whyte
Fitchett	Pyke	Withy.
Fraser	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	Richardson, E.	Hamlin
Grimmond	Ross	Lawry.

#### NOES, 13.

Allen	Marchant	Tanner.
Anderson	Newman	
Blake	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fish	Richardson, G.	Guinness
Hislop	Samuel	Perceval.

#### PAIR.

*For.* Moss. *Against.* Turnbull.

Majority for, 25.

Amendment negatived, and Bill read a second time.

#### GISBORNE HARBOUR BOARD BILL.

Mr. GRAHAM moved the second reading of this Bill. It was an amending Bill that did not ask for fresh borrowing powers, but it was rendered necessary through certain ambiguities in the wording of the original Act, under which the Board had done certain things that they thought they were perfectly entitled to do, but as to which doubts had since arisen. He would briefly go through the several clauses. As to clause 3, when the poll for sanctioning the harbour loan was taken the plan on which the ratepayers voted was the plan prepared by Sir John Coode, the wording of the original Act being,—

"The construction of, at or near the site reported upon by Sir John Coode, a breakwater to afford refuge and accommodation for vessels of large tonnage, and to reclaim and use such portions of the foreshore and land beneath the sea adjoining the harbour as may be necessary for the construction of such works and for purposes incidental thereto."

Thus, Sir John Coode's plan was put before the ratepayers when the poll was taken; but afterwards, when the loan had been raised and the Board had funds and were able to have fresh surveys made, it was found that some of the information which had been supplied to Sir John Coode, and on which he had based his plans, was not quite correct, and therefore the plan adopted had been one modified—to not a very large extent—from that of Sir John Coode. There had consequently been some doubt as to the validity of the poll, owing to the actual plan adopted not being before the ratepayers when the poll was taken. The plan on which the work was now proceeding had been approved by the Government, but it was thought to be desirable to remove all possibility of doubt by this proposed formal validation. Clause 4 was to validate the putting-aside of £25,000 of the loan as a sinking fund. This was not originally intended when the Act was passed; but, after the loan papers had been sent to London, the Board's financial agents—the Union Bank of Australia—wired out that it would assist in the success of the loan very materially if this were done; and the Board considered it and agreed to it. Of course the Board thought at the time that it had full power to do so; but in this case, too, doubts had since been raised. The arrangement had given general satisfaction, as it had given confidence to the lenders of the money, the loan being floated at a very good price; and the sinking fund was now invested at high interest. This clause 4 was to validate what had been done in that respect. Clauses 5, 6, 7, and 8 were in reference to the construction of a short line of railway found to be necessary in order to get stone for the making of the breakwater from the beach—three or four miles distant. It was thought at first that the Board had power to do the work under the Public Works Act; but on applying to the department the Colonial Secretary had advised that the proper course was to get authority under a special Act, and the recommendation of the Government

was followed in these clauses. Clauses 9, 10, and 11 were necessary on account of the ambiguous wording of the original Act as to the maximum rating-power. It had been intended that the maximum should be 1d. on country property and 2d. on town property; but, on account of the ambiguous wording he had referred to, it was thought desirable to make the matter quite clear. The poll had been taken on the understanding that the maximum rating-power was 1d. and 2d., and it was proposed now to clearly declare that. Clauses 12 and 13 were to give extended powers to the Board for leasing a part of their endowments. The Board had a very large block of land called the *Tauwhareparae Block*, situated in a rather inaccessible part of the country, and the land and its position were of such a nature that it was difficult to find tenants for it at all under the powers of leasing which the Board now had, and it was thought the land might be used to much greater advantage if the Board were given the power of dealing with it under the provisions of the general Land Act, including the perpetual-leasing clauses. These were the main points of the Bill, which he hoped would receive the support of honourable members; but, if there was any objection to particular clauses, he trusted honourable members would allow the second reading to be passed, and raise their objections in Committee. The Bill was very necessary to the Board, as it was possible that, without it, the levying of a rate might be resisted; and if the rate could not be collected the Board would not be in a position to pay their interest, and therefore there would be serious difficulty to face. He trusted the second reading would now be agreed to, and he would be prepared to meet any criticism on points of detail in Committee. The Bill was absolutely necessary in order that the Board might have the means to meet its obligations in the payment of interest. He begged to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. PEACOCK did not rise to oppose the Bill, as he thought most of its objects mentioned by the honourable member for the East Coast were good ones, such as rectifying possible informalities, with respect to the want of plans when the *Gazette* was published, the validation of the setting-aside of a portion of the loan as a sinking fund in the interests of the bondholders, and the using of a portion of the loan fund for the purpose of making a railway to get the stone for the harbour works. But one clause bore a very different complexion, and to this he would like to call the attention of the House. The last part of clause 4 read,—

“And whereas the Harbour Board has, prior to the passing of ‘The Harbours Act 1878 Amendment Act, 1886,’ and of this Act, incurred an overdraft at the bank on the General Account: Be it enacted that it shall be lawful for the Harbour Board to advance such sum from the Loan Account as shall be sufficient to pay off such overdraft, provided the Harbour Board shall refund one-tenth part of such sum to the Loan Account out of the general revenue

of the Board during each year for ten years after the passing of this Act: Provided, however, that the premium of four thousand one hundred and seven pounds five shillings, or thereabouts, incurred by the Board on the floating of the loan shall not be deemed to be overdraft, or part thereof, requiring repayment.”

It seemed from this that an overdraft to an indefinite amount, which had not been stated, had been incurred at the bank on General Account, and it was proposed to repay it in the meantime from the loan fund: that was, money borrowed purely for the harbour works was to be applied to paying off this overdraft used for general purposes, the amount to be recouped to the loan fund at the rate of one-tenth a year for ten years. That was a proposal which, he thought, required very careful looking into, because it was generally held to be most undesirable that money borrowed expressly for one purpose should be applied to another, unless there were very urgent reasons for so doing. One other point he would call attention to was this. In clause 6 it was stated,—

“Provided that where by ‘The Public Works Act, 1882,’ or any Act amending the same, anything is required to be done by Proclamation or notice gazetted, the same may be done by the Board by notice published in one or more newspapers circulating in the harbour district.”

He thought it a wise provision that notifications required under the Public Works Act should be published in the *Gazette*, to be made known throughout the colony to more people than were resident within a small district. This was a point, however, which could be rectified in Committee; but he hoped the honourable gentleman, in his reply, would give some explanation of the proposal to take money from the loan fund to pay an overdraft used for general purposes.

Mr. SAMUEL said the honourable gentleman who had just sat down had drawn attention to the two points which had struck him as being objectionable features—first, the provision for repaying overdraft out of loan; and, secondly, the alteration of the existing law to dispense with the necessity of advertising, and also with the necessity of obtaining a Proclamation by the Governor in Council. But, of course, these were matters which might be amended in Committee. With regard to the overdraft there was something misleading in the Bill. It recited, “And whereas the Harbour Board has, prior to the passing of ‘The Harbours Act 1878 Amendment Act, 1886,’ and of this Act, incurred an overdraft at the bank on General Account,” as the reason for this proposed legislation. But the Harbours Act of 1886 made no alteration in the then existing law as to the power of Harbour Boards in regard to overdrafts. Overdrawing was illegal previous to that Act, just as it had been ever since, and the Act of 1886 only imposed a penalty upon any member who participated in such an illegal act. There had been no alteration in the law as to the illegality of an overdraft by the Act of 1886, and therefore it seemed desirable that

Mr. Graham



these misleading words should be taken out of the Bill. As to legalising the repayment of the overdraft, that was a matter upon which there could be very little doubt as to what the House ought to do. If a local body, acting with the best intentions on behalf of the people whom it represented, incurred an overdraft and spent the money for the good of the district, the House should show indulgence and allow the money to be paid off. There was one other feature in the Bill to which he would call attention, and he felt the more interest in this matter because the Harbour Board which had jurisdiction over the district he represented had recently had some litigation in connection with a similar matter. The 4th clause said,—

“Whereas the Gisborne Harbour Board has, in pursuance of powers vested in it by the principal Act, borrowed two hundred thousand pounds upon debentures, and has entered into engagements with the debenture-holders that, in order to better secure the repayment of the sum so borrowed, a sum of twenty-five thousand pounds out of the proceeds of the said loan should be set aside and invested as a sinking fund: And whereas such sum has been set aside and invested, and doubts have arisen as to whether such investment could be lawfully made: It is hereby declared that, notwithstanding anything contained in the principal Act or ‘The Harbours Act, 1878,’ or any amendment thereof, requiring the proceeds of any loan to be expended in the construction of works or otherwise, the appropriation to sinking fund hereinbefore recited is hereby validated as if authorised and sanctioned by the principal Act, and the interest from time to time accruing therefrom may be lawfully paid into the General Account of the Harbour Board.”

Now, it was very important that the House should not legislate in any way in contravention of the agreement made by a Harbour Board with the persons who had lent them money, and he thought that the House should have, when it went into Committee upon the Bill, a copy of the agreement which had been made with the debenture-holders, and a copy of the instructions which were issued to any bank which floated the loan, in order that there might be no mistake upon the point. There had been very expensive litigation in connection with a matter of this sort by the Harbour Board of New Plymouth, and he should like to prevent the Gisborne Board being drawn into a similar difficulty. With regard to the provision that interest on the £25,000 should be paid into the harbour fund, and appropriated, he presumed, to general purposes, that was distinctly opposed to the present law. The Act of 1886 provided very clearly that interest should follow the principal fund; and, if the £25,000 was to be paid to the Sinking Fund Commissioners, then the accumulations of interest must also be paid to the Commissioners, and could not be appropriated to general purposes. If this Board had raised its loan while the law was in that condition it was manifestly inequitable that the terms on which the loan was raised

should be varied, especially seeing that the debenture-holders would know nothing of what it was proposed to do. With regard to setting aside £25,000 for the purpose of forming a sinking fund, that seemed to be scarcely fair to the ratepayers, who assented to the loan upon the distinct understanding that the £200,000 was to be spent for harbour purposes, not that £25,000 was to be spent in forming a sinking fund. But the ratepayers were close by, they knew of the provision that it was proposed to insert in the Bill, and if they did not object he did not see why the House should object to it on that ground. But the debenture-holders could not take any steps for protecting themselves, not being in the colony; and it was the duty of the House to protect them. Therefore that provision, as far as it affected them, should not be consented to until the agreement was produced and it was shown that they would not be prejudicially affected.

Mr. FISH said that the points which had been referred to by the last speaker were those which had suggested themselves to him as being most objectionable. The introduction of the Bill showed one thing clearly—that the Gisborne Harbour Board had recklessly gone outside their powers as defined by the Act previously passed, and the House was now asked to validate illegal action. It seemed to him that if the House passed Acts of this kind it was simply encouraging local bodies to go outside of their powers—powers which would never have been given if the House had thought that they would be used as they had been used. It seemed to him that the House should punish in some way—and the only way in which it could punish was to refuse legislation of this kind—bodies who recklessly or carelessly went beyond the powers which the House had given into their hands. It would appear, from the 3rd clause of the Bill, that the Board had not complied with the former Act in the way of preparing plans—surely a reckless piece of neglect; and now the House was asked to remedy that. To do so would be adopting a dangerous principle. It was quite possible that had the plans been published as provided for the people would have objected to them. He understood, further, that the Board had departed from the recommendations of Sir John Coode, who was employed at great expense to give them plans of the work. The second thing which the Board had done was evidently illegal: they had made some private arrangement with the bondholders, outside the Act, to deposit a certain sum of money—£25,000 taken from the borrowed money—to form a sinking fund as additional security for the bondholders. Now, the Board had no right to do that; and, if the Board had agreed with the bondholders to exceed their powers under the Act, the House had no right to consider the bondholders for one moment. The Board and the bondholders should not be lifted out of an illegal position by retrospective legislation to be passed in their favour. The House could not be too careful or insist too strongly upon local bodies' observing the conditions and terms of the Act under

which they were working, because, if illegal actions were loosely or recklessly validated, then local bodies would be found willing to accept any Act they could get, knowing that they could simply exceed their powers, and then come to the House for validation of their sins of omission and commission. If a local body fell into an error owing to a misadventure, then, of course, it was reasonable to validate its action. That was a very different thing. But the wrong in this instance could not have been without full knowledge that wrong was being done. They should have acted under legal advice; and, if they had acted under legal advice, and still had done wrong, then, as frequently happened, they had been badly advised. The honourable gentleman who had spoken last said that there could be no objection to the latter part of this clause 4—that was, that they should be allowed to take a certain sum of amount out of the Loan Account to pay off an overdraft at the bank; and, further, that they should repay the money to the Loan Account in periodical payments. If the House passed that clause it would give the Board power to divert the £25,000 and apply it to purposes foreign to those contemplated by the original Bill. It was all very well for the honourable member in charge of the Bill to say that no harm could come, and that the money would be paid back out of the general revenue of the Board in sums of so much a year for ten years. It was all very well to put a clause of that kind in the Bill; but what guarantee was there that such money would be paid back? It had already been seen that the Board was regardless of the law; and how could the House be sure that it would not break this provision as it had broken others which were not agreeable to it? The House would lose all control if it passed a Bill of this kind, and the Board might, at its own sweet will, pay the money back or not. He did not believe in slipshod legislation of this kind. The House could not be too careful how it passed by breaches of the law, for they knew that local bodies were too fond of breaking laws which put them under proper restrictions as to expenditure. If members of local bodies broke the law they should be made to feel that they were, individually and collectively, liable to pay for their mistakes. That was the proper system, and would impose a salutary check upon imprudent and improper expenditure. There was another thing which the Board wanted, and which appeared to be a very objectionable thing. The latter part of clause 6 said,—

“Provided that where, by ‘The Public Works Act, 1882,’ or any Act amending the same, anything is required to be done by Proclamation or notice gazetted, the same may be done by the Board by notice published in one or more newspapers circulating in the harbour district.”

The doings of the Board had an effect far beyond the locality in which the works were carried on, and the only means whereby the public generally, to a greater or less extent, could have notice of what the Board was doing

was by requiring notice to be given in the *Gazette*. The notice in the *Gazette* should therefore be insisted on, and, if the Bill went into Committee, as he had no doubt it would do, he should move to have that portion of the clause struck out.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Give the other Bills a chance.

Mr. FISH.—An honourable gentleman said, “Give the other Bills a chance.” His opinion was that the House gave too great facilities for passing Bills of this character, and that the sooner honourable gentlemen looked personally more into legislation brought before the House by private members the better it would be for the country. He would like the honourable gentleman who moved the second reading, in his reply, to state whether the enlargement of the reserve meant the acquisition of any further lands for harbour purposes. He would not detain the House further; but he thought it was necessary to make the few remarks he had made, because it appeared to him that they were asked to validate wrongs on the part of the Gisborne Harbour Board which they ought not to be asked to validate, and which no local body ought to have committed.

Mr. MILLS said that members of the party to which he belonged had been severely criticized the other evening by the honourable member for Dunedin South because, after it had been understood that they intended to oppose these Harbour Bills, and had voted against the Wanganui Harbour Bill, they afterwards had passed the measure introduced by the honourable member for Napier. He now wished to explain that they drew a distinction between those Bills. They felt very strongly that the time had come when all the Loan Bills for harbour purposes should be subjected to the severest scrutiny. The colony was being deluged with these Harbour Board borrowing Bills and Bills for the creation of new harbours in all directions; and he, at all events, thought that the time had come when the Government should exercise some supervision over them, with a view to placing some check on them. The time was not far distant when the House would have to face the question of taking over a great many of these harbour loans, because the districts would not be able to bear the very great strain upon them of taxation for the purpose of paying the interest. Having that in view, the House should be very jealous of giving any further borrowing powers to harbours already in existence, and also for the creation of new harbours. He and those who were acting with him intended to criticize very closely any scheme which came before the House for the creation of new harbours and for further borrowing, and unless a very strong case were presented there would be a very large vote against it. This Bill, however, did not seem to come within that category, because it appeared to be a Bill for the purpose of amending what had been defective in the previous Act, and also of validating certain acts of the

Mr. Fish

Gisborne Harbour Board which had been illegally done under some misapprehension of the law. There was no provision for further borrowing, and the Legislature was asked to confirm a very wise provision for setting apart a sum annually as a sinking fund for the repayment of the loans. He therefore intended to support the second reading of the Bill, but no doubt in Committee several alterations would be made.

Dr. NEWMAN did not know which honourable member of the Ministry was going to act as Minister of Marine during the recess; but, whether it would be the Premier or the Minister of Education, he would like to ask him if he would see, during the recess, that the Engineer-in-Chief of the colony went to Gisborne and examined the whole thing, with a view to report upon it before the next sitting of Parliament. He said this advisedly, because, having been there, and having taken a considerable interest in the harbour, he thought the harbour was not made at all in accordance with the plan of Sir John Coode, and it was a question whether it would not be advisable to stop the harbour works half-way, and, instead of going on with the expenditure of £200,000, consider whether it would not be better to expend £80,000, and stop there. The expenditure and liabilities already incurred amounted to some £50,000, and he believed they were pledged to works to the extent of another £30,000, and that expenditure must take the work to such a point as to make it profitable. This Bill was a very striking instance of the slipshod way in which the House allowed Bills to go through. What had happened was this: In 1884 the House, with very little thought, allowed the Bill to go through. On the report of Sir John Coode the House agreed that there should be a wharf run out, with lattice-work below in order that the travelling sand and shingle should run through it; but the new engineer of the Board had shifted the point of the breakwater, and had made it solid instead of being of lattice-work. This, he (Dr. Newman) believed, was a great mistake; and, instead of the wall being a long way away from the river, it was at the mouth of the river, and the consequence would be that the silt would come down in large masses, get mixed with the sand which the wall deposited there, and so block the entrance. The House should take into consideration whether the expenditure on this harbour should go on or not; and he trusted the Minister of Marine would send some one to look after it. Regarding the Bill itself, there were some very objectionable clauses in it. For instance, clauses 10 and 11 actually gave to the Harbour Board, a purely irresponsible body, the power of levying double the rate it had before. When the Bill came up three years ago it was agreed that the rating of the Borough of Gisborne should be 1d. and of the country districts 3d. That was agreed to, and on that agreement the inhabitants of the country districts voted for the loan. But three years had only just gone, and the Bill was brought in again and double rating-powers were

asked for. He felt certain that a large number of the people who had voted for the loan would not have done so had they known that their properties for miles around were to be taxed to such an extent as was now proposed. From letters he had received, and from other information which had been forwarded to him, it seemed to him to be a very grave question indeed whether, if the whole of the £200,000 were expended, anything like the floating palaces of the U.S.S. Company could go alongside; and, if that was the case, the £200,000 might be absolutely thrown away, but the unfortunate district would be taxed for the next thirty years to the extent of £12,000 a year, and for many years after that to a lesser extent, and all for nothing. This was the result of allowing second- or third-rate engineers to take in hand these works: and he had begun to believe that Sir John Coode's visit had been an absolute curse to the colony. Everywhere he had been asked to give his opinion, as an engineer, as to whether certain works could be constructed, leaving out of consideration the question whether they ought to be constructed. No doubt works could be constructed almost anywhere in the wide ocean; and the result of his opinions had been that every poor little district had been encouraged to believe that it should spend unlimited sums of money. Looking at the Bill, clause 4 seemed to contain one of those old childish principles of banking which he should have thought had been exploded in the last century. In England a hundred years ago if the Government borrowed a million of money it put by a sinking fund. But that had long been considered absurd, and the idea was annihilated by Dr. Hamilton, and since then no Government had thought of acting upon such a fallacy. The Board had borrowed £200,000, and actually the first thing they did was to set aside £25,000 which they were never to spend at all. Then, why on earth did they borrow it? All he could say was that the Board must have been misled by its bankers into doing so childish a thing. It would have been far better to have borrowed only £175,000 and to have expended it, and, if they must have a sinking fund, to have had a sinking fund of 1 or 1½ per cent., and then the debt of the place would have been less by £25,000 than now. Then, clause 12 of the new Bill, which dealt with the power of leasing the endowments, proposed to give power to lease for the extravagantly long period of sixty-five years. That, he thought, was allowing the dead hand too much power. A period of twenty-one or of forty-two years at the outside ought to be the longest period for which land should be leased. He hoped the Bill would be very seriously amended in Committee, and that the Minister of Marine would consent to get a report upon the harbour works, and lay it before the House, so that the House could see whether the money had been properly applied, and, if necessary, when another £30,000 had been expended, the colony should step in and refuse power, if need be, to waste a further sum of £125,000.

Mr. FISHER said the honourable member for Port Chalmers and the honourable member for Thorndon had dealt solely with a point which ought to have been discussed three years ago. They had raised the question of the advisableness or otherwise of proceeding with this work. The proper time to have discussed that question was when the Bill of 1884 was before the House, and he submitted that it was a little late in the day to discuss it now. He had listened with great interest to the speech of the honourable member for Dunedin South, and he must confess that it had had the effect of convincing him that they ought to pass this Bill. What did the Bill propose to do? The Board proposed, in answer to the representations of the bondholders, he assumed, that additional rating-powers should be taken in order to enable it to meet the interest charge. That appeared to him a reasonable proposition, and one the Board had every right to make. The honourable member for Thorndon said that the work itself ought not to be allowed to proceed beyond a certain point, and that nothing beyond a specified sum which he named ought to be expended. If that contention was correct, surely the honourable gentleman could have no objection to the sum of £25,000 being tied up in the way proposed. The objection to the principle of a sinking fund had nothing to do with the point. There was the fact that the Board itself proposed to set aside for a specific period a sum of £25,000.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It has done so.

Mr. FISHER.—Well, instead of being blamed the Board ought to be commended for the course it had adopted; for, having discovered that certain irregularities and informalities had arisen, they spontaneously and voluntarily came to the House and asked to be put in a legal position—a position in which they could legitimately meet any questions such as had been mentioned. He would also ask if this was the first local body in the colony which had got into such a position. He had a vivid recollection of many other local bodies which had perpetrated irregularities much more serious than these, and it had devolved upon the House to pull them out of those difficulties. It appeared to him that the Board was taking the most honest and businesslike steps to get out of its difficulties. If there had been irregularities in the past, the blame ought not to be thrown upon the shoulders of those who at the present moment were doing their best to get the Board out of its trouble. He did not think much more need be said as to the Bill itself. As to the creation of a very large overdraft, although such a thing was by no means uncommon with local bodies, he was prepared to say that it was very improper; but the Board appeared to him to have done the best thing any body of men could do, as they had proposed to liquidate the overdraft as soon as they were able to do so. It appeared that they proposed to pay it off in ten years; and they asked the Legislature to make provision to insure that the overdraft should in due course be paid off.

*Dr. Newman*

On the whole, he considered the Board had placed before the Legislature a very fair mode for the payment of this money, and also for getting out of its difficulties.

Mr. PERCEVAL said that when this Bill came before the Local Bills Committee it struck him and other members of the Committee that it was a very fair Bill, and one that ought to be agreed to by the House. The objection raised to the plans was a mere technical objection. There was some slight deviation, some slight inaccuracy, in the plans, but it was considered by the Committee of a trivial character. He did not at all agree with the remarks made with reference to the sinking fund. It appeared to him to be a very wise precaution to take to set apart £25,000 of the original loan as a sinking fund, and he thought the Board were to be commended for it. It did appear, at first sight, rather serious to permit the Board to pay its overdraft out of loan; but, as he understood the matter, this overdraft was incurred in connection with the works. There were certain authorised works, and there were certain works which had to be done in connection with the works which were not strictly authorised, and, as he understood the matter, this overdraft was incurred in the construction of these works. The proposal to pay off the overdraft in the manner contemplated in clause 4 was, he thought, one that the House should not take exception to. They ought, he thought, to assist local bodies out of the difficulties which they had got into in the proper exercise of their functions. Clauses 10 and 11, he must confess, appeared to him to be rather in conflict with the original Act, because the original Act limited the rating to 1d., and it appeared to him somewhat pernicious to pass an Act increasing the rate, which had been restricted by the original Act. But that could be considered more carefully in Committee. There were several inaccuracies in the Bill, which had been pointed out by the honourable member for New Plymouth and others, and these could also be amended in Committee; but he hoped the House would pass the second reading of this measure, because he thought the Harbour Board should be assisted out of its difficulty.

Mr. W. D. STEWART had gone through the Bill very carefully, and could corroborate the remarks of the last speaker very fully. This Board did not come before the House, so to speak, to validate what might be termed a moral wrong or an improper transaction. It simply came to the House in order to get over one difficulty raised in connection with the question of the loan and overdraft. The other provisions of the Bill all tended in the direction of removing what might be termed purely technical difficulties—difficulties which, if not removed, would harass the Board very much, and tend to impair its efficiency and independence. The 5th section was considered necessary. Apparently, there was some land required for properly carrying on the harbour works, and they could not take this land without some legal authority.

Mr. TURNBULL asked why there was this power to enlarge the leasing powers of the Board as to its endowment. Could the honourable gentleman give them any information on that point?

Mr. W. D. STEWART said this land could not be profitably leased under the present powers. It was found from the peculiar character of the land that it was necessary to enlarge the leasing-power, in order to be able to lease the land to something like fair advantage. He did not think it was the duty of the House to raise—he would not say frivolous objections, but—objections of no real substance in connection with these Bills, so long as the parties locally interested had not agitated against the proposed amendments of the law. He should support the Bill, which was a desirable and necessary amendment that ought to receive the sanction of the House.

Mr. TURNBULL wished the honourable gentleman who spoke last would be more distinct in telling the House what was the peculiarity that rendered it necessary that the lease of so large a block of land should be for sixty years. It could be easily understood that in the case of town lands, where people had to put expensive buildings on their leased sections, long leases should be given; but it was quite another thing to give a lease for forty thousand acres of land for sixty years. That appeared to him to be a very fatal objection. He would not oppose the second reading of the Bill; but in Committee he would have an opportunity of eliciting further information.

Mr. VALENTINE said that when this matter was before the Local Bills Committee the honourable member for the East Coast explained that it would be necessary for any one taking up this land to expend £2 or £3 an acre on it before he could receive any return.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Why?

Mr. VALENTINE said it was because it was necessary to clear the land, lay down grass, fence it, and so forth, the cost of which would be £2 or £3 an acre; and therefore it was necessary to give a long lease before any one would take it up.

Mr. TAYLOR had not intended to speak on this Bill, and would not have risen were it not for the remarks of the honourable member for Port Chalmers and the honourable member for New Plymouth. He thought the views put forth by the honourable member for New Plymouth and indorsed by the Minister of Education were very bad. He (Mr. Taylor) could not conceive of a more immoral proposition than this: that a local body should be allowed to borrow money by way of overdraft without the authority of law, and then come to the House and ask it to ratify their illegal transaction. He must enter his protest against a doctrine of that kind. It was simply holding out an inducement to these gentlemen to squander the ratepayers' money, because they were only in the position for twelve or eighteen months, and it was well known that some members of these Boards expended money for their own or their friends' interest, knowing quite well that when they retired from office

they ceased to have any responsibility, and they then came down to Parliament and asked to be relieved or "whitewashed" in that way. He trusted the promoter of this Bill would, in his reply, enter fully into these matters, and indicate to the House the exact position in which the Bill stood, because unless he did so he (Mr. Taylor) should have to vote against it. The opening remarks of the honourable gentleman were very meagre, and he trusted that, in his reply, he would enter fully into these matters, so that honourable members might have a fair case before them, in order to vote intelligently in the matter. He did not wish to delay the House in this matter, but he felt bound to protest against such an immoral proposition as that quoted by the honourable member for New Plymouth and indorsed by the Minister of Education.

Mr. GRAHAM, in reply, said that, with regard to this reckless extravagance which the Harbour Board was accused of, he might mention that at the time there were two lawyers on the Board, and the Board presumed that those gentlemen would have seen that the Board did not act illegally. As to this setting-aside of the sinking fund, he thought it was the best thing that could have been done, whether that setting-aside was illegal or not. The money was there; it was invested; it was not as many expenditures had been in some southern districts, where money had been got and squandered.

An Hon. MEMBER.—In Sydenham?

Mr. TAYLOR.—Oh, no; I object.

Mr. GRAHAM.—With regard to the borrowing of money from the bank, it occurred in this way: When the Board came into office there was an overdraft for works done that could not be carried out without an overdraft. The Auditor-General pointed out that it was illegal to have an overdraft; and the money could not be obtained without levying a heavy rate. The Board, however, had money lying at the bank to special account, and they borrowed from this special account, the repayment of which it was proposed to spread over a term. It was not a large amount that was borrowed—only £3,000; and this clause in the Bill, to which reference had been made, was a suggestion of the Auditor-General to get over the difficulty. As to the remarks that were made about the works that were being carried out, he should be glad if the Engineer were sent up to examine the works, because they promised to be more successful than any in New Zealand. He believed that it would not only be found that the work was being carried out in a highly-satisfactory manner, but that the plan adopted was what it ought to be. This plan had the sanction of the Government Engineer, and the site had been fixed by the Government Engineer. If it was only to satisfy the country and the House that the money was being properly expended, he should be glad if the Engineer went up there, and made a report on the whole expenditure of the Board. He was perfectly satisfied that his report would satisfy every one. As to the rate, the honourable

gentleman who was in charge of the Bill when it was passed assured the Board that the intention was that the highest leviable rate should be 1d. in the country and 2d. in the town; and when a vote was taken this was clearly put before the ratepayers. He had a printed circular to show that it was so. As to the land, this block was covered with scrub, bush, &c. It was a long way from the coast. It was very good land, but would require an expenditure upon it of £1 or £2 an acre before it was capable of producing anything. The Board found that no one would take the land unless they got a long enough lease to recoup them for improvements. If sixty years was too long a term, it could be altered in Committee. The Board only wanted to apply the provisions of the Land Act of 1885 to this land as far as the agricultural portions of this reserve were concerned,—whatever the land regulations of the day might be. He hoped the House would agree to the second reading of the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

#### NEW RIVER HARBOUR BOARD LOAN BILL.

Mr. FELDWICK—in moving the second reading of the New River Harbour Board Loan Bill—pointed out that money was required by the Board to pay off liabilities that had been contracted owing to various circumstances, and for the purpose of undertaking further improvements of the harbour. A small loan had previously been obtained, but this had been spent in the formation of a half-tide training-wall. The Board had also incurred debts in defending actions that had been brought against them. They also bought a dredge at a cost of £3,161, the object being to avoid the cause of further actions; and at the time of obtaining the dredge there was an overdraft at the bank of the sum of £2,090. At the time of making the overdraft it was not illegal to incur it. Subsequently Parliament passed “The Harbours Act Amendment Act, 1886,” which prohibits overdrafts, but had given no facility for the repayment of overdrafts which then existed. There was consequently a certain amount of indebtedness, which the Board were anxious to clear off. The sum asked for in the Bill was only £25,000, and it was believed that the interest on that sum would be easily paid out of the increased trade which would accrue in consequence of the improvements to the harbour. The loan was proposed to be expended in payment of the bank overdraft, in the purchase of the dredge and plant, and the remainder in dredging the channel and carrying out improvements. He would point out that the proposed works were not bar works. He might mention that any deficiency would be collectable from the Town of Invercargill itself, and no new district was included in the old district. He had received from the Chairman of the Invercargill Chamber of Commerce the following resolution of that body on the subject:—

“Resolved, That this Chamber respectfully urge the New River Harbour Board not to discontinue the use of the dredge in improving

the approach to the jetty and the berth there, feeling confident that the interests of the mercantile community are bound up with the successful prosecution of the work. That the members for this district be requested to use their influence in having the Bill for legalising the expenditure in improving the harbour pushed on as soon as possible.”

He would add that the proposed loan was not to be raised without the usual vote of the ratepayers being taken; and, as a matter of fact, there was a probability of no rate being required at all, and the interest would be very small. He moved the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. ALLEN was sorry to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but he felt it his duty; also that it was the duty of the House to oppose the measure. What were the facts in regard to it? Some had already been put before them by the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill. He would recapitulate them from his own point of view. The Harbour Board and City Council were one body dealing with harbour matters. As he understood the position, they had already exceeded their expenditure, out of the small loan they were authorised to raise, by £2,500, and that amount stood now as an overdraft at the bank. They had not only done that, but they had, without authority and illegally, entered into the purchase of a dredge for £3,150; so that, altogether, there had been illegal expenditure of something like £5,650.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. ALLEN.—At any rate, it was possible that the £2,500 was not absolutely illegal; it was spent under the loan Act. This question, however, seemed to him to divide itself into two. Were they going to take any notice of this illegal expenditure? And were they to allow people to plunge themselves into difficulties in order that they might carry out works on borrowed money that were not essential and that were not necessary?—and he thought he could show that these works were neither essential nor necessary. Within eighteen miles of this place there was a good harbour—the Bluff—and the Bluff was connected by railway with Invercargill, and there could be no earthly necessity for having a harbour here when they were connected with such a good one by railway within such easy distance. The overdraft had been incurred in building the half-tide wall, which, he was informed, was of no use. The whole object of these works was to enable them to enter into competition with the railway in order to get cheaper freights. In regard to these new harbour works, he thought they must insist that, unless there was an absolute necessity established for them, no more money should be allowed the Boards. He was prepared to take that view and say that, in the interests of the people concerned and in the interests of the colony, they must put their foot down and put a stop to this kind of borrowing.

Mr. COWAN hoped that the House would agree to the passing of this Bill. With regard to the overdraft that had been contracted, he

Mr. Graham

explained that the Board had been compelled to incur expenses in defending actions that had been brought against it. The last speaker said this expenditure had been illegal; but that could scarcely be so, as the Borough Council of Invercargill was also the New River Harbour Board. The necessity for the Bill did not arise till the Auditor-General objected to those payments coming out of the General Account. The new dredge had been paid for out of the general funds of the municipality, and that was another reason why this Bill was introduced. The lawsuits were caused owing to the insufficiency of the water to float the vessels that came to the wharf. The expenditure had been forced on the municipality, and he thought the least Parliament could do was to enable the municipality to comply with the requirements of the Auditor-General in regard to the payments which had been made. In regard to the proposed further improvements, for which £19,000 was wanted, Parliament had the control of this matter in its own hands. He would ask the House to look at the matter from a fair point of view, and give the people of Invercargill what they asked for.

Mr. VALENTINE was not altogether surprised at the remarks which fell from the honourable member for Dunedin East, because honourable members were well aware that Dunedin had got all the advantages which Invercargill was now seeking to obtain. They had got a channel now from Port Chalmers up to Dunedin, where those handsome steamers of the Union Steam-ship Company could go up and lie alongside the wharf; and the day might come, if they permitted this Harbour Board loan to be floated, when Invercargill would also have these steamers at the wharf. The honourable member for Dunedin East said they would be competing with the railways. The fact was, the railways should not have been constructed, as they were, along the coasts. Any harbour works of this description must necessarily compete with the railway. He did not believe the honourable member for Dunedin East would have made the remarks he had made if such a thing as a loan for the making of the channel to Dunedin were likely to come before the House. The honourable gentleman knew very well that there was no likelihood that he would have to support such a measure, and therefore he now came forward as the champion of economy.

Mr. PERCEVAL felt bound to oppose this Bill on principle. The measure might be a very good one or it might not—he had no knowledge on that point, but he quite agreed with the remarks which fell from the honourable member for Port Chalmers when the House was dealing with a previous Bill. He (Mr. Perceval) thought the time had come when some limit must be put to the borrowing powers of the Harbour Boards. This was a Bill which sought to give additional borrowing powers to a Harbour Board. It was said that the general tests which were applied in the Harbour Board Acts were a security against money being injudiciously expended. Those tests were a poll

of the ratepayers and expert evidence to the satisfaction of the Marine Department. In his opinion these were two very unsatisfactory tests. Experience showed that the temptation of having money locally expended was so great as to blind the judgment of those who were called upon to give a vote. He ventured to say that, if a loan were proposed in almost any district, and for any work, a majority of votes could be got in favour of the work; so that he thought that test was in no sense a fair test as to the necessity for the work. Then, with regard to the expert evidence, honourable members knew perfectly well that, if one engineer reported that a work could be done in a particular way, and that the work was necessary, it was easy to get evidence contrary to that opinion. It was quite a common thing to see expert evidence divided in that way. He contended, therefore, that the tests as to the necessity for harbour works were unsatisfactory. What he thought ought to be done was to constitute a Commission to make inquiries as to the necessity for these harbour works. If they had a standing Commission to refer these matters to there might be some check upon injudicious expenditure of money. The repeated borrowing for local works had become a very serious question indeed. To his mind it was almost a more serious question than the increase of the public debt. The growth of local indebtedness in this colony was really becoming quite alarming; and he thought the House should endeavour to check borrowing under the present Bill and similar ones. He felt some disinclination to oppose the Bill, because it might be sacrificing it to a principle. The work might be a useful one—honourable members had not sufficient evidence of that; and he thought the House should reject all such measures as the present Bill.

Mr. MONK wished particularly to allude first to what he considered the rather brusque manner in which the honourable member for Dunedin East had been treated. Instead of feeling gratified at the manifestation of penitence on the part of young New Zealand for the wasteful extravagance that had been going on for years past, several honourable gentlemen had "sat upon" him. The honourable member for Dunedin East was not responsible for that wasteful expenditure, but he was one who would have to suffer for it. With regard to the measure itself—on principle he (Mr. Monk) was against all these borrowing Bills, and would impress upon all who would heed him the desirability of opposing every one that might come before the House. The introducer of this Bill complained that the rabbits had destroyed the vegetation upon a peninsula of sand, and that the sand, being thus exposed to strong winds, was carried into the river, reducing its depth. There was a peculiar kind of grass which grew very well upon sand, and if this grass were tried upon the refractory mole at New River the experiment might result in a great benefit, as it might also to other parts of the country where the encroachment of

drifting sand was a matter of serious loss. He, along with others, thought that the very large expenditure which had been made on artificial harbours was a very unfortunate thing for the colony. In the course of two or three years—it might be after the next election—there might be a combination of these various Harbour Boards to bring pressure upon the House to take over the indebtedness of the Boards. Of course, the borrowing of money with the intention of ultimately obtaining relief in this way was immoral, and was conducive to recklessness in borrowing and wastefulness in expenditure. It was quite possible that in this instance there might be nothing of this kind actually contemplated. But he (Mr. Monk) knew that such a mode of obtaining relief was considered probable by some of these borrowers; and, when the ripe time should come, was there any of these burdened bodies that would not co-operate to, if possible, shunt their liabilities into the national debt of the colony?

Mr. WARD said the honourable member for Thorndon had stated a few evenings ago that it was the intention of a portion of the Young New Zealand party to oppose harbour loans. Three members of that party had, one after another, risen and opposed the present measure, and not on the merits of the Bill. He thought that was a very improper thing to do. This Bill was a matter of very considerable importance to the Town of Invercargill. The object of the measure was partly to wipe off an overdraft which had been incurred by the Harbour Board. He was surprised at the honourable member for Dunedin East opposing the measure as he had done. He (Mr. Ward) was aware of this fact: That there were some residents of Dunedin who thought that the Invercargill of the future was going to eclipse Dunedin, and probably the honourable gentleman, in his attitude towards this Bill, was actuated by a desire to prevent that coming about. Whatever was the fate of this Bill, he asked the House not to offer a wholesale opposition to any Bills, but to deal with every Bill on its merits. Those honourable members who were opposing this measure in so flippant a manner should seriously reflect upon the unwise course they were adopting, and have a proper regard for the responsibilities of their position in the House. He desired to enter his protest against honourable members combining to oppose any measure irrespective of its contents.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

#### HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

#### BIBLE-READING IN SCHOOLS BILL.

Mr. FULTON.—Mr. Speaker, this is not the first occasion that I have had the honour and the privilege of addressing the House upon this matter. I would that the task had fallen into better hands, and that a tongue much more eloquent than mine should speak and set before

*Mr. Monk*

this House the claims which that Book which we seek to get reintroduced into the schools has upon this House and the colony. The Premier this afternoon plainly intimated to us that this probably would be at any rate one of the last private members' days, and appealed to us to consider one another, and to forbear, as far as possible, from lengthening debates, so as to give each of those who have Bills on the Order Paper an opportunity of bringing his Bill before the House. I shall be the first to seek, by the brevity of my remarks, to give others such an opportunity: not because the subject is not one that might be dilated upon at great length, not because it is one upon which I feel but lightly, but because of the reason I have stated, that there is other business, and I should like others to have the same opportunity that I have at the present moment to bring matters before the House. When I say this, I hope that on the present occasion we shall not be met, as we have been met in the past, by a motion of "the previous question," but that we shall meet this subject fairly and squarely, and that the results—and I have great hopes that the result will be in favour of what I am proposing—may be known distinctly by the House and the country. In 1877, when this Bill was first introduced, the proposition was made by Mr. Bowen, then Minister of Education, that the school-day should commence by the reading of the Lord's Prayer and of certain portions of Scripture. I regret to say that that was not carried; and the country, or, at any rate, a very large number of persons in the country, have ever since been regretting it, and have been making their regrets known by the petitions which they have been continually presenting from that time to this, and have, through some of their representatives coming to this House, spoken out upon this subject. That is sufficient testimony of the demand of our fellow-colonists, especially of those who are parents of children attending the schools. There has been one objection raised in regard to this Bill, but I do not know that it is one that I shall have to meet. Still, it has been objected by some persons who support the Bill that we do not go far enough, that we do not ask as much as we should seek for. They say that the bare reading of a few verses of Scripture by some scholars in the school-hours will not do much good, and that we should attempt to gain something much more than that. Well, speaking for myself and, I am sure, for many others, we should like to see something more than this; but, still, we shall be glad to get this modicum of justice, and see this ignominy which has been cast upon that book we revere, and which, I trust, a vast majority of the people of this country revere, taken off from it—in fact, that it shall be taken out of the category which it now occupies as being almost the only book that is not permitted to be read in the public schools. The Bill which I have before me is perhaps not exactly the same as we have sought to introduce in other sessions; but, taking counsel together, and seeing the temper of the House on many occasions in regard to



this matter, we thought it would be well if it were framed in the shape in which I present it to the House,—namely,—

“ . . . to direct that a portion of the Bible shall be read aloud by the scholars every morning at the opening of the school. Such reading shall not exceed twenty minutes, and no child shall be compelled to attend such reading if the parent or guardian of such child shall, in writing, inform the Committee or teacher that he objects to such attendance.”

Why do we ask that this book should be re-introduced into our public schools? The State has taken upon itself the education of our young. To a large extent it has taken it out of the hands of private individuals: and I say that not only is public conscience offended by the taking of this book out of our schools and making it a forbidden book, but, seeing that the State proposes not only to teach the children some things, but really to educate them, it behoves the State to fulfil its duties in this respect fully and not in a partial manner. None of us will say that a human being is composed only of intellect. We have gone the length of seeking, besides training the intellect of the young, to train their bodies, and we have claims made that physical education should be properly attended to, that our schools should be properly ventilated, that there should be suitable playgrounds, and that every step should be taken so that the young may have sound minds in sound bodies; but there is one thing which to a large extent we neglect, and that is their moral teaching. Again, why do we ask for this book? We represent the feelings and wishes of a very large number of the people of New Zealand. In addition to the petitions which have come up from time to time to this House in large numbers and representing an enormous number of the population of New Zealand, we have this session had presented forty-two petitions, with names attached to them numbering 14,860 persons, and that not from one district only but from almost every district in the colony; not from one denomination only, but from nearly every denomination in the colony. Amongst them we had one from the Presbyterian Synod of Otago and Southland; another from the Synod at Nelson, signed by the Anglican Bishop there. These people are almost losing heart. They have come to this House so often that they begin almost to despair; but, feeling that a supreme effort must be made in the cause of what they believe to be righteousness, they have, during the election, —and I am glad of it—made their voices so heard that a very large number of members here have pledged themselves to support such a measure as that which I have introduced. We desire to give these persons an opportunity of speaking out the voice of the country here, and letting all know why they have this belief. That I should occupy the time of the House seems to me ungracious and improper. I have many a time before now, as the older members of the House know, spoken on this subject, and therefore, if others are anxious to speak

upon it, I will give them the opportunity. By-and-by I shall have an opportunity of replying to any objections that may be raised. And now let me ask, has this system worked well elsewhere? Speaking of the part of the country from which I come, I can aver with safety that no religious difficulty ever existed in Otago under the system of education introduced there by the Provincial Government. Then not only was Bible-reading practised but religious teaching was given in the schools; and I have never heard that any substantial objection was made to it. What objections have been raised in other places, where there are a far larger number of children attending the schools than we pretend to teach? What objection has been raised under the London School Board? What has been the withdrawal from the London schools on account of the religious difficulty? One in 4,000. And are we to be one of the places in the world which object to give this blessing—for I can call it nothing but a blessing—to our children? Has not the system been followed with success in America? Does it not exist in Prussia? and even in France is not religious teaching given in a large number of schools? In fact, almost everywhere throughout the civilised world this system obtains; and are we here to be so narrow-minded that we cannot, for fear of a difficulty, which we only imagine, and which when the matter is put in practice disappears, face this question, because in some few parts of the country some religious difficulties may have occurred? What are some of the objections? First, it is contended that it is not the business of the State. Why, then, does the State take upon itself to educate our young? Does it educate them only with the idea of preparing them for material advancement in the world? Is it only to enable them to progress in regard to their means and their property? Is it not that their whole nature should be educated? Is it better that we should have an intellectual population or that we should have an upright, righteous, manly, honourable, and Christian population? When the State takes upon itself to educate our young it takes upon itself a solid duty, but it fails in a large part of that duty when it does not undertake to teach the moral being of the young. The State has recognised its duty by taking children from degraded parents and placing them in reformatories and ordering that each child shall be brought up in the faith of its parents. It does not except the religious question there, but gives such instruction as shall insure that the child is properly brought up. Then, why, with regard to our State schools, should we have this difficulty at all? Then, another objection is made that it may bring discord into the schools, and make distinctions which do not at present exist. I have really answered that objection already, by showing how little such a difficulty has obtained in schools such as the Board schools of London and Birmingham, and where there are other large gatherings of children. The Bishop of Dunedin, recently speaking on this subject, said that he had been

superintendent of about a thousand children in schools, and not one single withdrawal within his knowledge had been made on account of the religious difficulty. And why not, then, meet this difficulty in a manly, straightforward way? Are we not to listen to the demands made by a large part of the Christian population of New Zealand, who demand this seriously and earnestly, who wish their children to grow up with a proper moral training, and a moral training upon a basis which they believe to be the only true and good one? Shall we say that, because, forsooth, some of the teachers may have conscientious scruples, because they may be free-thinkers and would not like to do it—shall we say that that is an objection? I have always thought that a free-thinker was one willing to give liberty of conscience to all. At any rate, they pretend to do so; but, while they agree with everything else, they will not give us liberty in this. Then, another very large question is said to be involved in this proposal, that it is the introduction of the beginning of denominationalism in our schools. Well, for eight years I have stood up in this House and supported this measure, and for eight years I have said that I deprecate any such thing; and, for my part, I would do all I could to prevent denominationalism being introduced. But I will tell honourable gentlemen what they are doing if they still continue to oppose even this slight modicum of justice to the people. They will drive those who, in the past, have been strong supporters of our education system, and who have striven to keep it free from all sectarian difficulties and denominationalism—you will drive them to combine their forces, and make them feel compelled, as our late eminent friend Mr. Macandrew told us he felt he was compelled, to support denominationalism as the only possible way to secure religious teaching in our schools. We are told that the advocates of Bible-reading in the public schools will burst up our educational system; but I say, with the deepest conviction of my heart, that those who oppose Bible-reading in schools are doing what they can to bring our system down in ruins, because they will not yield an inch. As I said before, I should have been glad had the initiative in this matter been taken by one with greater eloquence, or that I had a tongue more eloquent and more persuasive; but I can say from my heart that I yield to no one in this House in my earnestness, at any rate, to see this matter carried out; and if our earnest persuasions, the petitions presented to the House, and demands of a large number of our people cannot have weight with those here who represent them, then I feel that a voice as eloquent even as the voice of an angel from Heaven would fail to induce the House to give us what we demand. I hope and trust that on the present occasion we shall see not only a large number following us into the lobby on this matter, but I do trust and believe that honourable members, having had this matter brought prominently before them during the late elections, will so crowd into

that lobby that the second reading of this Bill will be carried.

Dr. HODGKINSON.—I support the second reading of this Bill, though I do not intend to speak at any great length, knowing full well that I have not those gifts of oratory which would warrant me in so doing. We are now engaged in a great work, and I appeal to the younger members of this House, the Young New Zealand party, to remove the reproach under which the colony has laboured for the past ten years. I was in the House ten years ago when the present Education Act was introduced by the then Minister of Justice, and when introduced there was a clause in it which provided that the schools should be opened every morning with prayer and the reading of a portion of Scripture. Unhappily that clause was struck out, and ever since then a large portion of the best part of the people of New Zealand have suffered what they consider a great grievance. They have felt that the colony has been under a great stigma—in fact, that a great national sin has been committed, and that we should use all our efforts to remove it. Now, I myself have presented a petition, signed by no less than sixteen hundred women of Southland, in favour of the introduction of the Bible into the schools. In speaking on this question I wish to base my arguments chiefly on two foundations. In the first instance, I say we must recognise that it is the duty of the State in all its important functions to make recognition of its duty to and its dependence upon the Almighty. This duty has been recognised throughout all Christendom up to the present time. Even we ourselves recognise it every day on meeting here, by offering prayer: that is a public recognition by the State. Now, I ask, what more important function of the State can there be than that it has undertaken in our common-school system? This system has been introduced for the purpose of bringing up our young people to be good citizens and subjects—able to discharge their duties to the State, to themselves, and to each other. Now, this is one of the most serious undertakings that any State can commit itself to, and in that especially we are bound to invoke the blessing of God, by causing the children to read or to have read to them the revelation which we have received from God, and which, I am thankful to say, we do still recognise as the revelation of God, notwithstanding the progress of what is erroneously termed “free-thought,” but which ought to be called false thought. That is one strong reason for the introduction of the Sacred Scriptures into our public schools, that it would be a full recognition of our duty to and our dependence on God. Another reason is that, having undertaken to instruct our children so as to become good citizens and subjects, it is absolutely necessary to educate the whole nature of the child, not merely his intellectual faculties but his moral faculties and his religious sentiments. A mere sharpening of the intellectual faculties only will have very little effect, and that alone may indeed have a mischievous

*Mr. Fulton*

effect rather than a good one. A very great Englishman—Oliver Cromwell—when addressing Parliament on the reformation of manners and morals, spoke to this effect:—

“Make it a shame to see men bold in sin and profaneness, and God will bless you. You will be a blessing to the nation, and, by this, will be more repairer of breaches than anything in the world. Truly these things do respect the souls of men and the spirits, which are the men. The mind is the man. If that be kept pure a man signifies somewhat; if not, I would very fain see what difference there is betwixt man and a beast. He hath only some activity to do some more mischief.”

Now, that is what you are doing in the present school system: you just sharpen up the intellectual faculties of the child, and disregard entirely the moral and religious parts of his nature. In this you are not fulfilling the purpose you profess to take in hand. Moreover, you are casting the greatest slight it is possible to cast upon the Sacred Scriptures, which we still hold to be a Divine revelation, and thereby, in the most open manner, you set yourselves in open rebellion against the Almighty. We are, in fact, saying, “Who is the Lord, that we should regard Him? Depart from us; we desire not to acknowledge Thy ways.” Now, any one with common-sense can see—and it is vain to attempt to disguise it—that we have, by excluding the Sacred Scriptures from our schools, put ourselves in open rebellion. Some of the strongest reasons why we should admit the Sacred Scriptures to our schools are these: They would teach the young their moral and religious duties, and educate their moral faculties: then, the Bible is a great historical work, and contains the oldest and most authentic history in the world: then, it is also a literary work of the very highest merit, surpassing in that respect all other books in the world: then, also, it is a noble example of the power of the English language, surpassing all other books in that respect. Then, again, it may be well contended, as it has been by the honourable member for the Taieri, that we should introduce the Bible into our schools as a matter of humanity. It is well known that there are a number of children attending our common schools who are, unfortunately, worse than orphans, and unless they receive religious teaching in the public schools they will never receive it anywhere. That alone is one of the strongest arguments—the argument on the score of humanity: if we introduced the Bible into the schools for no other reason we should introduce it for the sake of these poor children alone. Another strong argument in favour of this Bill has been used by the honourable member for the Taieri: that, unless you do introduce the Bible into the common schools, you will doom your education system. I am fully convinced that the system will not subsist seven years longer in its present form unless what is now proposed is done. I have the strongest possible objection to denominationalism in the schools; but, if I live ten years longer, I will vote for denominationalism

rather than that the colony should remain under the stigma which it now is under. I do not feel warranted in trespassing further on the patience of the House, having expressed my convictions in as strong a way as I can; and I will leave the matter now to other honourable members, who are no doubt anxious to speak and adduce further arguments in support of the Bill. I might, before sitting down, quote, in support of the position I have taken up—that if we profess to train up our children to be good citizens and subjects we cannot do that apart from religion, and also that the training of the moral faculties should be based on religious teaching, and that without religious teaching a high moral sense cannot exist—I will quote, I say, in support of that, one whose utterances are always heard with respect. The great General Washington, in his last farewell address to his countrymen—an address which has always been cherished by that country with the greatest respect—warns and counsels his fellow-countrymen in these words:—

“Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labour to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician equally with the pious man ought to respect and cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. . . And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”

This is part of that valuable legacy left to the American people by the father of his country; and let us also profit by it.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—I do not know whether I am going to oppose this Bill, and I am not certain that I am going to support it. I am on the horns of a dilemma, and I should like to hear a few more of the arguments on both sides before I make up my mind. At present, however, I fail to see the necessity for the Bill. There is already, if I mistake not, power resting in the School Committees to have the Bible read if they choose.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—I say Yes. The local Committees have the power, if they choose to exercise it, to appoint a certain time for Bible-reading in schools after school-hours or before school-hours. I know for a fact, as the honourable member for the Taieri mentioned just now, that the Episcopalians and other denominations have tried to take advantage of that provision. I know that in Nelson some time ago they were in a great state of mind about Bible-reading, and it is a positive fact that six months ago, at a meeting of the School Committee, it was carried by the casting-vote of the Chairman that the Bible should be read in school for

twenty minutes before the ordinary time for school assembling, and that the representatives of the different denominations were to attend there, and read the Bible in the school. I do not know whether that has proved very satisfactory or not. In the first place, I do not think the clergymen were prepared to attend; and, secondly, I do not believe that the attendance of the children was sufficient to warrant the experiment being continued. Then, in the Township of Richmond, in Nelson, it was tried there. The School Committee decided that the Bible should be read in the schools. There was sufficient enthusiasm there for the attempt to be properly made; and what was the result? That after a month the attendance of the children to hear the Bible read had dwindled down to one boy or a girl—I forget which. Under these circumstances, as the School Committees have the power to allow the reading of the Bible at certain times, I cannot see that there is any necessity for the Bill. I have no doubt the honourable member for the Taieri is thoroughly sincere in his wish to have Bible-reading in schools carried out, and I believe the honourable gentleman who has just sat down is also sincere, and no doubt there are many other honourable members who are equally sincere; but, for the reasons I have given, I do not see that there is the slightest necessity for the Bill, inasmuch as the Committees already have the power of allowing the Bible to be read. That is my difficulty in connection with this Bill.

Mr. GOLDIE.—I rise to oppose the second reading of this Bill, and I can put forward this claim, as showing that I am in earnest in wishing the young to have a knowledge of the Bible: that for the last twenty-three years I have been actively engaged in instructing the young. I suppose there has been scarcely a Sunday during the whole of that period when I have not been engaged in the work of instructing the young in connection with biblical teaching. But, though I have been and am engaged in that work, I still think that it would be a great mistake for us to force the Bible into the public schools in this way. In the first place, it has been said this evening that it is the duty of the State in the State school to instruct the children in religious knowledge as well as in other knowledge; but I think that is a great mistake. I believe that the proper place for the children of the country to be taught religious knowledge is in the Sunday-school or the home, by the ministers of the various denominations or by the parents. Yet, unfortunately, the fact seems to be this: that to a very large extent the parents themselves, as well as the ministers of religion, are only too anxious to have the children taught by proxy, they themselves altogether neglecting their duty. The parents and the clergymen have resting upon them primarily a duty in this matter; and it is because they do not perform this duty, do not care to do this duty, that this appeal is made to the House for Bible-reading in schools. Now, I do not think that it is the duty of the State to do this thing at all, and I

think that it would be a mistake for the State to relieve of this duty the persons who should undertake it. The honourable member for the Taieri has told us that the Government recognises that it is the duty of the State to impart religious education because religious teaching is, as a matter of fact, given to the children who are in the industrial schools. I am aware that the children in those schools are taught in religious matters; but that is altogether a different thing. As far as the ordinary public day-schools are concerned the children only attend them about five hours a day. Surely that is little enough time for them to devote to the acquirement of ordinary knowledge. Before that time commences and after it is over there is opportunity for giving them religious instruction. But, as to the industrial schools, the children are there during each day in every week for the period during which they are maintained at these schools. They must be taught in the schools or not at all. But even there, I would point out, the religious instruction is not imparted by the ordinary paid teachers: the various ministers of religion go to the schools and impart the religious instruction. I cannot understand how the religious teaching could otherwise be given. The children in those institutions come of parents of various religions, and the children have to be brought up in the religion of their parents, and I do not see how the Government teachers could give instruction to all the children. Therefore it is that the ministers of the various Churches go to those institutions to impart religious instruction. One of the chief objections to this Bill is the different religious belief of the teachers in our public schools. They belong to different denominations. Some of them are Catholics, and, from what I understand of the teachings of that Church, I believe that it is considered unwise by those in authority that their people should read the Bible. A good number of our teachers are Roman Catholics; and are we to ask them to conduct the reading of a book which they may not consider themselves justified in reading? I do not think we should be justified in asking our Roman Catholic teachers to conduct the reading of a book when the Church objects to their having the book in their hands. On the other hand, I do not know that it would be wise, in the interests of religious education, to have Bible-reading under these circumstances. I feel satisfied myself that this is but the introduction of the thin end of the wedge of denominationalism. I know that a clergyman of the Church of England residing in Auckland has made no secret of it that in his opinion it would be, and that he would be anxious to drive the wedge home as soon as he could. I feel certain that, once we introduce this into the schools, the present national system will be destroyed. I do not think that the teachers are the right persons to impart religious instruction. I remember hearing of a case in which a teacher, after conducting the reading of the Word, remarked to the pupils, "Yes, it would be all very well if it were true." If we

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had teachers conducting Bible-reading finishing up the lesson in that way, I think it would hardly be disputed that the result of such teaching would be to do more harm than good. Nor do I think that the school is the right place. If we take children out of the playground and put the Bible in their hands just as an ordinary lesson-book, we shall, I am afraid, lessen their respect for the Word itself, and in that way do them more harm than good. If in the Sunday-school, on the Sunday, a day round which there cling associations favourable to the work, it is not always easy to secure due respect, how much more difficult will it be to inculcate respect when the Bible is read as an ordinary task-book! Then, it must be borne in mind that the children attending our schools are of many different creeds. For instance, there are a number of Hebrew children in attendance, who, from the teachings in which they have been brought up, only believe in the writings contained in the Old Testament. Are we justified in compelling these children to read the Bible—perhaps selections taken from the New Testament, in which they do not believe? Of course it is said that there would be a conscience-clause. But if that be the case the children need not go to the school at all for religious instruction. The children for whom this reading is required might have it before they go to school. Surely the school-hours are quite short enough at the present time. It is an easy matter, where there is any real desire to give children religious teaching, to do it earlier in the day or later in the evening. It is not because the children do not desire religious instruction or are not willing to receive it—the great difficulty is to get laymen or ministers who will take the trouble or make the opportunity to impart the instruction. I know that in Auckland the Women's Christian Union have tried to take this work up; and they find that the children are quite ready and eager to read the Word, but that the great difficulty is to get persons to impart the instruction. That is where the difficulty lies. The parents will not act up to their responsibilities, and the ministers set apart for and paid for the work of religious instruction will not do their duty. That is the difficulty; but the remedy which the honourable gentleman proposes is not the right one. I believe that we should adopt the old Scotch system. Under that the children were sent to church in the morning and in the afternoon, but in the evening they were kept at home and instructed by their parents. From time to time the clergyman called and examined them in religious knowledge, and if they were found deficient in that knowledge the parents were held blameworthy. But here it seems to me the parents and the ministers have no desire to do their duty in this matter, but wish to throw the work which they should do upon others. I am quite prepared to throw the schools open in the morning before school-time, or in the afternoon after school-hours, if we can get persons to go there and give instruction; but beyond that I am not prepared to go. It has

been said by some honourable gentlemen that if we do not accept this Bill a number of members of this House will take a determined stand and revert to denominationalism. Well, if a threat of that kind is made I can only say that if they carry out their intention they must take the responsibility for it. We know what denominationalism has done in the past, and I do not think we want any more of it. Let those honourable gentlemen be responsible. I have as much desire as any one to see the young educated in religious matters, and I do my share of work in that; but I feel satisfied that the day-school is not the place for it, nor the ordinary school-hours the time for it, nor the school-teachers the persons to impart it. Bible-reading under those circumstances would take away children's reverence for the Bible which they now feel; because, if on the Sabbath-day and in the Sabbath-schools it is a most difficult matter to impart religious instruction, it appears to me that the mere reading of the Word in a day-school would not be sufficient. We know perfectly well, in connection with Sunday-schools even, that a very large proportion of the children are lost to the Church, and lost simply because they have not received the Word as they should have received it. They have the letter of the Word, but they have not the spirit, and so in this and various ways from 80 to 90 per cent. are lost to the Church. Having such results from Sunday-schools, what can we expect the day-schools would be able to secure by Bible-reading?

Mr. BRUCE.—Although this is only what is called a private member's Bill, it is in reality a measure of very great importance, and I intend to make a few remarks in explanation of the vote I shall give on this occasion. It is important in the first place as embodying the wishes of a very large proportion—indeed, some say a majority—of the people of this colony; and it is also a very difficult question, as we cannot apply to it, or measure it by, the ordinary tests or standards of either economic or mathematical science; because it is essentially a question of conscience and belief. Now, I think the most determined opponents of this measure must admit that for these reasons it is entitled to a very great deal of consideration. I believe, speaking from my own point of view, that very much can be urged in its favour, and also that something can be said against it. I believe also that if it is placed on the Statute Book we may not anticipate the very beneficial results which its zealous advocates claim for it; for I believe that religious lessons ought to be given at home and in the Sunday-school, where they are presumably both given and received with reverence, and not rattled over irreverently as tasks in the common schools of the colony. I also say—and I speak at the same time at least as a professing Christian—that Bible-reading under sceptical school-masters will have an effect in a contrary direction from that which is intended. But, on the other hand, we know perfectly well that if children, in many instances at least,

o not receive biblical teachings—which are, after all, the only real basis of morals and conduct—if they do not receive those teachings at school, in many cases they will grow up entirely ignorant of the true basis of conduct or of their relations either to their Creator or to their fellow-creatures. But this measure has been supported for other reasons than either moral or religious reasons—it is defensible on other grounds. Such orators as, for instance, Webster, and many other Americans I might mention, have testified to the beneficial results they have obtained from a perusal of the Bible, and I believe that some of the most eminent American writers on jurisprudence have done so also. There is, I believe, among the extreme advocates of this measure a belief that the world is rapidly growing worse, and that every crime of which they hear or read is attributable to the exclusion of the Bible from our day-schools. Sir, I believe that is a great popular delusion—for I am speaking a little on both sides of the question—I may say that I do not feel very strongly in reference to it. As I have said, I think that is a great popular delusion. I believe the world, instead of rapidly growing worse, is in reality daily growing better; and statistics entirely support this view. It has been alleged to-night that this measure meant the introduction of the thin end of the wedge of denominational education, eventually destined to break up our educational system. I do not believe a word of it. I cannot see any ground for that belief; it rests on no basis whatever. But I believe in many instances this view is urged by those who dislike the book and who ridicule its teachings. I again repeat, I do not expect, if this measure is placed upon the Statute Book, the beneficial results claimed for it by its warmest advocates; but I intend to vote for it, and mainly for this reason: Being a Democrat, I believe in majorities ruling, and particularly when, as in this case, that rule will be unattended with any injury to the conscientious scruples of minorities; and principally for that very sound democratic reason I intend to vote for the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. BUXTON.—Sir, I shall make a few remarks respecting this very important matter. I, like honourable members who have preceded me, have had a little experience in Sabbath-school teaching—at any rate, for about thirty years I have known something of teaching the young in Sabbath-schools; and, to my mind, there is not the slightest cause to be afraid that this book, which we so much prize, is likely to do any harm in our day-schools. There are a great many reasons assigned why we should not have this book in our day-schools. As regards the right at present to have the book taught in our day-schools, we have no real right to have the Bible read there during school-hours, and we have an equal right to have almost anything that is of a moral character taught in our day-schools out of school-hours; but we want the Bible to be read in the schools during school-hours. This is what we are asking for. There are a variety

of reasons assigned why we should not have this book read in our day-schools. One reason that is very often assigned is that it will be offensive to some. Well, there is scarcely anything that we could do or say but would give offence to some people; and there is scarcely a book that can be allowed in our public schools but it will be offensive to some people. I think if there is any book in the world that ought not to be offensive to the consciences of individuals, it is the Bible. Then, there is also this reason assigned: that the children cannot understand it. That, I think, is not a proper reason for its exclusion. When the various school-books are put into their hands they cannot understand them; and yet a great many people will assign the same reason why others should not read this precious book—because we cannot understand it all. I maintain that, while this book is not understood altogether by any of us, there is a great deal in it that is easy to be understood—that almost the smallest intellect of a child can grasp. I maintain that, while it is the philosopher's masterpiece, it is the schoolboy's spelling-book, and has a right to be in his hand. I speak from experience when I say that this book has been a blessing to me from my earliest youth. It has also been a blessing to mine—it has been within the reach of my children from their earliest infancy. And it has been in the school that I was taught this; and I have seen no danger as regards the Scriptures. Some will assign the fact that they do not believe it as a reason that it should not be allowed in our public schools. Why, I should imagine that those honourable gentlemen who say that is a reason why it should not be read in our public schools have themselves read thousands of publications that they do not believe, that they have not the slightest belief in; and yet they read them. And there are things which they would allow in our public schools that they do not believe. I maintain that this precious book, if a portion of it was read by the most profound atheist or deist every day, and he had no one to comment upon it, would be likely to do him good, and not harm. It is my impression that this reading of the Word in the hearing of the children, without comment, would be more likely to do them good than by any one teaching it or explaining it to them. I am opposed to religious teaching in our day-schools; I do not believe in it in the least. I say, Keep all the ministers out of the day-schools, but let the Bible in: it is a Word and a work that belongs to a higher power than man, and the Giver of it will explain it to the intelligences of men and of children. Only let the Bible have its place in our public schools, and it will do an honour to our colony, and will do no one any harm. I was somewhat surprised at an honourable gentleman who was on his feet a short time ago, and the exceeding sympathy he extended to a certain class of the community—namely, the Roman Catholics. He felt so much on their account, I wonder if he feels like that on other topics. I am rather

Mr. Bruce

afraid he does not. However, I think that the Roman Catholics are not such enemies to the Bible as some people may imagine; and I do think that, though we may have some Roman Catholic teachers in our day-schools, they would not object to the reading of a portion of that Word which we call the Word of God. I have not the slightest fear respecting that, either from Jew or Gentile, Roman Catholic, or anything else. While we are a Protestant people we should have our Protestant Bible in our schools, and not be ashamed of it or afraid of it; and if those gentlemen will forsake us because we stand to our principles, why, let them go, and we will find better men in their places. I have a very strong feeling as regards having the Bible in our day-schools, and I have a variety of reasons why I should feel so strongly upon it. I believe it would be a great blessing to what we have often heard about, "the unborn millions," when they come, if we do have the Bible in our schools. It has been a blessing to thousands, it is a blessing to thousands to-day; and why should we keep out of our day-schools the best book the world can produce? Let us allow it in the schools without comment, and leave it to the great Giver of it to explain it to the minds of the children. I would appeal to the intelligence of this honourable House, and say,—

Let us spare the tree,  
Touch not a single bough;  
In youth it sheltered me,  
And I'll protect it now.

And if I go into the lobby alone I shall go in favour of the Bible being read in schools; and let us keep out of it all comment. Let us not allow comment in our day-schools. We want the State to protect religion, but not to teach it. And let us, whatever we do, have the Bible in our schools. It will improve the morals of the youth and be a blessing to the colony.

Mr. TANNER.—Sir, the honourable gentleman who last spoke felt what he said. Some of the prior speakers deplored that they had not oratory sufficient for the importance of this subject. I am sure the last speaker had the oratory that must have commended itself to all hearers. Truth needs no oratory to commend it—it appeals to the heart more than to the head; and this is a subject that appeals to that which is the highest part of our nature. But before I enter upon the subject I should like, first of all, to refer to some of the remarks made by previous speakers, and the remark made by the honourable member for Auckland West. He imagined a great many difficulties which did not exist. The difficulties are more in his imagination. To hear him speak on this subject and suggest these difficulties, one would think we were going into a new experiment, something that had never been tried elsewhere. This is nothing new. The Bible is read in the schools of a great many countries of the world, and we know that the results have been most beneficial wherever that has been the case. Another objection made was that the thin end of the wedge of denominationalism would be introduced. An

honourable member says, "Hear, hear;" but what is the fact? The denominationalists are now joined together in demanding that the Bible shall be introduced in the public schools. At one time they were afraid that sectarianism might be introduced; but they are now fully convinced of the baneful influence of excluding the Bible altogether, and Presbyterians, Church-of-England people, Wesleyans, and all denominations have joined together to demand this right.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—What about the Catholics?

Mr. TANNER.—And even the Catholics. Catholics, who are supposed to be so bigoted, have shown themselves very liberal in the matter, and some of the enlightened Catholics have said that they do not object to the introduction of the Bible into the State schools of the colony so long as their claims are recognised. I am one of those who are prepared to recognise their claims, and I say their claims are just. Another objection the honourable gentleman made was that the public schools were not the proper place in which to teach religion,—that it should be taught in the homes of the people and in the Sunday-schools. But that honourable gentleman said he had tried it himself. I have done so, and many friends have done so; but what is the result of our attempts to give religious instruction after school-hours? Only about one-fourth of the children in the school remain and attend the religious instruction. And what is that fourth composed of? It is composed of the children who attend Sunday-schools. The three-fourths go away without any religious instruction whatever. It is not fair to ask children to remain after school-hours. A system of that sort is injurious in the interests of religious instruction. These children wish to get away home or to play, and it is an injury to the subject to attempt to teach the children during playhours. I must not, however, forget the injunction laid upon us by the Premier to make our remarks as brief as possible. Another honourable gentleman says, "Hear, hear," as much as to encourage that idea. I fail to see why any exception should be made in reference to private Bills. The honourable member for Auckland Central told us the other night that private Bills have been of the utmost importance—sometimes as important as, and frequently of much greater importance than, the other Bills brought before the House, policy or local Bills. He referred, as an instance, to that private Bill for the emancipation of the slaves. I think that was the Bill to which the honourable gentleman referred. That Bill was of no greater importance to the Old World than this is to us. This Bill is to emancipate our children from the fetters of secularism that have so long bound them. It is time that the light and freedom of religious instruction were admitted into the schools, and I say the people demand it. Those who have heard the petitions presented to both Houses must feel convinced that the people have arisen now to a sense of their great responsibility in this mat-

ter, and their voice is heard, and heard loudly, within this House and the other House, demanding that they should have this right accorded to them, that they should have this question relegated to themselves; and this is proposed to be done in the Bill. This Bill says,—

"It shall be lawful for the School Committee of any district already or which may hereafter be constituted under the provisions of 'The Education Act, 1877,' if it shall see fit, anything in the said Act contained to the contrary notwithstanding, to direct that a portion of the Bible shall be read aloud by the scholars every morning at the opening of the school. Such reading shall not exceed twenty minutes, and no child shall be compelled to attend such reading if the parent or guardian of such child shall, in writing, inform the Committee or teacher that he objects to such attendance."

Now, Sir, as to this handing-over of this important question to the people themselves, I repeat the time has come when they demand it. The people have the election of School Committees; therefore those who have any interest in this question will elect those of the candidates who they think are in favour of it, and we have no right to withhold this privilege from them. I could have wished that the Government could have seen its way to bring this question forward. It is a question of very great importance, and if the Government had brought a measure like this forward and given it their great influence I am sure that not only would it have been of the greatest benefit to the Bill, but I am quite sure that they would have had the applause and support of both sides of this House. I say this is a question that the Government ought to have brought forward, and I should have been very glad to see any Government having the courage to do so, as I feel sure they would have got a large amount of support. But, considering the vast importance of the subject, I still hope that the members of the Government will see their way to support this Bill, and I am sure they will have no reason to regret it, but the future generations that rise up will bless them for it. Those who do not believe in the Bible have admitted, at all events, as their opinion that it is very desirable that morality should be taught in the public schools of the country. In support of this view I will call in to my aid no less an authority than the late Premier of this country. In an address which he delivered down south not long ago Sir Robert Stout stated it as his opinion that there should be some moral teaching in the public schools, so as to counteract the tendency to rowdiness and larrikinism which was evidently growing up so strongly amongst us. This was at a time when there was a great deal of this larrikin element about, and when it was taken notice of by the public prints of the day. Now, I would ask that gentleman and others who think with him, how would they introduce this moral teaching into the public schools? Surely they would begin by teaching children proper respect for their

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parents and those in authority over them: "Honour thy father and thy mother." They would teach the children that they should have a proper respect for other people's goods, other people's property, and teach them not to take what does not belong to them: "Thou shalt not steal." Then, again, they would teach the children that it is improper to encourage a revengeful spirit, to bear malice. There would be no moral teaching unless you taught them that. They must be forgiving, and must not injure those who have offended them: "Thou shalt do no murder." Then, we should teach the children that they should not covet; also, to be truthful. Surely all those who advocate the teaching of morality would advocate that those who give evidence in our Courts should be taught to speak the truth: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." How, then, can we teach morality without recognising that book from which all morality is derived? That, I say, is a strong point in favour of introducing the Bible into our public schools. You cannot teach morality without it, because on the Bible it is based, and from that book we have derived it. The value of the Bible as a book of instruction has been referred to by other speakers, and without a knowledge of its contents no one can be said to be educated. Every one knows how interested every child is in Bible-instruction—I need not refer to the different portions of the Bible—to the Old or the New Testament; these Bible stories are so interesting to children. They both enjoy and profit by them. I would refer now to the system that is prevalent in other countries, and the system which, I hope, will yet be adopted in this. I hold in my hands the Scripture-lessons for the use of schools. This book is printed and published by the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland; and what is the remark it makes?—

"These selections are offered, not as a substitute for the sacred volume itself, but as an introduction to it; and they have been compiled in the hope of their leading to a more general and more profitable perusal of the Word of God. The passages introduced have been chosen, not as being of more importance than the rest of Scripture, but merely as appearing to be most level to the understandings of children and youth at school, and also as being the best fitted to be read under the direction of teachers not necessarily qualified, and certainly not recognised, as teachers of religion. No passage has either been introduced or omitted under the influence of any peculiar view of Christianity, doctrinal or practical."

These are the Scripture-lessons in use in the Irish schools of to-day, and I commend them to the attention of honourable members who may not perhaps have seen them. Now, what is the position of this question in England?—and I refer to the Board schools of England. They rose in 1870 with the Education Act. The State wanted to make the meshes of the education net so close that no fish could



escape, and they went into the highways and byways and brought in the children of the poor; and here is what is said on the subject:—

“There are 6,291 Board schools, with 1,011,477 children, and at present the Board schools educate more than one-third of the children of the poor. The State acted wisely in permitting religious instruction and Bible-reading in the Board schools during school-hours. It refused to make it compulsory, by introducing a ‘conscience clause,’ which allowed any to absent themselves from the hour of religious instruction at discretion. But religious instruction was there. The various local School Boards throughout the country have the power of omitting the religious instruction altogether. How do they use it? Well, out of the 6,291 schools there are only three or four in which the Bible is not read or explained. The number of children who attend too late to profit by Scripture-lessons is inconsiderable: the first lesson is on Scripture. Similar instruction is given, with few exceptions, regularly, in accordance with the plan adopted by the London School Board. In Birmingham, where these schools are supposed to be most secular, the Bible-reading was originally left out, but it has now been resumed, with religious instruction. Most of the School Board masters and mistresses come from training colleges and institutions where religious influences are paramount. The biblical instruction in Board schools is similar to the religious instruction in ‘voluntary and Christian schools;’ if anything it is better—more systematic and more carefully prepared, the chief difference being that it omits the Catechism and all formulæ distinctive of the creeds of particular Churches. The Nonconformists are satisfied with the Board schools, and the Established clergy are in many instances members of the School Board and active as chairmen of the local committees of management.”

I will now read section 91 of the London School Board’s minutes, which runs thus:—

“In the schools provided by the Board the Bible shall be read, and there shall be given such explanations of such instructions therefrom in the principles of morality and religion as are suited to the capacities of children.”

Simple prayers and hymns are also used at these schools, and the London Board has drawn up an elaborate system of biblical instruction, ranging over the whole of the Bible. For the rest, the details are left by the Government entirely in the hands of the committee of each Board. It is only necessary to take up the syllabus of Bible-teaching issued for 1882 to show that sound religious and undogmatic teaching may be given in connection with the Bible. The Bible is made the grand centre of religious instruction in the Board schools. Now, I commend this information to those who have not made up their minds on this subject; and I am sure—if they consider what has been written, and the information we have upon the system as it exists in the Old Country, and its satisfactory results—it will satisfy

them that we shall be acting wisely by following the good example set at Home. It is also allowed in the school system of New South Wales. In other countries which I will mention it also prevails; and I will quote very briefly from a very eloquent and able speech that was delivered on this subject by a gentleman who was recently a candidate at the late elections in the Wairarapa. His remarks are given in these words:—

“In America it is the common practice to open or close public schools with Bible-reading and prayer: the influence of the school is on the side of morality and religion. In Germany it is said, ‘Religious training is part of universal education.’ In Switzerland there is Bible-reading. In England there is Bible-reading; and the London School Board, in June, 1886, resolved on a thorough and detailed examination in Scripture-knowledge in every school once every third year. In Victoria, where the Bible was excluded, and all passages relating to Christian teaching struck out of school ‘readers,’ the Minister has promised to advise the Cabinet to ask Parliament to reinstate them. The Melbourne *Age*, the great opponent of religious teaching, has declared that ‘for the safety of the nation there must be a change.’ In France, where there is on the part of the State a violent intolerance of all religion, where the name of God is excluded from the schools, crime of all kinds is increasing with startling rapidity, and is worst where the education is highest.”

These facts ought to make honourable members pause in considering this most important question. We find this system, as I have said, in one sister colony; and, from the information we possess, it is about to be introduced into another. Shall we be the last to adopt it? Shall we be the last to give way to the religious influences that we desire to see introduced into our schools? Experience teaches us, and we learn from history, that nations without religion fall into decay. We have only to look at the nations of the past—for example, Greece and Rome, which were foremost in the arts and sciences—to be assured that they fell into decay because they had no religion; and that will be the fate of this country if we exclude religion from our public schools. The youth of the country will grow up as infidels, and we shall find that as religious influences decay so will our nation. If it is true, as the honourable the mover of this Bill said that it was commonly remarked that “it is no part of the duty of the State to teach religion in the public schools,” then I say the converse is equally true, that it is no part of the duty of the State to prevent its being taught. I have only to appeal to the better feelings of the representatives of the people, who are here to represent the people’s best interests, and if they do their duty to themselves and to the people they represent they must grant to the people what they now demand, and that is—the permitting of religious instruction in the public schools.

Mr. BLAKE.—Sir, I think if the reading of

the Bible in schools causes so much seriousness to the scholars as this debate has caused to me they will be very glad to get away to play. When young I was taught that the Bible was a book of peace and good. In this House, after the various expressions of opinion on the part of the representatives of the people, it seems to be almost a book of discord; and, if there is so much discord and so many differences of opinion among the chosen of the land, there will be differences of opinion among the children, and it is likely to disturb the schools just as the torpedo which got away the other day disturbed the harbour. I am opposed to the reading of the Bible in schools, because I think the schools have been a success without them, and I think the probability is that the schools will be broken up if we begin it. I do not know that I have much more to say, except that, in introducing this religious question into the schools, we shall have to suit the wishes of those who believe in the Maxims of Confucius, or in the Koran of Mohammed, and I do not know that we should not have also to suit the lost ten tribes of Israel;—there are so many differences of opinion even in a small population like ours. The population we have to be taught would not be very large—about eighty-three thousand—and amongst these children there will be some representing all kinds of beliefs and opinions; and I suppose, in the matter of colour, they will range from the Ethiopian to the albino, and, in the matter of religion, from the professor of religion to the dire atheist, who fears nothing but pain. And how they are going to meet these difficulties seems strange to me.

Mr. FULTON.—I hope the honourable gentleman will pardon me. Surely he does not think this a denominational Bill.

Mr. BLAKE.—It seems very like it. The honourable member, in an able speech, said that the Bible should be explained in the schools; and another honourable gentleman, who also made a very able speech, said that the Bible should be read, and that the child should make the best of it he can. I do not think, however, that it will do much good. What I have learned from that book has taught me that "a house divided against itself cannot stand;" and I believe that the differences of opinion that would arise from the introduction of the Bible into the public schools would certainly have the effect of breaking the schools down.

Mr. HOBBS.—I should not like this Bill to go to the vote without taking advantage of the opportunity to give my reasons for the vote I am about to give. I should have no difficulty whatever in the vote I am about to give if we all belonged to one denomination. But, unhappily, that is not the case; and I consider that religious strifes and differences are the worst kind of all differences, and we have not to go very far back in the history of the world to know that. Several speakers assume that because the Bible is not taught in our public schools therefore the children get no religious teaching; and yet you will find that most people who speak of religion at all can remember how the

first impressions made upon their minds were at their mothers' knee and at various sanctuaries which they attended, not that they had been rubbed into them by the schoolmaster. I was kept in school one day and had to learn, for punishment, a chapter of Proverbs, and I am not prepared to say that that made a favourable impression on my mind. I think there are many persons who are defending the introduction of the Bible into our schools who have really not considered the question as they ought to have done. It is a matter of sentiment with a great many men. We must be careful that, in a question of this kind, we do not introduce into our public schools "the thin end of the wedge" which will have the effect of introducing denominationalism. I was a member of the Board of Education where the system of denominationalism prevailed many years ago, and there I saw the evil of it, and I shall never forget the evils that came under my notice. It would take a great deal to influence me in favour of denominational education. These are some of the reasons why I shall not vote for this Bill. I will not detain the House longer, because I know that honourable members are very anxious to get on with other business. I did not, however, feel disposed to allow this question to go to the vote without, at any rate, giving some reasons why I shall vote against the measure.

Dr. NEWMAN.—As one who is very enthusiastic about the present system of education, I should not like this debate to be so entirely lopsided as it appears to have become. The honourable member for Waipawa told us that he would defy any one to teach morality in schools without reference to the Bible. When he goes on to talk, as other honourable members have also done, of the rowdism and larrikism of our young people, I say, that is a monstrous slander. Clergymen in the churches are always telling us of the rowdism and larrikins of young New Zealand. I say it is a foul slander.

Mr. TANNER.—When I spoke of larrikism I spoke of a remark made by the late Premier.

Dr. NEWMAN.—One sees in the newspapers statements to the effect that the young people educated in the State schools are often larrikins and rowdies. I say the reverse is the fact. I say, as regards the schools in this colony and in New South Wales and Canada, that the schools do teach uprightness and morality; and comparison shows the enormous advantage, from a moral point of view, which children attending the State schools derive. In Great Britain, since the establishment of the State system of education, the gaols have become rapidly empty, and juvenile crime has decreased. In Canada crime had decreased year by year since the establishment of the State system of education; so much so that a little while ago no fewer than eleven gaols were put up to auction because there were no inmates to fill them; and why? Because of the State system of education. Young New Zealand commits fewer crimes per hundred of the

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population than are committed in any other part of the world. For honourable members to come and talk of the rowdiness and larrikinism in this colony I say is preposterous. There is far less rowdiness and larrikinism in the streets now than there used to be when there were no State schools in New Zealand. Wherever children are not taught under our system the crime amongst uneducated children is four times more than what it is where our State schools are. One has only to go through our streets to see the marked improvement there is in the children. If we look at the numbers of boys and girls congregated in the large cities we shall find that the amount of crime is small. As to the little larrikinism which occurs in the streets: amongst the gilded youths of the universities at Home, amongst the higher students of the London University, you see every bit as much larrikinism. There they call it "effervescence of youthful spirits;" but the moment anything like larrikinism occurs here it is charged to our education system. The greatest boon which has been conferred upon the people of this colony has been our system of education.

Mr. PARATA.—This Bill commends itself to me because it provides for religious instruction in schools, and because a number of people are in favour of religious instruction being granted to the children. I am quite in sympathy with them upon that point. These words, "Scriptural teaching," mean a very great deal. There is one thing which does not appear to me to be clear in the measure before the House. It is not stated what portion of the Scripture shall be taught. There seems to be a great diversity of opinion amongst honourable members. Some are entirely in favour of the Bible being read in schools, others are emphatically opposed to it. The question is, Who is right? As there seems to be a strong desire for religious instruction, I think that a trial should be made; and let us judge by the result. With regard to there being a great number of children at school who belong to different Churches, and with regard to the supposition that that will be an apple of discord, it is quite true that there are a great many denominations, but I think that they all admit that religious instruction is the one important thing. The parents of the children all admit that we should teach the children what is right, so that they may distinguish between good and evil—to know right from wrong. I think that is of paramount importance. We know that if a person does wrong—takes what does not belong to him—the law provides a punishment. Now, the Scripture teaches us that it is wrong to bear malice against others, or to take what does not belong to us. In fact, the whole of the moral teaching that we require is contained in the Bible. I think that the wishes of the people should be acceded to, and that an experiment should be made. A great number of honourable gentlemen have been returned to this House pledged to support Bible-reading in schools, and if these honourable gentlemen do their duty to their consti-

tuents they will support this measure, and so grant the wishes of their constituents. I again reiterate that I think a trial should be made. I hope that, if this measure become law, the children in Native schools will have the same privilege as is now sought to be given to others. People in some parts of my district have urged me to support this Bill. This very matter was discussed in the House in 1885. I spoke against the Bill on that occasion. It occurred to me then that if the Bible were read in schools there would be this difficulty: that the children of Roman Catholics, or Mormons, or other denominations who did not approve of Bible-reading in schools would have to wait outside while the Bible was being read. That was the objection which induced me to oppose that measure; but since then I have observed that it is the great wish of the people to have religious instruction in the schools, and therefore I consider it my duty to support this measure now. We must all admit that religious instruction is a very important matter. We all know that before men are allowed to give evidence in the Courts of justice they have to take an oath on the Bible, and that is a proof we attach great importance to it. Then, the marriage ceremony is by many made a religious ceremony. I look upon the Bible as the groundwork of all our proceedings. The first teaching we should have is to fear God, and to be afraid to do that which is evil. I will not say more, but I will support this measure.

Mr. TAIWHANGA.—Sir, as far as I can understand, all the foundation of England is the Bible, and all her laws are made on the Bible. Therefore it is a very important thing that the Bible should be taught to children. Without the Bible I do not think that England would stand for many years. One chief of Samoa went to England, and he went to see the Queen, and he asked the Queen, "How is it that England is so large?" The Queen simply took up the Bible, and said, "That is what makes England what you see." That is what I heard in England, but whether it is true or false I cannot say. Therefore I say New Zealand must follow the example of England, because it is our Mother-country. Of course there are laws in New Zealand, and what is passed here we must follow. There are so many religions in New Zealand that they must all be satisfied, and, of course, every one of us must be equal. I merely stood up to say that I would support this Bill.

Mr. FISHER.—Sir, while I yield to no man in my respect for the Bible, I yet feel constrained to oppose this Bill. And I wish it to be understood that I do not speak in the interest of those persons called secularists, but because I dread the dislocation or derangement of the State system of education by the school-floor being made the battle-ground of religious intolerance. Those honourable gentlemen who have spoken of countries where the Bible is read in schools have not referred to those countries where the introduction of religious influences has led to most regretful results. For instance, they have not referred

to the deplorable consequences which resulted from the admission of ministers of religion into the schools of Newfoundland. Two or three years ago the scholastic and religious worlds were startled by the frenzied and fanatical feuds which broke up the schools of Newfoundland and other Canadian provinces, and which were the direct outcome of denominationalism. Now, if it is really desired to have read in our schools selected portions of the Scriptures, I see no difficulty in the way. We see from the petitions presented to the House, and we gather from the speeches made on this occasion, that there is a very general desire to have portions of the Scriptures read in the public schools; and I should feel inclined to agree with those who move in the matter if they would consent to accept the Irish Board Scripture-lessons, to which the honourable member for Hawke's Bay has referred. That would be a fair compromise. But how were those selections made? After great conflict and almost interminable controversy they were drawn up by two Archbishops, an Anglican and a Roman Catholic Archbishop; and that fact in itself shows that no selection would have been acceptable unless made by some such eminent authorities. But what would happen under this Bill? The School Committee is to direct that every morning, at the opening of the school, a portion of the Bible is to be read aloud by the scholars. There, at once, you put more or less power of selection into the hands of possibly irreverent teachers and also possibly irreverent children. I have already said that it is in the power of those who desire this change to do now what they want to do; and here is the proof. The Education Act, section 84, says,—

"The school shall be kept open five days in each week for at least four hours, two of which in the forenoon and two in the afternoon shall be consecutive, and the teaching shall be entirely of a secular character.

"The school-buildings may be used on days and at hours other than those used for public school-purposes upon such terms as the Committee may from time to time prescribe."

There is the fullest liberty to use the schools for the purpose of giving religious instruction, if the Committees wish to use them for that purpose. If their feeling is so strong as it has been represented to be—and as I have no doubt it is—why not elect Committees who will insist that religious teaching shall be given in the schools after the secular teaching is finished? It is said that that would not be fair to the children; but I say that it would be not only fair to the children, but it would be fair also to the religious sentiment of the country. But, Sir, is it not a singular thing that, while we have two hundred religious creeds, there are but two methods of cooking a potato? I am all too conscious that large numbers of people regard this question with great earnestness of feeling, but, as I have pointed out, there is already provided in the Education Act a means of carrying out their views if they chose to avail themselves of it. If the various religious bodies entertain so

strong an opinion upon this question as is expressed in the numerous petitions presented to the House, and in the speeches delivered in synods and Church-meetings—if there were the life, vigour, and enthusiasm in the Churches which those petitions would seem to indicate, they would avail themselves of those means; but it is fair to conclude that, as this clause is not acted upon, it is proof that the life and vigour and enthusiasm are not altogether what they are represented to be. There are the means, if the religious bodies wish to use them, to obtain that form of teaching which they so much desire. I think it would be a retrograde step to amend the existing Act. I ask, with all respect—for I do not wish to show the slightest disrespect to any persons or bodies of persons—the means being ready to hand, why do they strive to arrive at the same conclusion by a circuitous route? I do not wish to dwell on the fact of there being too many different religious distinctions, but we cannot conceal from ourselves the possibility of so many differences and distinctions leading to the display of religious intolerance in the schools. When these numerous religious creeds become merged into one broad Christianity, then we may introduce religious teaching into our schools without fear or misgiving; but, as a fair commentary upon the religious distinctions which have been built up in England, I will take the liberty of reading the view of an educated East Indian, Mr. Keshub Chunder Sen, the great native reformer of India, who died some few years ago. He says,—

"We Indians have not been able to accept any particular form of Christianity; yet we are steadfast in our attachment to Jesus Christ. Christianity is a many-sided religion, and every individual and every nation takes in a small portion of this many-sided thing. These are accepted and developed into a creed, till we see a large number of individuals, entertaining a particular kind of opinion, forming themselves into a distinct Christian denomination. Let the ministers of the various sects exchange their pulpits; let the brothers and sisters of one Church go into another and shake hands with their brothers and sisters there: then we shall find, not two hundred and fifty narrow sects scattered here and there, but one grand universal Cathedral, where ten thousand voices of ten thousand nations shall commingle in one sweet and swelling chorus, and proclaim the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."

When we reach that state of religious tolerance it will be possible, openly and without restriction, to make religion part of the teaching in our schools; but I say it would be dangerous to attempt religious teaching in the form in which it is sought to be introduced in this Bill. I should have no objection, if scrupulous care were taken that proper religious and moral teaching were so inculcated as to establish on a sound basis a true sense of honour and integrity; but to admit the whole volume into the hands of careless and irreverent teachers, and children not sufficiently

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old to understand the Bible, would, I say with all deference to those who are moving in this matter, be dangerous. I hope I have not said anything which would in the slightest degree wound the feelings of those who are moving in the matter. I have as strong feelings on the subject as they, but it appears to me that we are pursuing the same end by different means. If the Bible is ever introduced into our schools, I hope it will be in the most careful manner, that the selections to be used will be most carefully made, and that the Bible will be placed only in the hands of teachers who have some reverence for the Great Work itself.

Mr. ALLEN.—The Minister of Education has spoken, and I deem it we ought to consider that the wisest man, so far as we are concerned, has given us his opinion on this subject. But, Sir, I cannot help thinking that, so far as this Bill is concerned, he has rather been studying the religious feelings of an East Indian, and the methods adopted in Ireland for carrying out religious instruction, than the actual words of this Bill. For, if I mistook him not, he said that the introduction of the Bible into the schools in the manner now proposed would lead to intolerance and strife owing to the admission of ministers. This Bill does not provide at all for the admission of ministers into the public schools. It provides simply that the scholars shall read the Bible in the schools, and nothing else. Then, the honourable gentleman used an argument which has been used more than once to-night, that under the present Act we have the power to have the Bible read in the schools. I admit we have the power now to have the Bible read in the schools; but when? That is the question. Is it during school-hours or out of school-hours? You cannot have the Bible read in the schools during school-hours; and, if I remember rightly, the honourable member for Inangahua mentioned a circumstance which is direct proof, to my mind, that the fact of the Bible being excluded during school-hours shows that we want a Bill of this kind. The honourable gentleman mentioned an instance in which the School Committee allowed the Bible to be read in school for twenty minutes after school-hours, with the result that, in a very short time, only one pupil remained to hear it. If I can read anything from that fact it is this: that if Bible-reading in schools is to be of any use at all it must be in school-hours, and not by forcing a child to remain twenty minutes extra beyond the school-hours. It must be made a portion of the school-teaching within the school-hours, or it can have no effect at all. Is it likely that children will give up twenty minutes of their play even for the reading of Holy Writ? If necessary, I might refer to what has been and what is being done in other countries; but I know that there are other Bills to come on, and I will not detain the House with any detailed remarks about other countries. I will only say that in Germany and Switzerland religion is the basis of education in the elementary schools, and it forms a very large and a very

essential part of the education of children in Great Britain, Italy, and Belgium. I believe all these five countries are enlightened countries that we may well take a lesson from. It has been argued this evening that by allowing the Bible to be read in the schools we open the door to denominationalism. I totally and entirely deny that it opens the door to denominationalism at all; and I, for one, would be the first to resist any attempt at denominational education. It does not, in my opinion, open the door to any denomination. My honourable friend the member for Rangitikei said he is a Democrat, demanding that the Bible shall be read in the schools; and my honourable friend the member for the Bay of Islands said that was illogical. If Democracy means anything at all, it means that the majority shall rule; and I ask members of this House, seeing the petitions that have been put on that table, and reading—if they can read it—public opinion, whether the majority in this country have not demanded that the Bible shall be read in the schools.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Mr. ALLEN.—I ask those who say "No" to travel through the length and breadth of the land, go to every home, to every parent, and come back and then say whether or not the Democracy has demanded that this Bill shall pass. I say they will be convinced, if there is any conviction in them, that the Democracy has demanded it. Then, let me ask, why is this the only book—or one of a very few books—excluded from the public schools of the colony? What does that mean? To my mind, it means this to the child—

Mr. TAYLOR.—Sir, I rise to a point of order, and to ask your ruling on this: I understand the honourable gentleman to say that the present education system does not provide for religious instruction, that the schools are not open for it either before or after school-hours. I think the honourable gentleman is labouring under some misapprehension in the way he is arguing the question.

Mr. SPEAKER.—That is not a point of order. You can answer any arguments you disagree with when the honourable member has finished speaking.

Mr. ALLEN.—If I base my arguments on false grounds the honourable gentleman will be able to reply to them, and I dare say, if I had an opportunity to speak again, I could upset his reply. I asked why the Bible is the only book, or nearly the only one, excluded from the schools. Perhaps that touched the honourable gentleman, and he did not like to hear it, and so he interrupted me. What does the special exclusion of this book teach the child? It must teach him that in this book there is something he ought not to see and ought not to read.—(No.)—I say, if the book is kept out of the school, it must be kept out for some reason. And what is the reason? It is this: that the child ought not to have it read to him. There are other books of every kind allowed; and why should this one be debarred? It is the voice of the

persistent minority trying to overrule the majority. I will only touch on one other argument that has been used, and it is one that has been used with some force, or apparently with some force. Some honourable gentlemen have said that the public schools are no place in which the Bible should be read, or in which religious instruction should be given, and that the home, at the mother's knee, is the place where the child should receive religious instruction. I am quite prepared to admit that at the mother's knee is the place where the child should receive religious instruction; but I must modify that admission by this: Is every home a fit place for a child to receive religious instruction? Is every father or every mother fit to impart religious instruction? If they were that argument would be one of great force. But, unfortunately, there are men who are debased by crime, who are debased by drunkenness, who are debased by many other evils; and, unfortunately, too, there are women who must be put in the same category. Are such men and such women fit to impart religious instruction to their children? They are not, and that unfitness is found not only among the poor, but among the rich; and I say that in either case, either amongst the rich or amongst the poor, in such cases it is impossible in the home at the mother's knee to impart such religious instruction as ought to be imparted. I felt compelled to rise after the speech of the Hon. the Minister of Education, because I thought he spoke with some considerable amount of authority, and I thought some one should reply to him; and, having attempted to do so, I will not detain the House longer, as time presses and there is much business yet to do.

Mr. FERGUS.—I think those who are advocating Bible-reading in schools are assuming a great deal more than the facts warrant, and especially do I think my honourable friend the member for Dunedin East assumed a great deal more than he was warranted in assuming, when he said that the majority of the people of the colony are in favour of the introduction of the Bible into the schools. Does the honourable gentleman know the history of the movement for the introduction of the Bible into the schools, or the action which was taken by the Bible-in-schools party? The honourable member for the Taieri and myself were members of the Otago Education Board some years ago, when the Bible-in-schools party sent circulars to all the parents of school-children throughout Otago, asking whether they were in favour of the introduction of the Bible into the schools or not. What was the result? The great bulk of the people declined altogether to send replies. Fifty per cent. of the parents in that school-district absolutely declined to answer the circular at all. The people are not in favour of the introduction of the Bible into the schools; and I will give the reasons: In the first place, just as surely as you introduce the Bible into the schools, in all fairness and justice you must grant denominational education. You can stop nothing short of that—

*Mr. Allen*

that is the logical sequence—that is inevitable.

Mr. ALLEN.—No.

Mr. FERGUS.—Then, where is the honourable gentleman's logic and his desire for fair-play? If the Bible were introduced into the schools I, for one, should be found under the banner of denominationalism. A great many honourable gentlemen say that all they want is simply the Bible read in the schools without note or comment. But as soon as that had been got there would be something else they would want. It is the thin end of the wedge we should have allowed the party to insert, and they would soon drive it right home.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What party?

Mr. FERGUS.—The clerical party. Honourable members talk about the petitions sent, and the number of people they are signed by. How are these things managed? Let me describe. This Bible-in-schools party sent round the celebrated circular I have referred to to every parent. Directly after the circular has been received round goes the clergyman, who says to the good wife, "Did you receive the circular about Bible-reading in schools?" "Yes." "What are you going to do with it?" "I don't know." "Oh, the Word of God is the most precious thing, and it is a crying shame it should be debarred from the public schools. Fill in the answer, and send it to the secretary." And, as a matter of course, a great many of them did so; and it comes here as the voice of the people. If the people of New Zealand want one thing I opine that it is to maintain intact and inviolate the present system of education. This Bible-in-schools party deliberately, in a great many cases, are playing into the hands of the enemies of our present system of education. What does the whole thing arise from? Simply from the laziness of the people preventing them from teaching the religion they profess to believe. They want, in other words, to establish a State Church in New Zealand.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Mr. FERGUS.—Yes. You want to establish a State Church. Because the professors of religion and the parents are incapable of doing what they should do, or for some other reason, they wish to force the whole of the duty on the State, and want the State to teach religion to the children. And what would be the result in the matter of teaching? To raise up religious differences in the various Committees, and cause strife amongst them as to who would have the appointment of the teacher, so that their peculiar views would be favoured. And what will you do? You will be doing an injustice to a great many of the children of the colony. It means another thing. We have laid it down, very rightly, I think, that the State shall not teach in reference to religious matters. We have decided that we shall give secular education, but not religious education. Now, suppose that it is true, as the honourable member for Dunedin East says, though I do not admit it, that a majority of the people demand this religious education in the schools, and you pass this Bill, then you are infringing

the rights and consciences of a very considerable minority.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Mr. FERGUS.—Yes; of every Jew, every free-thinker, every man who does not believe in all the tenets contained within the borders of the Old and New Testaments. And you are doing more than that: you are inevitably breaking down the system which has grown up under our hands—a system of education which is conducive to morality, as all education is, because we know that since the free, secular, and compulsory system has been established in Victoria crime has been gradually decreasing—convictions have been coming down year by year; and, when we reflect that of the people in Victoria considerably more than half were born in that colony, it cannot be asserted that the reading of the Bible in schools is the cause of that improvement. The same thing is taking place in New Zealand. Our crime is decreasing year by year, the number of people convicted is growing less and less, and our present system of education has not been in force over ten years. I hope that this House does not intend to pass the Bill of the honourable member for the Taieri. I am quite certain that on this question the House is absolutely sound at heart. I am perfectly well aware that the country is sound at heart on the question; and I am bold enough to say that, if the only issue was whether we should have the Bible in schools or denominational education, the country would prefer the latter; but by an enormous majority the people would say that the present system of education must be left intact and inviolate. I do not disparage the Bible for a moment, but its true place is in the church, the Sunday-school, and, most of all, at the mother's knee in the home.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I think the honourable member for Dunedin East, though he is not often illogical, was quite wide of the mark. He said that there are people in this country, fathers and mothers, who are not capable of teaching their children religion, and then he went on to say that these children must be taught religion in the State schools. Now, that shows that this is simply a denominational "move." I say it is not at all necessary that the State should teach these children religion, because the Act provides that clergymen may go to schools an hour before or an hour after school-hours to teach the children religion. Now, if these gentlemen were sincere they would take advantage of these hours to go and teach the children religion, to teach them what they believe in. I listened with pleasure to the speech of the honourable member for the Bay of Islands, in which he told us the result of having chapters of the Bible set before him to learn when he was young; because his experience has confirmed my impressions. About four months ago I met two or three aged men in Christchurch, and I asked them what they thought of Bible-reading in schools. I asked them this question: "In your young days was it customary to start from Genesis and go right

through the book?" They said it was, and that the result was that they used to dread coming on to jaw-breaking names; but that, speaking conscientiously, they could say that reading the Bible in that way did them no good, but rather set them against it. And I can indorse that myself, so far as that goes. Now, I ask those honourable gentlemen who want to break up the education system of the country to come down boldly and say so. A member of this House has told me that that is the object he has in view. He said, "We want to get the first spike into the system, and then we will get another in, and so break it up altogether." Well, as long as I am in this House I will fight against that, and in favour of our present free and secular system. "Free," so called; but I entirely deny that it is free in any sense of the term. The working-men of the country contribute through the Customs and in other ways towards the general taxation, and pay for every iota of education that they get. They pay for it, and it is monstrous to talk of it as if the people were educated under it as paupers. I cannot tolerate that for a moment. I have great respect for the honourable member for the Taieri, and I believe that he is moving in this direction not from any desire for popularity, but because he sincerely thinks he is doing right; but I would ask the honourable gentleman to consider what position he is placing us in. Certainly I am not going to be a party to bring about the results which this Bill, in my opinion, would bring about. I say that most distinctly, and I hope honourable members generally will take the same view, and that, without further delay, we shall reject this Bill, which is the first attempt to split up our system of education.

Mr. WITHEY.—I had intended to give a silent vote against the second reading of this Bill, but it appears to me that most of the speakers have missed an important principle that underlies this question of religious instruction in the State schools. The question as it presents itself to my mind is this: Is the State warranted in taxing the whole of its people to teach the religious opinions of a section? The Minister of Justice touched to some extent on that point, but did not put it in that distinct form in which I should have liked to see it stated. This question seems to have three stages. The first of these we have before us to-night. I quite believe that many honourable members who approve of Bible-reading in schools do not wish to go any further than it is proposed to go by this Bill. But I cannot help seeing in the country—and the discussion here to-night has shown the same thing—that the advocates of religious education and the advocates of a denominational system of education are with those who want Bible-reading in schools, and I am therefore very anxious that we should not take the first step. The honourable member for Dunedin East spoke about the character of many homes. We must all admit what he says, and deplore it; but I say that that is a condition of affairs for the amelioration of

which the State cannot usefully intervene. Many countries have found that the absence of general knowledge is detrimental to the prosperity of the State, and tends to create crime and wretchedness, and therefore have decided to endeavour to ameliorate the condition of the people by educating them. So far the State can intervene with safety. But I maintain that this question of morality and religion is one into which the State cannot enter. It could not do so usefully; and it could not do so justly, because of the principle that I have laid down. I did not intend to speak, and am not going to weary the House; but I must just say that there is one rather pleasing feature of the discussion which deserves notice. The honourable member for the Northern Maori District told us the other day that England was a great country because she had railways everywhere, and that we ought to follow her example; but to-night he has told us that she is great because of the Bible. I am glad to see that he is progressing, and I believe that he has now come to a sound conclusion.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I have only a few words to say on this subject. I must say that I have a great deal of sympathy with the mover of this Bill; and I should very much like to see the Bible introduced into the schools if it could be done without raising what is known as "feeling." I have presented two petitions from the district from which I come; but I know that these come from one part, from one section of the district. The district generally, I believe, is not in favour of this Bill; and that is where the trouble comes in. We should have a great deal of feeling shown. It would begin with the Committees. There would be an attempt to elect Committees in favour of the introduction of the Bible into schools, and according to some religious sect, such as Presbyterians, or Methodists, or Anglicans, or Catholics; then there would be an attempt to get men who would suit, to teach in the direction the Committee wished. We have been told by the member for Dunedin East, and rightly so, that there are many fathers and mothers who are unable to give religious instruction to their offspring. But are there not many teachers in the colony who would be unfit to give religious instruction? I think a majority would not be likely to be able to please the Committees. That is my opinion, at any rate. Now, I will go one point further and state that, if the honourable gentleman who introduced this Bill is prepared to vote to allow the capitation-grant to Catholic schools—I mean the schools that are thrown open to inspection, and come up to the standard of the other schools of the colony—if he will agree that they should get capitation-allowance, I will go with him into the lobby; but I want him to state that plainly when he replies; if he does not do so I shall be compelled to vote against him. The honourable member for Dunedin East, when speaking, said that he was the very man to stand out against denominationalism; but what does he want to do but to introduce a denominational system—a denominational system

*Mr. Wilby*

which suits himself, and none besides? The subject has been very well debated to-night, and as honourable members are probably anxious to vote, I will not say more; but I certainly do wish the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill to say what he is prepared to do in the direction I have indicated. If he goes the length I have asked him to go, I will go with him on the second reading of the Bill; but if not I shall be forced to go into the other lobby.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—It was asserted by the honourable member for Dunedin East that a majority of the people of New Zealand were in favour of Bible-reading in schools, and, when other honourable members interjected "No," he said, "Well, let them go through the length and breadth of the land; let them visit the homes of the people, and when they come back tell me that." I ask him, has he been through the length and breadth of the country? Has he visited the homes of the people in order to support his opinion? I ask him, has he examined the petitions laid on the table of this House? For, if he has, he will see that a large number of signatures have been written by the same hand. Does he know how canvassers go about? I will tell him. A canvasser goes to a house and obtains the signature of the head of the household, and then he tells him that he will be justified in putting down the signatures of his wife and of all the other members of the household.

Mr. FULTON.—Will the honourable gentleman be kind enough to say what particular petition he refers to, or where it came from?

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I refer to petitions that have been got up in favour of Bible-reading in schools.

Mr. FULTON.—Where?

Mr. LEVESTAM.—If I tell that I shall be breaking confidence; but I can assure the honourable gentleman—and I have no doubt he will accept my assurance that that is so—that a person who was a canvasser acted in that manner.

Mr. FULTON.—If the honourable gentleman refers to the Nelson District I shall be able to show him why I ask.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I think I should be breaking faith if I were to state where it was, but I can assure him that that occurred. Then, the honourable gentleman tells us that this will not open the door to denominationalism. He says that is not wanted. Now, I hold in my hand a speech delivered at the opening of the Synod at Nelson during this present month, and will tell him what the Bishop of Nelson says:—

"I hope we shall, without delay, send our petition to the Houses of Legislature, in whatever form it seems best to you to frame it. We must watch the proceedings narrowly, lest we have a permission for religious instruction given in such a form that, by the use of the word 'non-controversial,' the reading of the Word of God itself shall be excluded, as was the case in the former Nelson Provincial Act. The simplest course of all would be to add a clause to this effect: 'The Bible, and in-



struction thereon, may be given in the public schools at the option of the local Committee; and this further proposal: that, where fifteen or twenty heads of families desire it, they may have a capitation-grant given to them, provided the scholars satisfy the examinations of the Government Inspector."

Is not that controverting what the honourable gentleman here asks? Bible-reading in schools would not satisfy the clergy, and it would not satisfy those who are agitating for it. No, what they want is denominationalism; and what would be the effect of that? It would simply mean the breaking-up of the whole system of education. The Bishop of Nelson actually asks that, where fifteen or twenty heads of families require it, they should have the capitation-grant. If you take a country school, and from the school take the children from fifteen families, how many would be left for the State teacher? The inevitable effect of passing such a Bill as this would be to break up the educational system.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—My honourable friend says, "No." He is welcome to his opinion; but I think I have the argument altogether on my side. If a number of parties of families took away their children from a country school I do not think there would be many pupils left for the State school-teacher.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That is denominational schools.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I do not know if the honourable gentleman is hard of hearing; but I am speaking against denominationalism; and I say that wherever it is introduced it will break up our school system; and I say that is what is asked for by this Bill, and in proof of that I refer to what I have just read from the speech of the Bishop of Nelson. The Bishop of Nelson lays great stress upon the fact that they did not make it a party question or a *sine quâ non* at the last general election, and he lays it down that it should be so treated at the next general election; and yet he says, later on, "Well, preaching cannot teach them, for God preaches to them in His Word, which they profess to acknowledge, and they hearken not. There is nothing left but prayer." There is no doubt that the clergy are very much interested in bringing forward this Bill and in getting it carried; but there are also other people who are very much interested in passing this Bill. I ask, is not the best man to fight in any cause the one who has the subject at heart? And yet what do we find? We find leaflets sent broadcast over this land signed by men who, to add weight to their names, have affixed certain mystic letters thereto: "M.L.C." Why was that done? We have been told that these petitions were signed right through the land. And how were they signed? They were signed, as my honourable friend the Minister of Justice told us, simply because people were persuaded into it. My friends from the other House have also sought to surround the thing with a lot of influence on those who perhaps have not the education or knowledge to judge

for themselves. What would their names have been worth but for the "M.L.C."? Nothing. And nobody would have gone to the trouble of printing it. Why did they not ask other people who had not "M.L.C." to their names? I say they tried to surround this matter with a halo. And if they were so earnest why do we not find them fighting for it? Why did they not resign their seats in the Council, and stand against those who were opposed to it? They did not do that, and I will state why. My opponent in Nelson stood in the interests of a Bill of this kind, and he told the people there that in that district alone eight hundred people had signed in favour of it; but he added, "Of those, only seven voted for me;" and he ended by telling the people that if they took his advice they would never stand on that ticket. I suppose they have had similar experiences elsewhere, and so, though they were willing to urge others to fight in a cause they knew was hopeless, they had not the courage to leave their places of security and come and fight for that which they contended to be right. We have been told by a good many that it is the duty of the Government to teach religion in schools—

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—My honourable friend tells us so. He told us that prayers were read here every day, and that we thus acknowledged that religion should be taught. But I ask him, is this Assembly better than any other Assembly where no prayers are read? Are the proceedings we have witnessed in this House time after time such that we can claim that the prayers to which we have listened have done any good, or that we are better than other men? He tells us there is great virtue in this prayer. I ask, where is the proof of that virtue? We are told that the duty of the Government is to teach religion in schools. I take objection to that. All government is for the good of mankind. I will admit at once that that varies in different places and under different circumstances; but I think we may safely say that the good of mankind is the greatest amount of happiness to all men which they can possibly have without encroaching upon the happiness of other people. And I ask my honourable friend, is it possible to give those who wish this Bill to become law what they want without trespassing upon the happiness of others? Must we not all admit that if we teach in schools this religion—the Bible which we are asked to introduce—we are taking away happiness from those who do not believe in the Bible?—(No.)—My honourable friend says "No." There are a number of Catholics in this country who do not believe in having the Bible taught in the schools; and to my mind the introduction of the Bible in schools would compel the Catholics to pay for that in which they could not participate. I ask, is it happiness to the honourable gentleman to pay for that which he cannot enjoy or which he cannot have? Then I say that by passing this Bill we are encroaching upon the happiness of others by taking away from them that which we have no right to take away. So

long as we leave the education system intact, as it is now, all can enjoy the same privileges. We teach no religion, enforce no creed, but simply give a good sound education. It has been urged by the honourable member for Dunedin East that there are some families where the father and mother are unfit to teach religion to their children. How do the Catholics do in that respect? I know, and he knows, that there are as many Catholics unfit to teach religion to their children as there are unfit Protestants. But, if the parents do not teach religion to the children, the priests do. They visit the home and the school, and teach religion. But do the clergymen who are so urgently in favour of this Bill take the same trouble as the Catholics take? No, they do not. I know of an old lady in Nelson who has been attending church regularly for over thirty years. At last she was stricken with blindness, and had to undergo an operation. The clergyman who had seen her under his pulpit for thirty years knew that she was in trouble, bodily and mentally; but did he go to see her? No, he never went; and when I was waited upon by a clergyman and asked by him to pledge myself to support this Bill I told him I should not do so. I told him my experience of the case I have just been mentioning, and he said, "I stand self-convicted." That is seven months ago, and yet since then he has never been near the old lady. That is very wrong, and I simply mention it to show the sincerity of those people who call for a Bill of this kind. We were told—I think by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay—that if we had this Bill children could be taught religion after school-hours, and that only those would remain who went to Sunday-school. Has he ever looked at the statistics we published in 1886? and have all those honourable gentlemen who are in favour of this Bill, and who tell us that the children of this colony are not taught religion—have they perused these statistics? If they do they will find that 90 per cent. of the children attend Sunday-school. Therefore, if it is admitted that a certain percentage absent themselves on conscientious grounds, all the children practically are taught religion. We are told that the moral tone of the children must necessarily fall very low in those countries where religion is not taught. I ask the honourable member for Dunedin East if he remembers an address delivered by Bishop Nevill in Dunedin some months ago, and the reply that was made to his Lordship's statement. Was it not shown that, although in New Zealand religion was not taught in the schools, the children were morally of a higher standard than those of a neighbouring colony where religion is taught, and that the children of New Zealand occupied a higher moral standard than the children of almost any other country? We are told, again, that the State is very unmindful of its duties in that respect. Does my honourable friend know the value of the reserves that religious bodies hold? Why, they amount in value to £877,287. I am leaving out the odd shillings and pence. That he will find

*Mr. Levestam*

in the Blue Books. Besides that they hold other endowments purely for educational purposes. If he takes against that the reserves that are held by educational bodies he will find that they are under £624,718. The honourable member for Thorndon told us that where religion is not taught crime among children is very much greater. That point has been answered by those gentlemen who replied to Bishop Nevill's address. What is asked by this Bill is, that the Bible should be read without comment. Now, what will be the effect of that? Would it give secular knowledge or religious instruction? I think it would do neither. They would be worse off than they are now. It will be admitted that the Bible is unintelligible to many persons even of intellect; but to young children the Bible must be unintelligible. Therefore, if it were read in the schools the only effect it would have would be to give them secular instruction. Does my honourable friend believe that a child would not profit more if it takes an interest in what is read than by simply droning words over that are unintelligible to it? If you take a little story that is interesting to the mind of the child, and give that to the class to read, will not the whole class follow the one who is reading, and understand it, and, when another child is called upon to take it up to read, will he not know exactly where the first left off? But if it were the Bible they would not understand it, and, instead of looking upon their book, they would look elsewhere, and would not profit much by their lesson; so that, as far as reading is concerned, they would profit very little. As regards religion, it will be generally admitted that the reading of the Bible alone would give very little knowledge of religion. But what would be the probable consequence? It would be this: that, whereas now 90 per cent. of the children attend Sunday-school, the percentage would fall very low indeed, because the parents would say, "Oh! you need not go to Sunday-school to-day because you are taught religion in school." Therefore I take it that to pass this Bill would do no good, either as far as religion is concerned or in any other way. The honourable member for Dunedin East said, "Is it likely a child will stop even to hear the Word of God when other children go to play?" Is it likely that any child would stay in school if it were not compelled to do so? If the parents say, "You shall go and learn so-and-so," the child must learn it. Are there not children who are compelled to learn music after school-hours? Are they asked whether they are desirous of learning music or anything else? No; they are told they must learn it. And if parents are desirous that their children shall learn religion they will compel them to learn religion. The honourable member for Dunedin East says, "It is the voice of the minority which rules over the majority by keeping out that book." I always understand that in assemblies of this kind the majority rules. If a majority in this House were in favour of this Bill, no minority could keep it out. If the majority of the people had been in favour of

this Bill, the majority of the people would have sent representatives here to support this Bill. A few years ago an election contest took place in Nelson between two men, one of them in favour of denominational education, and the other not: and the man who lost was by far the more popular man—he was liked by everybody; but just upon that point he was beaten, and beaten very badly indeed. He had the same experience as my friend who opposed me this time. He said eight hundred signed the petition, and only seven voted for him. The contention which has been advanced, that if this Bill is passed it will not lead to denominationalism, is, in the face of this speech delivered by Bishop Suter in Nelson on the 3rd. of this month, quite contemptible. I agree with the Minister of Justice; and if this Bill is passed I should consider it my duty at once to vote for a Bill to give aid to Catholics. I think every one who has any sense of justice would do the same thing. I hold the opinion that if we pass such a Bill as this our educational system will inevitably be broken up. I consider it my duty to vote against this Bill. I have always spoken and voted against it, and will do so as long as I have the honour of a seat in this House. I have never concealed my opinion in that respect. I have always given it straight, and have told the people that I should not support the measure; and I shall not be breaking faith by opposing it.

Mr. GRIMMOND.—I rise simply to remind the House of the position in which education matters are at the present moment. We know that it is proposed from the Government benches to reduce the amount of capitation granted to the Education Department for the present year, and, in the face of that fact the introduction of this Bill will deal a blow at our education system when it occupies a very crippled and unfortunate position. Every person interested in education in New Zealand should be united; but by the introduction of this Bill you will introduce—let its advocates say what they will—the element of discord. In that part of the country from which I come the people are very much united in regard to the education question; but if you introduce this religious element you will introduce an element of discord, and we shall weaken the system that we have worked up to such a state of proficiency. I have a very great amount of respect for those who have promoted this measure, and I also believe that religious teaching would do good; but I hold that the State has no right to interfere or deal with religion at all. It has been stated that this question was submitted to the electors at the last election. The electors of this colony have been lulled into a state of security; they believed that the education system had such a hold on the people that the question of whether the Bible should be read in schools or not did not affect the election at all. It has also been said that the Bible is debarred from the schools. It is debarred during the time that secular education is taught; and rightly so, because it introduces into the schools an element of discord which I hope will be kept

out. I have really nothing more to say, except that I hope and sincerely believe that this Bill will not pass. I should like to move an amendment that the Bill be read a second time this day six months, but I see my object will be attained without that step. As it is, I shall vote against the Bill.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—I hardly expect much profit from the amount of time that has been spent in discussing this question. I do not say this is not a very large and important question; but the point is, whether it is in place here, and whether this is the time to discuss it. This House is not a debating society or a Young Men's Christian Association; if it were a body of that kind no doubt this matter would be extremely useful and important to discuss. But we come here to do practical work, and not to listen to manifestoes or the blowing-off of steam; and this, I take it, is really a manifesto. There is no chance of altering our education system in the way the honourable member for the Taieri proposes, and he knows there is no chance of doing it; this House knows it, and the country knows it; and therefore why should the honourable member occupy evenings in threshing out a question which has been so often threshed out already? There are only two reasons why the House should spend time in debating a question: one is that the matter is an entire novelty, when the matter wants to be brought before the public, and have excitement caused over it for the benefit of public opinion; and the other is that it is a matter that has been threshed out in the country, on which the people have made up their minds, and which they wish to be discussed by this House and dealt with. I do not think these reasons can be urged in favour of the present discussion. Goodness knows this matter is not a novelty! It has been discussed and talked over and fought over year after year and session after session. There is hardly an intelligent man in the country who has not thought over it, and who ought not to have been able to make up his mind about it by this time, if he has not made up his mind. I believe there is not a member of the House who has not made up his mind about it, and therefore the argument of novelty does not apply so far as the House is concerned; nor can we say that the majority of the people demand that it should be discussed by this House. But it is not a little question, or a matter which the House has to take up irrespective of a united demand on the part of the country; it is a very big matter indeed, and it is certainly something which ought not to be touched unless a great majority of the people have made up their mind and say very plainly that it should be touched. I maintain that the majority of the people have not expressed any demand that this matter should be touched. If they had they would soon send men to the House pledged to do it—most undoubtedly so. On great questions the public do exercise their power plainly enough, though not on minor questions. Advocates of Bible-reading in schools have their

proper place for the argument of these questions, and that is in the country and not in this House. They should go to their constituents first, and not come here. Let them first convert the constituencies by fair argument to their own way of looking at this matter, and let them then come to this House and carry this great resolution. I do not believe the majority of people believe in the reading of the Bible in schools. I do not believe they want any change in that direction in the present system, because when we look at the religious people, the advocates of Bible-reading in schools, what do we see? We see that they are not at all united in the matter. They cannot come here and tell us what they want. When the religious bodies have made up their mind on some common platform, and when they have gone to the country and can tell this House what they want, I am certain they will get what they want. So far, they have not done that; and until they do I do not think they will get anything,—which is what some of them want, and what some of them do not want. I do not think they will get what Catholics do not want and Presbyterians want, or what the Wesleyans want and the Church-of-England people do not want; but when once they can make up their minds on some compromise, on some common demand from the country, then I believe they will get that. I think the task which the honourable member for the Taieri and his friends should set themselves about to accomplish first is to convert the constituencies, and then let them carry their point. Until they have converted the constituencies their labour here is only waste of time. I hope that, when they do set themselves to this task, they will confine themselves to fair and reasonable arguments, because I do not think, with all due respect to the honourable gentlemen, that all the arguments they have employed are fair ones. I do not think it is fair to make out that the colony is going down and down on the descending path of crime, when we know perfectly well that it is doing nothing of the kind, and that there is not on the whole a more moral and religious colony. And it is not fair to take away the character of the rising generation by making such unfounded and exaggerated declarations, which are so recklessly put forward. It degrades the rising generation of this colony, and degrades them not only in the eyes of the world, but also in their own eyes. I hate larrikinism as much as anybody; I do not think anybody would deny that larrikins are the greatest nuisances possible; but if he looks around he must admit that this is not a country that is distinguished by that nuisance. There are boys who march about three or four abreast, or stand at the corner of a street, and talk in a loud tone of voice for ten minutes or so, and do not laugh in a way that one would laugh in a lady's drawing-room; and we are told that these are larrikins. Should they see boys playing cricket hit a cricket-ball into a garden, and perhaps break a pane of glass, or boys smoking cigars which make them sick, then they cry out that larrikinism is on the increase. I maintain that the

*Mr. W. P. Reeves*

lads of this colony are as well behaved as any lads in any country of the British Empire. I am a young New-Zealander myself, and I feel very strongly the slander which has been cast upon New-Zealanders by honourable gentlemen who in their wish to attack the State system of education think that the end justifies the means. However good their end may be, it does not justify taking away the character of the colony's children. That is what I have to say on the main question. Before I sit down I should like to appeal to this House not to prolong this debate—

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh, oh!

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—I do not think I have made such a terribly long speech that I am not entitled to say that. I would bring to the recollection of this House a very ancient proverb which says, "The devil can quote Scripture for his purpose." I can suggest a slight alteration on that, which would perhaps be not inappropriate to the proceedings this evening: "The devil's own can talk Bible-reading in schools for their purpose." I think the honourable gentlemen belonging to the legal profession may possibly be inclined to prolong this debate for their particular purpose. I would say to those who are in favour of Bible-reading in schools, "Do not play into the hands of those who may possibly be prolonging this debate for reasons of their own."

Dr. FITCHETT.—I am astonished to hear the remarkable sentiments expressed by the last speaker touching "the devil's own." This debate has been on the boards since half-past seven o'clock; it is now more than half-past eleven; and I think I am the first member of that august body who has spoken. But, leaving aspersions against the lawyers, and coming to the Bill before the House, I have a word or two to say. As I understand the matter, at the bottom of the whole of the objections to the Bill lies the conviction that it means denominationalism; and we have heard a great deal to-night as to there not being grounds for suspecting such a thing. Indeed, the honourable member who moved the second reading of the Bill said if it involved any peril to the present system of education he himself would oppose his own measure. I have in my hand a pamphlet headed "Bible in Schools," which the honourable gentleman has circulated with the view of assisting the passage of this Bill. I take it, then, that the sentiments contained in this book are sentiments which he indorses; and I ask the House to listen to me while I refer to one or two passages in the book, and I ask whether those passages are consistent with the present system of education. The pamphlet consists of a series of letters and articles—of letters chiefly. One of these letters is headed, "The Responsibility of educating Children rests primarily with the Parents, not with the State." I ask whether that is not a direct attack on our national system of education. I will not read the letter, but the heading indicates its purport. I glance down another page, and find these words: "Every district should be obliged to support its own

schools in the same way as it supports its own churches." Is that consistent with the present system? Then again: "I cannot see why those who have not many or any olive-branches should contribute to the teaching of mine." Is that consistent with our system? Then, I find also the following:—

"The responsibility of educating children rests primarily upon the parents, not upon the State. . . . The expense of providing education for their children should fall primarily and directly upon the parents, and not upon the State through the medium of Education Boards. . . . It is a bad policy. . . . Government should rather call upon parents to educate their own children."

I ask, what are we to think of the real underlying motives of the gentlemen who support this Bill by a pamphlet such as that? I ask, are they honestly friendly to the present system? I question it. One honourable member pointed out that at the Anglican Synod at Auckland it was agreed that denominationalism, and nothing else but denominationalism, should be demanded. To my own knowledge, at a meeting at Dunedin presided over by the President of the Bible-in-schools Association, a lecture was delivered by the Anglican Bishop of Dunedin in which he openly avowed it, and that avowal has been indorsed by the Bishop of Nelson, I am told, and also by other clergymen in Otago.

Mr. FULTON.—The pamphlet was left here by a gentleman who is now dead, a clergyman of the Church of England. It has not been issued or published at all by the Bible-in-schools party; but there are certain things in it with which that party and those who work with them agree—notably the speeches delivered by Sir William Fox in this House, and the Hon. Mr. Menzies in the Legislative Council, and some things which the gentleman who compiled the pamphlet also states; but we do not hold ourselves responsible for all that he says.

Dr. FITCHETT.—It is very extraordinary that they should not adopt a thing which they have circulated. This pamphlet has been put into the pigeon-hole of every honourable member for the purpose of this debate. Apart from the avowed sentiments of those honourable members who support Bible-reading in schools, a slight examination of the question will satisfy any one as to what is the logical outcome. The Bill is asked for because we must have religious teaching in schools. If that is so we must have the religious teaching of one sect and have a State Church, or we must allow the religious teaching of every sect; and if we allow the religious teaching of every sect we have nothing more or less than denominationalism. If the various creeds could define a common platform, if they could eliminate all discordant elements, and come down to the House and ask that such-and-such passages in the Bible should be read, then they might have a standing in the House; but to grant Bible-reading in schools as sought in this Bill would be neither more nor less than to introduce an apple of discord.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That could be dealt with in Committee.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I take it that the principle of the Bill is Bible-reading in schools, and this House could not take upon itself the extraordinary function of deciding what particular portion of the Bible should be read. There is another way of looking at it. The Bill merely says that the Bible shall be read. There is an ambiguity there—it may be read either with or without comment. I take it that the words of the Bill are quite wide enough to admit of comment. Some honourable gentlemen say, "We do not want comment," and some say, "We do." I hold that if the Bible is read without comment it will be a positive evil, and nothing else. To read the Bible without comment must injure the Bible itself.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It cannot injure the Bible.

Dr. FITCHETT.—Well, I do not know. In the schools every book except the Bible would be expounded most fully, and every difficulty would be cleared up to the child; but this book he could ask nothing about: and can the child gather any other sentiment than that of disgust towards a book which he is compelled to read but cannot understand? I say that in the interests of the Bible itself it should not be read in the way this Bill contemplates. If comment is to be given, is it to be a mere explanation of words? That would be a farce. It necessarily involves the teaching, the inculcating and expanding of the verses, and there you come to the sectarian differences ending in denominationalism. It was well said by an earlier speaker on the other side that religion was a matter affecting the heart rather than the head. Therefore it is, I suppose, why, on the other side, we have had so much of exhortation and so little argument. The honourable gentleman asks us to pass the Bill because of the way religious teaching has worked elsewhere, and he instanced Germany and France. The illustrations are not conspicuously happy. In the first place, if religious instruction is given in German schools without causing sectarian differences, he forgets that there is only one Church in Germany; and it was, I think, the Minister of Defence who pointed out that we have forty or fifty creeds, each of which is entitled to equal recognition. And, further, as to the moral results of religious education in schools, I do not know that the honourable gentleman was conspicuously happy in the example he gave. The most infidel nation on the face of the earth is Germany, unless it be France; and education in France has been under religious control for centuries. It has been stated that it is the duty of the State to teach religion. We have had assertion for it, but we have had no reason. It has been said that, inasmuch as the State attends to physical training, to technical training, and to intellectual training in the ordinary school-work, therefore it is the duty of the State to teach religion. Now, if it is the duty of the State to teach religion, the State must decide what

religion it shall teach. Here we have a State Church at once. Then, again, why should it follow, because the State teaches secular subjects, that therefore it should teach religion? Why does the State teach secular subjects? In the first place, because ignorance is the mother of crime, and the State must check crime; and, in the second place, because, unless we teach our children, our young men when they grow up will not be able to compete on level terms with the educated artisans of other countries. It is solely for these reasons, and not for any moral reason, that the State gives secular teaching to its children. Therefore no argument follows from that that the State should give religious teaching. Most of the arguments which have been urged in favour of Bible-reading in schools have been urged on false grounds. Glowing pictures have been drawn of the moral, religious, and intellectual results that will accrue to the nation if this Bill be passed. A moment's reflection will show that these gentlemen have in their minds national righteousness, not Bible-reading in schools—a very different thing. The present law is that for two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon secular teaching shall be given; the Bill proposes that for twenty minutes or so the Bible shall be read, the two-hours period being broken into for that purpose. Is it not absurd to say that such gigantic results as the moral, religious, and intellectual perfection of the nation are to follow from so trivial a cause? There is very much more that I could say on this subject; but, as there are many honourable members who want to follow me, I shall not proceed further.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I will briefly state the reasons which lead me to vote as I am about to vote. Before proceeding to those reasons, I should like to say a word with respect to the statistics referred to by the honourable member for Wakatipu. I am afraid that honourable gentleman draws much too favourable deductions from those statistics—much more favourable deductions than he is entitled to draw. I will also briefly refer to one of the arguments which fell from the honourable member for Dunedin East. He argued, and seemed to attach great weight to the argument, that, if the Bible were not allowed to be read in schools, the children would conceive the idea that it was not a good book; and, inferentially, he insinuated that, if this House would not allow the Bible to be read in schools, this House showed also that its opinion was that it was an objectionable book. I think that is a very shallow argument. He might just as logically say that, because we do not every evening conclude by reading a page or a chapter of one of Dickens's novels, therefore this House considers Dickens's novels objectionable books. Sir, it may be because honourable members have too high a reverence for the Bible that they object to its being trifled with, that they object to its being read in schools in such a manner as neither to do justice to its great and solemn truths nor be of advantage to the

*Dr. Fitchett*

children. Indeed, they might go further and say that under such reading as this Bill proposes the children might be taught to look upon the book with a want of reverence. And so it is with members of this House. It is not to be inferred, because they do not agree to the proposal that the Bible should be read for twenty minutes in the schools, therefore honourable gentlemen do not becomingly regard the Book of Books. And now I will say a few words as to the reasons which will guide me in voting this evening. I deplore as much as any one can do the tendency which is to be observed in this colony to give children a purely secular education. For my part, I think the child which grows up without a firmly-implanted religious belief, no matter with what creed that belief is associated, is likely to become a misery to himself and an evil to the community. But I do not think the State should act the part of teacher of religion. There are too many creeds, too many refinements of creeds, to make it possible for the State to undertake that duty with satisfaction to the parents of the children, who have a right to designate what direction the religious instruction of the children shall take. And, if the State were to undertake the duty of religious instruction, it should do so thoroughly and efficiently; and I contend that it would not be doing so thoroughly and efficiently under the proposal contained in this Bill. To allow children, for twenty minutes each day, to read to each other passages from the Bible, without explanation or exposition, would infallibly create in the minds of the children a distaste for The Book and a want of reverence for its great teachings. I believe that there are only three ways by which a religious education can be given to children. The State must either leave that duty to the parents and guardians of the children, or it must undertake the duty and establish sectarian schools, or it must subsidise denominational schools conducted by private people. One of these three courses only is open, and so obviously is this the case that I cannot help thinking it must be apparent to the honourable member for the Taieri, who is not wanting in intelligence, that what we have heard throughout this House is true, that this is but the initial attempt to drive home the larger system of denominational education. For these reasons, and not because I have not a reverence for religious teaching, I feel myself compelled to vote against this Bill.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—This is a subject which has been occupying the attention of colonists for a large number of years. Ever since 1877, when the Bible was first not allowed to be used in the public schools, the feeling has been growing that a wrong has been done to the people, and that feeling has been intensified year by year, and, I venture to say, will not be satisfied until their object is accomplished. Year by year the demand for reading the Bible in schools has increased, and honourable members may do what they please for a time, but I submit that, ultimately—whether it be a year or two or more—Bible-reading will

be established in our public schools. We boast of our national system of education; but how can that system be national which proscribes the book to the presence of which we attribute the civilisation of the English countries, and, indeed, the civilisation of all the civilised world? That book is held to be the standard of civilisation. The countries which profess belief in this book are the countries most advanced in science, in literature, in art, and in all those civilising agencies of which we are so proud. Why, then, is this book, in this colony, to be kept out of our public schools? We have been told that this is simply an initial stage towards denominationalism; but that is one of those cries which are so easily got up, and which are so easily answered. If you wish to do away with denominationalism, establish Bible-reading in your schools; and, if you wish to foster denominationalism, exclude religious teaching from your schools, and, depend upon it, the demand for that teaching will be so great that in a few years the country will demand to fall back on denominationalism. Therefore, if you wish to work against denominationalism, the best way is to support this Bill. I think a great deal of misconception has arisen with respect to the terms of the Bill. I think, if the people in Otago or in Hawke's Bay, or elsewhere, desire to read the Bible in the schools, there is no reason whatever why they should be prevented from having that system. Why should we in Otago be prevented from having this system because the representatives from other parts do not want it?

Mr. KERR.—Because you want to thrust it upon us.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—No; the very object of the Bill is to make it optional with the districts to adopt the system or not as they choose. It expressly gives authority to the School Committees to sanction the reading of the Bible. What I was about to point out was this: that we have had a great many sentimental objections to this Bill. What is the fact with regard to the past? The Bible was read in the public schools of Otago until the Act of 1877 put a stop to it, and ever since then there have been complaints and grievances in Otago in respect to that Act. Up to that time the people of that district were in perfect unanimity and harmony in this matter; and it would be so again if this Bill were passed. That the people desire it has been fully demonstrated by speakers before me this evening, and especially by the honourable member for Dunedin East. I venture to say that in several parts of the colony—take Nelson, take Otago, take Hawke's Bay, take South Canterbury—you will find five-sixths of the people in favour of this Bill.

Mr. KERR.—It was never mentioned in our district.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Well, that may be the fault of the honourable gentleman himself; but that it was discussed fully and prominently in the southern districts of the colony I can vouch. Now, Sir, upon the general question, in the first place I submit that this question

of denominationalism is a mere myth. Then, we have been referred to the question of a State Church. What possible connection that has with the subject I cannot understand. Is there a State Church in America? Certainly not; and yet they have religious teaching there. Is there a State Church in Canada? Is there a State Church in New South Wales? Is there a State Church in Victoria? No. Why, all these arguments are simply arguments which go to show that the subject has not been thought out by those who have used them. Take, for instance, the Minister of Education. His speech seemed to me to be practically an apology. The only apology he could offer for not supporting the Bill was a number of very far-fetched arguments which did not seem to have very much bearing on the question. In the first place, he said that the reading of the Bible in schools would lead to religious intolerance. Where is the evidence of that? Not in those countries where the Bible is read in schools. We know perfectly well that at present there is a cry of intolerance in this country because the Bible is not read in the schools. In America and New South Wales, where the Bible or portions of it are read in the schools, there is not this cry of intolerance. We are told about some instances in Newfoundland where some ministers are admitted to the public schools to teach religion; but the very object of this Bill is to keep ministers out. At present considerable dissatisfaction is caused in several parts of the colony through the ministers of some denominations teaching in the public schools, the ministers of other denominations not doing so; and difficulties have arisen through privileges being conceded to the one and not to the other; and sometimes there are complaints of ministers being admitted to the schools and availing themselves of privileges they have no right to. The Minister of Education asked, Why do not the Committees sanction the reading of the Bible out of school-hours? That has been tried in several parts of the colony—we have tried it in Otago—and for the reasons given by some other honourable members it has failed. If the Bible-reading takes place before school-hours, the children will come late or will find some excuse for not being there, their attendance being entirely optional; and, if the reading is after school-hours, they will not remain. The result is that, although, in some instances, I believe, in Canterbury and Otago, Bible-reading classes have been held successfully, still the scheme generally has not been so successful as its promoters desire. What is wanted, then, is that during some part of the ordinary school-hours the children whose parents wish them to attend will be compelled to attend, and will be subject to the discipline of the school. This Bill is to carry out that intention. Then, we have been told by the Minister of Defence that we have assumed too much in supposing there is a very strong feeling throughout the community in favour of Bible-reading in public schools. He said that not 50 per cent. of the parents were in favour of it.

Now, I venture to say the honourable gentleman has not devoted much attention to the study of this subject. We know perfectly well that persons who do not wish to get information on the subject do not go into it very carefully, and are apt to be convinced with very little evidence. But what are the facts? A *plébiscite* was taken, and practically the whole of Otago was unanimous in its expression of opinion—it was not quite unanimous, because there was a dissenting number, but seventenths of those who voted on the subject were in favour of Bible-reading in schools. Now, we know the floor of this House has been flooded with petitions for it since 1879, and they seem to be on the increase. We have had even this session a very large number of petitions indeed presented to this House.

Mr. KERR.—What are they? Go and look at them. Most of them are written by one man. I speak as a member of the Committee that saw them.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—The honourable gentleman is talking of that about which he is not informed. Then, we have been told by the member for St. Albans that the subject is out of place here. Why, the honourable gentleman forgets that the reading of the Bible in schools was part of the education scheme in most parts of the colony before the present general system was established in 1877; and we know it was simply by a catch-vote that the Bible was excluded from the schools under the colonial system, and efforts have been made ever since to get the Bible restored to the schools. The honourable gentleman told us that this subject afforded an opportunity of "blowing off steam." I am afraid the honourable gentleman avails himself of many opportunities of "blowing off steam;" and he availed himself of one in speaking upon this Bill. He told us we should go to our constituents and convert them. That is the very thing we are now doing. The object of this debate is to enlighten the people as to the importance of the subject, and to weigh the arguments of those who advocate the Bill; and it also gives an opportunity to those who oppose it to adduce what arguments they have. An important object of the debate is to try to convert the constituents to support this important movement. I was much struck with the argument of the honourable member for Auckland West, who, I know, has very great sympathy with the Bible and its teachings. He stated that the proper place for religious teaching is the Sunday-school and the home. Now, we know very well that a very large number of children do not attend Sunday-school.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Yes; over 90 per cent. of the children who attend the public schools.

Mr. FULTON.—Only 25 per cent.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—If you go to the cities you find that the children who attend the Sunday-schools do not represent half of those who could attend.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—110,000 attend the public schools, and 99,884 attend the Sunday-schools.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Yes; but they are

not the same children. Besides, Sunday-school teaching is only one day a week, and is not all the teaching that is desired by those who advocate Bible-reading in schools. As to religious teaching in the homes, the honourable member for Dunedin East fully demonstrated that that is a failure. We know very well that many parents of children are utterly incompetent to impart religious instruction to them, or have not the time or inclination to teach their children at home the teaching of the Bible. Now, I submit to this House that it would be only a fair measure of justice to those who demand the object of this Bill that it should be granted to them, and that what is asked here should be conceded. The Bill inflicts no injury upon any one. It is entirely optional with the parent whether he will let his child attend the school during the Bible-reading or not, and it is entirely optional with the School Committee whether the Bible-reading shall be allowed at all or not. I should myself prefer to leave the option to the Education Boards; but that was discussed, and this proposal was adopted as the better under the circumstances. We know it is a very lamentable thing indeed to find a boy or girl of fourteen or fifteen, when called as a witness, not able to understand the nature of an oath. I know perfectly well a case of that sort that occurred some years ago, where a youth who ought almost to have been leaving school was put in the witness-box, and was asked whether he understood the nature of an oath, and he said he did not; and, being asked if he knew anything about the Bible, he said he did not. Now, was he qualified to discharge the duties of a citizen? I submit, not. Then, we are told that the reading of the Bible without comment would cause a feeling of revulsion against the Bible. Now, as to that, we have only to look at the facts in older countries than this for the reply. In Scotland the Bible has been taught in the schools for century after century. What is the case there, and in many other countries? Is there any revulsion there?

An Hon. MEMBER.—How is it taught?

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—As it should be taught. I submit to honourable members who have any feeling that injustice would be done by the passing of this Bill that they should dispel that feeling entirely. It can cause no injury to any one, and a very great good can be done in satisfying the demands of a large and influential body of colonists who demand the reform proposed by this Bill. I do not know whether we shall succeed in getting the Bill passed into law this session; but, if not, I think I may venture to predict that this agitation will be kept up, and I have no doubt whatever that ultimately, like many other great objects that have taken time to achieve, success will be attained in this matter. I am convinced that the fullest success will come by-and-by if it is not obtained to-night.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—The honourable gentleman has made it appear that I misrepresented the feeling of the people of Nelson on this subject, because he said they were in favour of

Mr. W. D. Stewart



Bible-reading in schools. The last election of School Committees in that district was held specially upon this question, and the number of votes given were—For Bible-reading in schools, 1,765; against it, 1,740—a majority of twenty-five for it. But there were thirty-four informal votes, and those who received these informal votes were notoriously against Bible-reading in schools, so that really there was an actual majority of nine against the proposal.

Mr. WALKER.—I do not like to give a silent vote on this question, because I feel it is a very serious one, and if I thought this Bill would be a solution of what is undeniably a very great difficulty I should support it most cordially. But I cannot see for one moment that it will do so. I cannot be persuaded of that by any arguments I have heard to-night, or by any of the mere assertions that have been given as arguments in support of this Bill. I think the remarks of the last speaker were nothing but assertions. If the honourable member had been doing anything but listening to the clergymen and the dominies who have circulated petitions and otherwise tried to work up an agitation in favour of this proposal during the last few years, he must have seen that the colony is not in earnest in wishing for this proposal to be part of the education system. The honourable gentleman says that by a catch-vote in 1877 the provision excluding the Bible was inserted in the Act. But, even if that were so, the people of the colony have in no way risen against what he maintains to be a glaring case not only of injustice, but almost of national immorality. But I maintain quite the contrary, and I also say I am glad to have an opportunity of replying to an honourable gentleman who comes from Otago, where, most distinctly, this so-called agitation has its home; because I charge that part of the colony, I charge those who bring these petitions to the House, in the first place, with not being sincere in the matter which they profess to have at heart. We all remember the old story of the Quaker who asked the man who said he had sympathy with the widow and orphan, "To what amount do you sympathize?" To the honourable gentleman who brought in this Bill I would say, to what amount do these gentlemen in Otago who profess to have this matter at heart sympathize with it? They have large endowments for Church and educational purposes; and I ask, how much of these endowments have they devoted to the cause of religious instruction? Contrast what they have done with the self-sacrificing course pursued by the Roman Catholics. I say that they show the Presbyterians of Otago and the other denominations who are working in the same direction a most bright and glorious example. I say to the honourable member for Dunedin West and those who are working with him that, until those who support this measure are prepared to put their hands into their pockets and show their sincerity, as the Roman Catholics have done, they will get no justice such as they demand from the colony, nor any sympathy. I have the greatest sympathy

with and respect for my fellow-colonists who profess the Roman Catholic religion, and if I could see my way to help them in their present difficulty I should be the first to do it; but I am sorry to say, and I have always said it, that I do not see my way to help them at present, because it would disturb the national system; but I say this: that, if ever this Bible-in-schools proposal is carried, and has any practical effect in the way of altering our educational system, I, for one, will also join with those who seek to give denominational schools their fair share of educational expenditure. You cannot give the Bible-in-schools party what they want unless you also give the Roman Catholics what they desire; and therefore, while it is all very well for the honourable member for the Taieri and for the "true-blues" in Otago to say that they are only asking for what will be for the good of the Presbyterian Church, they are doing what their fathers would have been very sorry to do, they are really doing what will be the downfall of the national system of education.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I do not wish to go over all the arguments that have been used against this measure, because I think that the honourable member for Auckland West stated the arguments most fairly and concisely; but there is one view of the case I do not think has been presented by any honourable member who has spoken to-night. That is this: We know that, in establishing a State system of education, we wish to make it as attractive to all colonists as possible. Now, we know that, although our system has been at work for a long time, there is one section of the community that cannot, owing to conscientious scruples, obtain any advantage from that system. I refer to the Roman Catholics; and, as has been said, they have expended large sums of money and have made large sacrifices in order to satisfy their consciences. I ask honourable gentlemen whether we shall not, if we carry this measure, add another objection to the system, not only on the part of the Catholics, but on the part of some other denominations which do not wish to have the Bible read in schools. We cannot get away from the fact that there are a large number of persons in the colony besides the Roman Catholics; and we know that, if we are to maintain our national system, we must make it as free from objections as we possibly can. The Bill says that the Bible is to be read in school-hours. Now, I ask any honourable member to look back at the time when he was at school and say whether the fact of a boy reading the Bible aloud to a class, or of a teacher reading it aloud in that way, would be likely to confer any benefit upon the children. I fail to see that it would. Can moral or religious principles be implanted in the minds of pupils by reading the Bible aloud in turn, verse by verse, for twenty minutes a day?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I maintain, not. I say that the Scriptures should be expounded and taught, as well as read, in order to have any effect; and it is against the whole principle of our education system to do that. But, even if

it could be done as part of the national system, under the provisions of this Bill you would not teach all your children religion, because there are a number of denominations which would not allow their children to be taught religion in the schools. That is recognised in the Bill when it is said that a parent may notify to the School Committee that a child is not to attend. Then, I say that you are asking the State to provide money to teach religion to only a certain number of the children of the colony. That is going in the direction of sapping the system that we have at the present time, and which we wish to maintain. Then, if my contention is correct, that the Bible cannot be read merely but must be expounded in order to carry out your wishes, who is to expound it? The teachers of the schools? Then, I ask, would it be right to allow some of the teachers to do that? We have had an instance given to us to-night of a teacher reading the Bible, and then saying, "That would be all very well if it were true." I ask, are such teachers fit persons to impart religious instruction or a knowledge of the Scriptures? I say certainly not. I think the arguments used by the honourable member for Auckland West showed that the only proper method of imparting religious instruction is for the clergymen and the parents to do it; and his testimony on this point is most valuable. There was one argument made use of by the honourable member for Dunedin East. He said that it is not to be expected that we can get parents to teach their children anything from the Bible, because many parents are not able to do so. Well, I answer to that that it does not apply to all persons in the colony. There are many persons who are able to do this, and there may be some who are not able to do it; and it is in respect of those classes where the parents are not able to do it that the duty of the clergyman or minister comes in.

Mr. FULTON.—If the honourable gentleman will promise to stop talking, so as to get on with other business, I will not take two minutes in reply.

Mr. SAMUEL.—What are other honourable members to do?

Mr. GUINNESS.—Sir, I think these interruptions are unseemly. I was very glad indeed to hear the Minister of Education and also another Minister speak out so plainly and decidedly upon this matter, because it is in their charge that the system of education is placed at the present time. It is refreshing to us on this side of the House to know that the Government, and especially the Minister in charge of the administration of this department, hold views on this question that are sound. I say that the arguments of the Minister of Education entirely meet the arguments that have been brought forward in favour of this measure. I think what ought to have been done was to have stopped this debate long ago by simply moving, That this Bill be read this day six months; and I shall move that now.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—I rise to second that. I did not intend to say anything on the sub-

ject to-night, and when I came here I was quite undecided how I should vote. I have listened to all arguments *pro* and *con.*, and I feel that I am as unprepared to vote now as when I entered the House. For that reason, I feel that the only way to solve the difficulty with regard to matters is to second the motion my honourable friend has just moved. I have, as I have said, listened to all the arguments, and especially to the arguments of those who have advocated this Bill, and I have discovered nothing in their arguments to induce me to vote for it; nor have I heard anything on the other side that would induce me to vote their way.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why vote at all?

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—My honourable friend says, "Why vote at all?" I have not voted yet. Now, is it the desire of those gentlemen who introduce this Bill and endeavour to carry it through that children should really receive religious training at the State schools, or are they merely carrying out the wishes of their constituents in attempting to get this Bill passed through Parliament? I think it is the latter; because, for myself, I do not see that any real religious instruction would be given to children in the State schools by the reading of the Bible for twenty minutes or half an hour. We all know that children, when they do read the Bible—and some of us, I suppose, have children who read the Bible with us—ask a number of most extraordinary questions about it. We are told that the children in the schools are to receive no instruction with regard to the Bible—that it is not to be explained to them—that they are merely to read it. Now, if that is so, I feel quite sure that, having read it, they would shut up the book with the most foggy notions of what they had read, and that, instead of its doing them good; it might possibly give them food for reflection of a kind which might do them harm. For that reason I think it would be unwise to have Bible-reading in schools, unless what the pupils read is fully explained to them. We have also heard to-night that this Bill would do harm, because it is the thin end of the wedge which is to be used for ultimately obtaining denominational education. Now, if it was really the thin end of the wedge for that object, I myself should at once vote for it, because I think the best thing we can do is to at once adopt denominational education. What do we find? We find that the Roman Catholics here are educating their own children. Last year there were 22,000 Roman Catholic children of school-age; and if the Roman Catholics, as they have a perfect right to do, had taken advantage of our system of education and sent those 22,000 children to the State schools, what would have been the result? Their capitation alone would have amounted to £88,000; and, in addition to that, you would have had to build schools and to provide teachers. I maintain that if the Roman Catholics had sent their children to the State schools, as they had the right to do, the colony would have been put to an extra expense of £100,000 at least—probably it would

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have been £150,000; and when we are groaning under frightful taxation, and have this great liability for education, I think we should be glad at once to adopt the denominational system of education. But this Bill does not go so far, although it may be the means of bringing about ultimately such a result. Now, I am not going to occupy the time of the House, because I know there are honourable gentlemen who wish to bring other measures on.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Do not be cruel.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—Sir, I am accused of being cruel. I suppose I have a perfect right to speak. It is not often I speak in this House, and I suppose I have the right to second the motion. I say we require more time to reflect on the subject, and when I say I am not going to keep the House long I am not being cruel, I hope. I will conclude my remarks by seconding the amendment.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I have been in the House on several occasions when this question has been debated, and I have never yet stated my reasons for giving my vote upon it. During the recent elections I found there was very great interest taken in this question, and I was many times asked what were my reasons for the vote I gave on this important subject. I feel, therefore, although the hour is late, that I should allow nothing to prevent me from stating my reasons for voting as I intend to vote. And still less, Sir, should I allow any insinuations of ulterior motives to keep me silent. Because there may be some other Bill on the Order Paper underlying such an important Bill as this, am I therefore to be gagged, and deprived of the right of expressing my sentiments? Sir, I am surprised that any honourable gentleman should have given expression to the insinuations I have heard this evening.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh, oh!

Mr. SAMUEL.—Honourable members say, "Oh, oh!" Some honourable members are themselves so insincere that they will never believe in any other man's sincerity. Some honourable members have acquired such notoriety for insincerity that it would be quite foreign to their natures that they should not ridicule the sincerity of any one else. Now, this Bill is a very short one—I venture to say, far too short to deal with such an important subject. It is a Bill which, I venture to say, has been very inadvisedly drafted, and is not at all fitted for the purpose for which it purports to be designed. Its object is said, baldly, to be to allow the Bible to be read in schools, subject to a time-table and conscience-clause. That is what is said of the Bill; but when we look at it what do we find? We find that the time-table is comprised in these few words: "such reading shall not exceed twenty minutes;" and we find that the conscience-clause is comprised in these words: "and no child shall be compelled to attend such reading if the parents or guardians of such child shall, in writing, inform the Committee or teacher that he objects to such attendance." Sir, is that a worthy or full provision to make for a

time-table or conscience-clause? It seems to me it certainly is not. What does the "twenty minutes" mean? Does it mean that one particular denomination is to have twenty minutes on Monday, another twenty minutes on Tuesday, and so on? If that is what it means, then why does it not say so, or why is not the thing properly defined and set out? It may be said that we can arrange it in Committee: but surely we should have something more than this bald outline; it should not be left to us to frame a new measure in Committee. Honourable members who introduce measures should bring down complete Bills, and not mere sketches or outlines for us to fill up in Committee. Then, Sir, "no child shall be compelled to attend such reading if the parent or guardian of such child shall, in writing, inform the Committee or the teacher that he objects to such attendance." Let us look how this would work. We all know that there are children in the colony who are not sent to school as they ought to be; that the compulsory clauses of the Education Act have to be from time to time enforced; that parents are brought before the Magistrates for evading the provisions of the Act: and we cannot but recognise that by a great many people in the colony the benefits of our education system are not taken proper advantage of. Would not those people be only too glad to keep their children from school for twenty minutes in the morning, and would not they take advantage of this provision to keep their children from school? I say that thousands of people in New Zealand, caring little or nothing for the education of their children, as we see is the case at the present day, and caring still less for the religious education of their children, would make this a mode of altering the school-hours. This cannot be denied. I think the honourable member for Dunedin East told us that a mother might care nothing about the education of her children in religious matters—that she might be addicted to intemperance, and therefore would not care about the educating of her child. Would such a woman as that send a child to school twenty minutes earlier than there was any necessity to do? Not a bit of it. They would not send their children at all until twenty minutes after the school opened; and so this provision for religious training would be quite ineffectual. Then, what would be the deciding body? Not the Education Board, but the School Committee. We find that School Committees are to be the persons to impose this Bible-reading on the schools or not. We shift off the responsibility from this House and put it on School Committees. We say to them, "There, we give you the power; you can take twenty minutes, and regulate it as you like. You can let that reading take place in the presence of any minister you like, and there shall be no supervision over you." What would be the effect of that? At the elections for these Committees we should have all sorts of methods used to get particular members elected; and we should find School Committees working together to make such

regulations as would fit their own religious prejudices. It would be an engine, too, of religious intolerance. There is a very large body of colonists who are paying for education, while they are getting no benefit from it. We have no right to gloat over their miseries by imposing this slight upon them. It does not follow that, because we are strong, we should insult the weak. Our excuse for making them pay for these schools is that they may send their children there. But we must take care there is nothing taught that they can object to. Yet the promoters of this Bill are asking us to sanction something that they can with good reason object to. I do trust the Bill will not be carried, and I hope that such an injustice will not be done to so large a body of people as to not only tax them for what they do not use, but to give them an absolutely good and sufficient reason for not taking advantage of the free education afforded in this colony.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, what a solemn farce we have seen acted to-night! Was ever a great Legislature so disgraced—the teaching of the Bible made the means of robbing wretched people of benefits which were about to be conferred upon them! What shame must the members of this House themselves feel, to think that a religious question of this kind should have been used by lawyers for purposes such as this—to disgrace the Bar of this country! Will they dare to take their seats upon the bench as Judges, after having used the power conferred upon them by the people for such a purpose as this? Let their names be recorded, let the facts be recollected, let the people of New Zealand remember that the name of religion has been used for such a purpose as this. Why, there was a Bill here immediately to follow this debate which was to give to a suffering people a freehold of their lands, to relieve them from the oppressive burdens of continued residence upon one spot that have been laid upon them. And now, for another session, these benefits must be delayed; and those who have done this deed would aspire to wear the ermine hereafter, which they have disgraced as members of the Bar this night. What have these people done that they should be deprived of these benefits to gratify the desire of monopoly of the men who already possess too great a monopoly? Why are they to shut out their fellow-countrymen from pleading for the oppressed, from striving to relieve them from the servitude they are under of being compelled to employ those gentlemen who have treated them thus to-night? Are they to raise fees from the pockets of their countrymen—

Mr. SAMUEL.—I rise to a point of order. Is the honourable gentleman to be allowed to debate another Bill on the Order Paper, to allow him an opportunity of commenting unduly on members of this House?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The rule is to confine the debate to the order under consideration; but I think the honourable gentleman is merely commenting on the length of the speeches, and he has a right to speak on that subject, but he

*Mr. Samuel*

will not be at liberty to enter on a discussion upon other orders of the day.

Sir G. GREY.—I am glad the honourable gentleman's conscience is touched at last. I say, Sir, that I am fairly entitled to comment on the conduct of those who have this night, as I say, robbed their fellow-countrymen, by their lengthened speeches, and by a plot that is not upon the Order Paper—by a plot laid in the lobbies of this House—by which they were to defeat the chances these poor people had of gaining benefits such as I speak of. And, then, when I mention these benefits, that a question of order should be raised in order that, by my being prevented from speaking, those who have been robbed of their rights should be left in ignorance of the rights that have been taken from them in this House! I say it is all wrong that, in the name of religion, these things should be done,—that one of the greatest debates that could have taken place should have been prostituted for such a purpose. It is to me inconceivable; but let them walk forth to-morrow before their countrymen branded with the recollection of what they have said to-night, boasting of their sincerity at the very time their actions and words were insincere, and they knew it; standing up under a false mask as sincere and good men, while at the same time by their words and actions they give most abundant evidence of their insincerity. I trembled when I heard some of the words that fell from some honourable members' lips. I heard one honourable gentleman state that the object of reading the Bible in schools was to impart those great truths it contains to the scholars, and he spoke these words as if he was speaking with no other object than the teaching of those truths; and yet those words were but the cover of a plot, by extending this debate until half-past twelve to-night, after which hour no new business can be brought on, to rob the people of rights to which they were entitled. When I think how the poor have been treated in this country, when I think of how long they have suffered, and the state they are reduced to, and how, when relief was so near them, when, apparently, the healing-cup was at their lips, it has been dashed down for so contemptible a purpose as the gratification of the greed for gain of some people—

Mr. SAMUEL.—Sir, I rise to a point of order. Is the honourable gentleman justified in accusing members of this House of being actuated in their action in this House by their greed for gain?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think that is an improper motive to impute to members of this House.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I should be sorry if I have said anything improper; but I feel for the sufferings which others have to undergo in various ways. I can fancy plots being made to ruin the poor in many ways. They have suffered so that I hardly know how to speak. I fear every word I say may trespass upon some rule of the House. But, I ask, are ordinary rules easily applicable to such a great occasion as this, when so great a wrong has been done under the deceiving cloak of virtue? I believe if I

moved the adjournment of the House it would give me a larger field to speak. The object I have before me is really this: Very great wrongs have been suffered by the people of New Zealand, and I believe that the very honourable gentlemen whose speeches I am finding fault with this night have been the main movers in many of those wrongs. I believe that the present depression in the colony is due to those causes. I would fain now, while the sense of all those things is fully upon me, give expression to some of the views I feel on these points. I could fancy, for instance, a people coming into this colony, as yet almost unoccupied, and then such a state of things prevailing as a friend of mine, a noble lord, states, after his visit to this country, that he found to prevail. He was a visitor on a great run, and is entertained by the squatter. He hears how the people of this country are treated; and what does he say? The run consisted of about fifty thousand acres. Nominally, any one might go in and buy any of that land over the squatter's head. We shall be told that there was a free choice open to the people; that they might purchase anything they liked; that that country was open to them. Why did they not purchase it? Ah! what are the words? "Nominally" they had that power. And then it would be boasted by members in this House how difficult it was to get people to go upon the land. "Have they not all the right to go in and select any unpurchased land they like?" And every one who spoke these words knew there was no such right; that it was a nominal thing, a deception practised upon the settlers and those who are poor and ignorant, just such a deception as has been designed to-night, when they read in *Hansard* how these noble and righteous men struggled for Bible-reading in schools and made long speeches upon the subject, while the purport was different: it was to prevent other measures from being brought forward: it was to ruin the poor. Well, what took place in these runs? Let me follow the parallel out. It was thus that Lord Lyttelton wrote:—

"The run was about 50,000 acres. Nominally any one might come in and buy any of this land over the squatter's head; but, besides that in these remote places it would not be worth buying, the early squatters had what is called a pre-emptive right to buy at the fixed price of £3 an acre such parts of the land as they had made certain improvements upon. They used to 'spot,' as it was called, these improvements in different parts of the run, the effect being that the intermediate parts were valueless without them, and these they thus secured."

Suppose these same gentlemen, some of those who this very night have been very prominent in what has been done—suppose that they form this plan. Here for twenty-eight years have these great runs been shut up against men in New Zealand by those persons who have gone in and occupied these vast tracts of country, secured by these unfair means. And during these twenty-eight years they have reaped large profits, and have shut everybody out from

these large tracts of land. And they make the country full of poor. They have impoverished many; they have prevented numbers from growing rich, and have driven others from the country. Supposing that was the case, as it really was, and that then the thought occurred, "Let us get a great railway made. Let us do that. Let us promise the poor abundant employment on the railway—those who are impoverished by our having grasped the land. Let us tell them that these works shall be found for them. Let us enter into a treaty with a foreign company, nominally, but many of ourselves taking part in it; and let us pass a law which will enable us to enter into a contract by which these runs shall pass to that company, and then those who occupied them for years, in great part wrongfully, shall enter into those vast freeholds and impoverish the country for all time, and use this House as an instrument to obtain it"—use myself as one of the instruments to obtain those things, as one ignorant of what was being done, the people thus being deprived of their inheritance. That would be a fit object of the debate, this night to be accomplished; and, in fact, it has been accomplished. What have they done? From the people and their children all this have they this night taken. And now, when some small relief could have been afforded to them this night, it seems hard that some few members should use their power in the manner they have used it, and dare to send men working upon their land, and, for one job, which job would make it five times the value it is now to those who take it over, to lose it for all time, to become the serfs of people who live in the Mother-country. Oh, I think that these things ought not to be done, and that to-night we should not, under cover of a religious debate, which every one knew was fictitious, have done such wrongs to our fellow-men. I heard some of those honourable gentlemen professing their sincerity, declaring they were sincere, in solemn language, in the face of this House; and I ask the House whether they were sincere or not.

An Hon. MEMBER.—There is no sincerity among us.

Sir G. GREY.—Well, so be it. I say that for years great wrong has been plotted against the people; for years a great wrong has been plotted which was to deprive them of vast tracts of country; and that wrong has now been accomplished: but no blessing will fall on those who have achieved it. At last some man will rise in the country who can rally round him the people, who will insist that after the debate of this night such things shall not be repeated. When I think hopes had been formed that such things would not occur this session; and yet that such a great wrong should have been done to the population, and that to-night that wrong should have been increased by the slight remedy that was to be applied to it having been by such means defeated, I am grieved. It is sad to reflect upon. I do not wonder honourable members hide themselves behind the curtains, and try to keep out of sight. Well they may. But we, for a time, must submit

to a triumph which has been achieved. The lawyers have gained by the means I speak of, apparently—they have succeeded in wresting their lands from the lawful owners. Wretched children may run about half-fed and naked, who are the real proprietors of the soil. And a time will come, I believe, when some support will be given, some aid afforded, some reparation sought for and obtained for these great wrongs. And possibly yet, coming back to the question of throwing open the legal profession, we may see this measure carried; see it the law of the land; see men fairly walking into their inheritance, all being able to plead in our Courts; and we shall see those who aided in what has been done to-night to defeat that measure dwarf into their just proportions. I know they will sorrow in their hearts for what they have done. I know they will feel that a wrong has been truly done. I cannot forget one gentleman. This is not the first time he has robbed his fellow-countrymen by an action of this kind: it is a repetition of the same sort of thing. But I believe yet this Parliament will say they will not see me wronged as I have been wronged this night; that justice shall be done, that these measures shall all be brought forward, and that such a plot, so treacherous in its conception and so cunningly carried out, will not attain the end which its authors hoped to attain from it. I feel sure that the public at large will contend that justice shall in this respect be done. I believe they will direct their attention to the great events I speak of: and this Parliament will see that it will not be used for such purposes,—that honourable gentlemen shall again be allowed to bring forward Bills which have been defeated in such a manner. Let these Bills be discussed openly and fairly, and be defeated by fair means. But, no; if they thought they could be defeated by fair means they would not have ventured to follow the course they have adopted this evening. I ask for justice, not for myself, but for the people of New Zealand—those who have been robbed for years, the oppressed of New Zealand, the men who are now out of work, with starving families, and for whose protection and sustenance no sufficient provision has yet been made. I feel sure that I may rely upon justice for them, and justice in regard to the measures which to-night have been disposed of in the manner I speak of; and on a future occasion I shall strive to attain that end and to have justice done myself and those whom I represent. The rules of the House will not allow me to use the terms I should like to use in regard to the unfair position we occupy; but I feel that justice will be done to us, and that at last we shall attain those rights which we are entitled to.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I cannot allow the remarks made by the last speaker to pass unchallenged. He has imputed to the lawyers in this House that, by a cunningly-devised plot, they have robbed the people of certain rights and lands. I regret that the honourable gentleman has left the House; but, as I am vindicating the lawyers, not attacking him, I

will proceed. This debate came on at half-past seven o'clock this evening. I was the first lawyer to speak, and I did not rise till about a quarter to twelve: even then, I was provoked into speech by the attack of the honourable member for St. Albans. I say that the honourable gentleman is not warranted in imputing to us a plot to kill his Bill, and the House ought to resent such an imputation. It means, if true, that we made tools of every member who has spoken; and that is not a compliment to members who constitute the House. It may be matter of regret that the Standing Orders prevent the Law Practitioners Bill from coming on. Personally, I am glad of it, for I am opposed to that measure. I emphatically deny, however, that the lawyers have talked it out. The great bulk of the speaking has been done by others. No lawyer has spoken for as much as ten minutes. There is therefore absolutely no ground for the very grave reflection the honourable gentleman has cast on the members of the legal profession in this House.

Mr. FULTON.—I will only occupy the time of the House a few minutes. I have taken a number of notes of objections raised by various honourable members to this Bill, but I shall not be able to deal with them all. When we come to practical experience in this matter we find that the difficulties which have been raised disappear. We find that religious teaching in schools can take place without any serious difficulties being met with at all. The honourable gentleman who last spoke and the honourable member for Ashburton have both virtually accused us of being insincere. With regard to the honourable member for Dunedin Central, I think that those who heard his speech will recognise that it was rather the clever speech of an advocate addressing a jury or pleading a cause and trying to find holes in a case—it was rather like pleading in Chambers than the speech of a person who was dealing with a matter of this sort. The Hon. the Minister of Education said that we should make use of the school out of school-hours. Something kindred to that has been stated by other honourable gentlemen, who said that it was only necessary to have teaching for two hours in the morning and for two hours in the afternoon, and that surely there was plenty of unappropriated time in which religious teaching might be given by those who were deeply interested in it. Does the honourable gentleman not know that the school-hours are all occupied far beyond two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon? In my own particular district the children are kept in beyond the ordinary school-hours, and the parents are complaining that the children are pressed so hard that they cannot find time to do their lessons. There is one point that has not been noticed, and it is perhaps the strongest of the arguments against the Bill, and that is the overpressure of the syllabus. That is really the greatest difficulty which at present exists. I have spoken to teachers without number upon this matter, and they have said, "Where is the time? We are favourable to the measure, but

*Sir G. Grey*

how can we find the time to give for this purpose? We are obliged to go on pressing the children. If we do not, the status of the school goes down, our own proficiency is called in question, and we at once fall in the estimation of the school authorities." I say we are cramming the intellect while we are neglecting to train the moral nature of the young; and we are neglecting it because we are taking up the time which might be useful for that purpose. If it is—and I believe it to be to a very large extent—the voice of the mothers of the colony which has been given in this case, I say we are dealing with those who have the interests of the children at heart more than the fathers, and who are better able to judge as to what the requirements of these children are, and as to what training they ought to have, than even any others could do. An honourable gentleman asks, "What is the duty of the State?" We want, at any rate, this: We want a recognition of this book as the foundation of morality; and that it shall not be driven out of our schools, and treated as a thing worthy of indignity, and to be expunged from the category of books admissible there. Accusations were made by some honourable gentlemen as to the character of our teachers. I say a gross injustice has been done to them in saying that even a large number of them are unfit to teach religion, or to preside while the Bible is being read. The honourable member for Nelson spoke of the petitions brought up here, and he questioned their genuineness, because he said that many of the signatures were in the same handwriting. I asked him whether he referred to petitions from Nelson, and I am not at liberty to say what answer he gave me in private. I say now that, if he did refer to petitions from Nelson, those who got those petitions up took care to forward me certificates to this effect—I can show them to the honourable gentleman if he wishes it: that nearly every signature was the genuine signature of the person professing to sign it; and, where it was not signed by the person himself, authority was given to the person going round about for the signatures. What shall we say when an honourable gentleman casts such a slur upon the petitions presented to this House? The honourable gentleman also spoke with regard to the endowments. Is he aware that, as far as Otago and Canterbury are concerned, those endowments were really purchased by the people who first colonised those parts? He is not perhaps so well versed in the early history of the colony as I am—he has not been so long here—but I may tell him this: In point of fact, those endowments were purchased by the early colonists, inasmuch as they paid a larger sum for their lands just for the purpose that a certain portion of them might be devoted to religious and even to denominational education. It is not necessary for me to say how the persons intrusted with the care of these endowments performed their duties. That property was intrusted to their care, and it is for them and not for me to answer. The

honourable member for St. Albans seemed to infer, from the statement he made, that we had no right to bring this matter to this House until, in fact, we had a majority. How many matters of vital moment—one was referred to by the honourable member who has just spoken so eloquently, the abolition of slavery—how many matters of this sort, when they were first advocated in the Parliament at Home, received scant support! but, because they were true and just, those causes grew upon the people, the people became educated, and, last of all, the members were able to carry them. And shall it be said that we should stand still until we get a majority in this House before we discuss this matter? "We should seek," an honourable gentleman said, "to educate our constituents." I know that our constituents have been educating a great many of our representatives. I think we shall find, in the division that takes place, that a far larger number of honourable gentlemen will go into the "Ayes" lobby with me than on any previous occasion. The honourable member for Thorndon stated that many people said that much of the larrikinism and crime was due to the want of Bible-teaching in schools. He and other honourable gentlemen were but setting up men of straw for the purpose of knocking them down. I am not aware that any advocates of the present measure have said so. But the late Premier of the colony said in a speech that "morality must be taught, to cure larrikinism." I feel that there are many other matters which I might well refer to—I have not exhausted even the notes I made—but I do not wish to weary the patience of the House, and I ask them to come to a decision upon this question. There is one other point I wish to refer to. It is said that this is the thin end of the wedge to introduce denominationalism. Let me repeat now what I said at the beginning, that I have never been an advocate of denominational education. I have had promises in this House of support for this measure if I would advocate denominational Bills which are to come before us, and I declined to do so. We ask simply this: that it shall be left to the people themselves to say what they want. We ask that it be left to the various local bodies and School Committees. They surely can deal with this matter. We many of us know cases where the people are almost unanimous: where, I believe, it would be possible to have a Catholic teacher teaching Catholic views, because, practically, there would be no dissent at all. We know other places where nearly the whole of the settlers belong to some other denomination, and where the views of that denomination might be taught. But, quite apart from religious views, are we to say that, where a Committee are so united and where the people are so united that there would not be a dissentient voice, we shall refuse to allow them that which they sincerely and honestly believe will be a boon which they have a right to claim from this House? Again, with regard to denominationalism, I have only to add that those who are refusing this measure are them-

selves paving the way for the introduction of denominationalism. If they would have our present system of education maintained, I say to them, Do not consider it a law of the Medes and Persians, which may never be altered. It will have to be altered. A very large number of the people are determined that it shall be altered, and the longer that is refused the stronger will the feeling of the people grow.

Mr. SEDDON.—I think the legislation on this subject should be definite. If it is necessary for the well-being of the youths attending our State schools that the Bible should be read, then, I say, the Legislature should at once enact that the Book of Holy Writ should be read at given times. By leaving it optional with School Committees we are simply throwing down a bone of contention, and the School Committee elections will become a strife for supremacy, which will cause ill-feeling among the various religious sects and be very injurious to our educational system. I must say that the views I have held on this question have been somewhat shaken during the last few years; so much shaken that on this occasion I shall not feel myself justified in voting against this Bill. If it goes into Committee I shall endeavour to have it so amended that this House shall speak out plainly either in one direction or the other, and not leave the matter optional. Another reason why I rose to speak was to say that there is some justification for the strong feeling exhibited by the honourable member for Auckland Central. Considering the importance of the Bills which he has on the Order Paper for this evening, and that this Bill has never before, to my knowledge, taken half the time it has to-night in discussion, I think there was every justification for the honourable gentleman speaking as strongly as he did. I do not know that we have ever had an occasion on which two Ministers have spoken at such length and, I may say, in so provocative a tone. I do not know that we have ever had, from the Government side of the House, fourteen members following Ministers speaking upon this measure. These matters require explanation; and if the explanation is that which has been expressed by the honourable member for Auckland Central—namely, that the intention was to prevent the Freehold Tenure Acquisition Bill and the Law Practitioners Bill from being discussed—it is easy to see why the discussion has lasted so long. I am positive that these measures are of far greater importance to New Zealand than the Bill we have had under discussion to-night. There has been a desire on the part of the Legislature to give large tracts of country away to a syndicate for railway purposes, and for harbours; and the result will be that, ultimately, when that land is required there will be no provision whereby the people can demand as a right to have the occupation of it. Seeing that the feeling is growing in the House to construct public works by means of land-grants, there is all the more reason for the introduction of a measure to maintain the rights of the people; and, as the honourable member

Mr. Fulton

for Auckland Central has been struggling hard for years to maintain those rights, and has, by the long discussion on this Bill, been prevented bringing forward his measures to-night, there is full excuse for the feeling and earnestness he displayed. As regards the minor question which the honourable gentleman supposes the legal gentlemen of the House have been blocking, I scarcely think the honourable gentleman was justified in referring to it in the manner in which he did, because in looking over the names of those who have taken part in the debate I find that those who belong to the legal profession are in a minority. However, this matter has been discussed, and no doubt the result of the discussion will be good. It is not the first occasion on which a minority, if it take time, will become a majority. I shall not feel myself justified in voting against the Bill.

The House divided on the question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

AYES, 14.

Allen	Joyce	Stewart, W. D.
Anderson	McKenzie, J.	Tanner.
Cowan	Richardson, G.	Tellers.
Feldwick	Ross	Buxton
Hodgkinson	Steward, W. J.	Fulton.

NOES, 81.

Ballance	Jackson	Reeves, W. P.
Barron	Kelly	Samuel
Blake	Kerr	Seymour
Duncan	Lawry	Taylor
Fergus	Levestam	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Marchant	Walker
Fitchett	McGregor	Withy.
Fraser	Moat	
Goldie	Monk	Tellers.
Guinness	Moss	Fitzherbert
Hobbs	Peacock	Grimmond.

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Atkinson	Valentine
Bruce	Hislop
Carroll	Mitchelson
Fish	Reeves, R. H. J.
Graham	Beetham
Hall	Macarthur
Jones	Izard
Larnach	Vogel
Mackenzie, T.	Pearson
Mills	Buchanan
Parata	Richardson, E.
Pyke	O'Connor
Rhodes	Newman
Taiwhanga	Loughrey
Turnbull	O'Callaghan
Ward.	Mackenzie, M.J.S.

Majority against, 17.

Bill ordered to be read a second time that day six months.

The House adjourned at half-past one o'clock a.m.



## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

*Monday, 28th November, 1887.*

Government Business—Customs Tariff—Governor's Salary and Allowances Bill—Ministers' Salaries and Allowances Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

## GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

Major ATKINSON.—In moving this motion I should like to ask the House for permission to insert the word "Thursday" as well as "Wednesday." I should have been glad not to propose to add Thursday, but the occurrences of the past few sittings on which private members' business was down for consideration have shown that there are a number of members who have determined that opportunity shall not be given for the consideration of certain Bills which I should have been glad to see discussed, and which I have used my personal influence to get discussed, but without effect. I confess that I think our Standing Orders are defective in this matter, for, clearly, private members have a right to expect that the House shall have an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon any measures which they may bring forward, and the House ought to have that opportunity, even though a few honourable members may not desire those particular measures to pass. I have some hope that the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, which, I think, are applicable to this Assembly, do provide for this; but the Speaker prefers to take time to consider the matter. All I can say now is that, if the House agrees to this motion, I will endeavour, if possible, to secure that the House shall have an opportunity of discussing these measures. But it is of no use devoting a day to these Bills if time is to be wasted as hitherto. I hope the House will agree to the motion, and will consent to the amendment I have asked to make. If leave is refused, I shall get some one to move an amendment.

Leave to amend refused.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That Government business take precedence on Wednesdays for the remainder of the session."—(*Major Atkinson.*)

Sir G. GREY.—It would be, I think, satisfactory to the House if we had a rather clearer explanation from the Premier upon this subject. I understand him to say that he will endeavour to give to the House an opportunity of discussing these measures and expressing an opinion upon them.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Those that he thinks desirable, only.

Sir G. GREY.—"Those that he thinks desirable." But I mean that even then he does not promise that there will be a chance given of getting them passed this session. If it is to be only a discussion,—and I have no doubt the Premier means that,—I do not think it would be satisfactory really to anybody, and I think it would simply increase the mortification of

those whose measures have been rejected, and perhaps further disappoint the country. Then, I understand one honourable gentleman raises this question: that the Hon. the Premier only proposes to agree to this with reference to those Bills which he thinks it desirable to bring forward. I think, if he will mention the Bills he will allow to come up, and that he will allow them to come up in time to pass this session, we shall be much better able to express our opinion. Perhaps the honourable gentleman will be good enough to give us that information.

Major ATKINSON.—I have not made the motion that the honourable gentleman seems to understand. I have only moved that Wednesday be given up. There is no doubt an amendment will be moved to that effect. But it is impossible for me to say that any of these private Bills will be passed this session. I have given, as the House knows, every opportunity for this business, and we have had wasted no less than three private members' days already. Nothing has been done; and that, I think, will occur again unless we come to some arrangement. I shall be very glad this week to give a day, if possible; but, looking at the time at the disposal of the House, the large number of Bills on the Order Paper, and the present feeling of the House, I am afraid there is very little hope of many of them passing. I should be glad to see some of them passed; but I could not give any pledge as to their passing, though I would gladly try to get a day this week for their consideration. I think it is useless bringing them on unless we can come to some arrangement.

Mr. FISH.—If the honourable gentleman intends seriously to give a day this week to private members' Bill, what necessity is there to take away Thursday? Why should he take that day away, if he is prepared to give Friday? I said "No" not so much against the extra day being taken, but because I thought notice ought to be given of such a proposal, so that members might consider its effect. I agree with the honourable member for Auckland Central that the Hon. the Premier ought to be a little more definite as to what his intentions are with regard to these Bills.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—I beg to move, That the words "and Thursdays" be included in the motion.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I should like the Premier to explain what he means when he says the Government would give a chance to the House to consider such Bills as he thinks desirable. There are a number of honourable gentlemen who have Bills on the Order Paper, and I do not think they would like very much that their Bills should be set aside for certain Bills the Government consider desirable. I think the Bills the Government consider desirable should come up from them as Government measures. I have a Bill on the Order Paper, and the Government may consider it a Bill that it is not desirable should be considered by the House; and I should like a little further explanation.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I am surprised that an old

tactician like the Premier should make such a suggestion as the one he has just now made. Is he going to take upon himself the invidious task of selecting a few Bills from the many Bills brought forward by private members, and saying that these Bills shall be given prominence to, and that they shall be put in such a position as that they shall have a chance of passing, while other Bills shall have no chance at all? It seems to me, Sir, that the Premier is likely to acquire very little popularity by such a proposal as that. Several members have brought in Bills, and have set down the Bills for second reading on such days as they may have selected; and they have to take their chance, and if that chance is taken away, and prominence given to other private Bills, it will be wrong and unjust. I think it would be most arbitrary and tyrannical, and I trust the Premier will not attempt to take such a course. A good many private members have introduced Bills, and each one thinks that his Bill is of great importance. If the Government are going to select any of these, let them take them up and carry them on as Government measures, but not select them as private members' Bills, and give them undue prominence for the sake of currying favour with those members who have introduced them. I do trust that the Government will deal fairly with private members.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I shall certainly support the amendment moved by the Hon. the Minister of Lands, because I take it that, while our Standing Orders remain as they are, it is useless for us to waste any more time debating these private members' Bills. The session must be brought to a close before the end of the year, at any rate; and I hope this is an indication on the part of the Government that it is the desire of the Government to finish the session before Christmas, for I shall do all in my power to assist them to do that. I say that, so long as our Standing Orders remain as they are at present, and enable members to talk out private members' Bills which they deem objectionable, we shall never get on with the business, and there is no chance of the Bills passing unless an alteration is made in the Standing Orders. For these reasons, I think the Government are acting wisely.

Major STEWARD.—I think it is a matter of special hardship that the honourable gentleman should not have given the House notice of his intention to ask for Thursday next. The notice on the Order Paper is not an unusual one at this period of the session; but the Government not only ask for Wednesdays, but desire Thursdays also, and I submit that that should have appeared on the Order Paper. I say so for one reason especially. The honourable member for Manawatu has a Bill which stands first on the Order Paper for Thursday evening, which must necessarily have come on, and could not by any possibility have been talked out, and which not only his district, but the district I have the honour to represent, and also the district of the honourable member for Ashburton, have the strongest possible interest in.

Mr. Samuel

The matter is one of remedying the very great injustice which we have been subjected to under the operation of the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act—an injustice, I say, because in the case of Waimate the county pays £600 a year more than it ought to be called upon to pay, and it was expected that the matter would be remedied this session in some manner. The Bill has passed its second reading, and would necessarily have come up for committal as the first order for Thursday evening. There have been petitions presented on both sides respecting it, and I believe it would pass through Committee in some form that would give relief. Had it been a local Bill it could not by any possibility have been shut out, but, because our remedy is necessarily by way of amending a public Act, we are obliged to proceed by a public Bill. I do therefore think that it is very hard lines that notice should not have been given, and that we should be thus shut out from our remedy. I would put it to the honourable gentleman opposite that, if he carries the motion with regard to taking Thursday, he should, at all events, seeing the importance of this Bill, and that it would necessarily have come on on Thursday evening, give us an opportunity of bringing the Bill on.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—Before going to a vote on the amendment of the Minister of Lands I should like to ask the Premier a question. There is a special class of private Bills in which certain honourable gentlemen take a particular interest, and of those honourable gentlemen I am one. I understand from the Premier that he will probably allow a sort of expurgated list of private Bills to come on some day—a day he may fix. If the honourable gentleman will tell us that the Harbour Board Bills will not be included in the expurgated list—and amongst them I include the Opunake Harbour Bill—I shall be most happy to support the amendment of the Minister of Lands; and I think there are several other young and honourable members who will do the same thing.

Mr. HAMLIN.—I should certainly like to ask the Premier and the Minister of Lands their intention with reference to certain Bills on the Order Paper for Thursday. Is it their intention, immediately after the questions are asked, to call on the Government orders of the day; or is it their intention to allow certain local Bills down for that day to be considered? It would depend entirely upon the answer to that question as to how I should vote with reference to taking Thursday.

Mr. FELDWICK.—Sir, I am in the same position as the last speaker. One of my Bills is in the position of having been interrupted in its second reading, and I should like to know clearly from the Premier if he will allow my Bill an opportunity of coming on on Thursday, or, otherwise, if he will give us another and better opportunity than Thursday afternoon affords, this session. There is no doubt these local Bills stand in a very unfortunate position. Certain members of this House seem to think

that the principal talent for a new member is that of stone-walling. The result has been that for the last two or three Thursdays Bills have been talked out. I do not think my Bill was intentionally talked out: I believe the Bill they wished talked out was about two Bills below mine. I appeal to members of this House to consider Harbour Bills and other Bills upon their merits. There may be good Harbour Bills as well as bad ones; and there is no doubt that many of these local Bills very seriously affect localities, and they are of far more importance than some of the private members' public Bills. The Premier knowing to what an extent local interests are affected by many of these Bills, I hope the honourable gentleman will give us an assurance that we shall have a fair opportunity of considering some of those Bills this session.

Mr. MILLS.—If there is one consideration more than another that would induce me to support the amendment it is the prospect of seeing no more of the Bills of the class to which the last speaker alluded. I sincerely hope that the Government will take away the private members' days, and so enable the House to get on with the business of the country. We have been told by the leader of the Opposition that he will not allow business to be hurried, and that we must sit on here until the business of the country is concluded, and that those of us who are anxious to get home did not give our constituents to understand, when seeking their support, that we should only be able to give two months to the business of the country. I make bold to say that, if members could appeal to the country now, they would find that there is but one feeling throughout the country, and that is a feeling of abhorrence at the great waste of time that has gone on, and the country would applaud the efforts of any honourable member who endeavoured to get the business of the country pushed through. It must be borne in mind that a good many of us have been devoting ourselves now practically for seven months to the business of the country; and really, I think, the only practical issue of our efforts for that time has been the carrying-through of the measure in connection with the Midland Railway the other day. That, Sir, is probably one of the most important pieces of legislation that have ever been carried through this House—important both on account of its own magnitude and of the effect it will have on the future of the country in the creation of a very large institution, to be followed, probably, by similar institutions in connection with the Otago Central and the North Island Trunk Railway; and yet it was carried through in one day. This House, by approving of that scheme, has initiated a new factor altogether in the management of the country's affairs. We did all that in one day, and that is the only piece of important business that we have done during the seven months since the beginning of last session. I hope the Government will carry this amendment.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I trust the Premier will

reconsider his decision as to this proposed system of expurgated Order Papers. Some objections have already been raised to it, but the most serious of all has not yet been mentioned. To my mind it is a dangerous innovation, and will give to the Government an enormous power of patronage and favouritism. If this power of selection is exercised by the Government, then when such-and-such a private Bill appears at the top of the Order Paper the presumption will arise that the member so favoured has given the Government a consideration for the favour. Looking at it from that point of view, my opinion is that the innovation will not work for political righteousness.

Mr. HOBBS.—I am one of those who feel that they ought to have some consideration given them, and I rise to protest against the sweeping charge of the Premier that the House has been wasting time. If he had said some members, and gone a little further and said a certain party had wasted time, and gone a little further still and named certain honourable members as having wasted time, I should not have risen now to protest against the sweeping nature of the charge. I have sat patiently day after day and month after month, and now business is to go by the board, and my Bill, which is a very important one, is to have the same chance as the rest.

Mr. TAIWHANGA.—I think honourable members have to blame themselves for wasting time. If honourable members had followed my example and not made such long speeches there would have been plenty of time to get through the business. I shall not blame the Government if all these Bills have now to be slaughtered.

Mr. WALKER.—I should like to ask the Colonial Secretary, with reference to the Bill of the honourable member for Manawatu, whether the Government have considered the measure, and are now prepared to make certain amendments which the Colonial Secretary stated would meet the difficulty which he referred to when the Bill was last before the House. If the Government are able to assure us that they will take charge of the Bill, my honourable friends and myself will be perfectly satisfied. The measure is as important, perhaps, as many which the Government bring down; and I trust, therefore, that they will be prepared to state whether they will take that Bill up and treat it as a Bill of public importance.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I trust the Government will not deal specially with the Bill which has just been referred to. I hope the Government will stick to their colours and do what is right—take up all or none, and make no invidious distinctions.

Mr. HISLOP.—With reference to the Bill alluded to by the honourable member for Ashburton, I may state that the Government has not had sufficient time to consider fully the question which is dealt with by that Bill, but I have had sufficient information placed before me to convince me that it is impossible to deal with the Bill this session to the satisfaction of the honourable gentleman. With reference to

the question generally, the Premier stated last week that probably he would ask for Thursday as well as Wednesday, and therefore it can hardly be said that the House is taken by surprise. As to private Bills, what the Premier stated was this: that, if the House showed an inclination to have any particular Bill brought forward which the Government considered of pressing importance, he would endeavour to give consideration to that Bill, but that it was better to devote the time at their disposal to the consideration of those measures which it is necessary to pass, instead of their passage being risked by discussions on Bills which could not possibly be got through this session.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—I am sorry at the attempt which is now being made to hurry through the business in the manner proposed. We are here to put the country in a proper state, and we ought to do so even if we have to come back here after Christmas. I have no Bill myself that I am particularly anxious about, but I am speaking in the interests of the majority of honourable members who have got Bills on the Order Paper, and who wish to see them carried through. It is all very well for the honourable member for Sydenham to say, "Put everything by the board." I do not believe in that for a moment.

Mr. TAYLOR.—What I said was, "None or all, not making invidious distinctions."

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—Then I misunderstood the honourable gentleman. I quite agree with the honourable member for Greymouth that the state of our Standing Orders prevents honourable members from getting their Bills brought on, and I think if fresh business were allowed to be brought forward after half-past twelve you would find that no Bills would be blocked, but that the business would go on just the same as ordinarily. I do not think that the Government is acting judiciously in forcing this proposal on private members. The honourable member for Port Chalmers complained of the waste of time there has been in the House. No doubt there has been a waste of time, but I do not think it is attributable to this side of the House; I am quite clear of that. I believe that if the Government had treated the House as it ought to have done the business would have gone on more satisfactorily. I protest against the proposal of the Government, and shall therefore vote against it.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—I shall probably vote for the amendment, if the Premier will make a promise. The Premier mentioned that if we gave him our private day he would see that we got another private day for business, and that he would regulate the Order Paper. That is what I object to—the Government regulating the Order Paper. Honourable members have set down their Bills for certain days when it seemed to them they would have the best chance of coming on; and we should interfere with their privileges altogether if we put the discretion in the Premier's hands. I will support the amendment if the Premier assures us that, if we give up private members' days, he

*Mr. Hislop*

will allow private members' business to come on, when it does come on, in proper order.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I am afraid if the Premier makes a promise the House will prevent its having effect, because, if there are measures to come on objectionable to some honourable members, they will, as before, talk them out, and if the rule rendering that possible is suspended it will mean such long sittings that the man with the strongest constitution will stand the best chance of getting his Bills through. The general business of the country is of far more importance than that of any private member, and therefore I support the amendment unreservedly, and hope the Premier will give no promise.

Amendment to add "and Thursdays" agreed to.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I support the taking of Wednesday and Thursday for Government business, for this reason: that it seems to me the wish of the House that the session should be brought to a conclusion as early as possible; at any rate, within a fixed period, no matter what the state of public business may be. That being the case, it appears to me that, the Government business being by far the most important to the colony, it is our duty to give it every opportunity of being done. I shall have occasion to refer to the subject again, so I will merely briefly say now that, as to the waste of time which has taken place, it has been caused by the action of the Government itself, and because of its being incapable of properly leading the House. For my part, I think what has taken place lately—the constant resort, to put the thing plainly, to "talking out" measures—is an odious practice, and one that all sides of the House should join in discouraging; and I take it that, if it is allowed to go on, the effect will be retaliation on retaliation, until all parliamentary discipline and organization is swallowed up, and the very worst possible feeling will prevail amongst honourable members. If I can give any assistance to the Government at any time in stopping this practice I shall be only too glad to do so. As regards the business of private members which should be done, I hope the Government will find an opportunity of allowing local Bills to be dealt with. Next to Bills which affect the whole colony, are local Bills—measures which affect particular parts of the colony—and there is a great deal of expense incidental to bringing them on, and it is a very hard thing not to allow them to be considered during the session. As regards the remainder of the measures standing in the names of private members, there are three Bills which, in my opinion, are pre-eminently of importance, seeing the condition of the colony and the great want of employment and occupation which prevails throughout it. The first of these is the Otago Central Railway Bill; the next is the Kamo-Kawakawa Railway Bill—both of which, in my opinion, it is desirable the Government should take charge of. They are measures which would have the effect of opening large areas of the colony, and affording a very large amount

of employment to great numbers of men. If the Bills are passed the negotiations and the business to be done under them will have to be carried out by the Government, and therefore it seems to me that these Bills are Bills which the Government should take charge of, so that they may be assured that the provisions of the measures are such as they can act upon. The third Bill also is a Bill promotive of local industry: it is the Law Practitioners Bill. That Bill is a measure which, if carried, would enable a number of young colonists to earn a respectable livelihood, which they are now prevented from doing in consequence of a trade monopoly. Therefore I trust that this Bill is one opening the door to a larger amount of employment; and, seeing what has notoriously taken place in regard to it, in its being "talked out"—a practice which has now become so established that every honourable member knows the meaning of the term—I say, Sir, that, seeing how two, at any rate, of the three particular Bills to which I have referred have been affected by that practice, I hope the Government will give opportunity for proceeding with these Bills: and it would be very easy to do so, as the Premier knows.

Sir G. GREY.—I wish to add one argument why the Law Practitioners Bill should be allowed to pass, and it is this: that I do not think vice ought to be allowed to walk triumphant in this House. I do not think the wrong attempts which were made the other night to prevent that Bill passing, and so to entail a great evil on the colony, ought to triumph. I do not think that some two or three selfish men in this House ought to be allowed to defeat the intentions of Parliament. One honourable member—the honourable member for Grey-mouth—has several successive years assisted in these attempts, and the honourable member for New Plymouth also has done so, and I hope this House at last will prevent a few tyrants of that kind from pressing down the talent of New Zealand. I am glad to join, therefore, with the honourable member for Christchurch North in his expression of opinion on that subject. Now I turn to another point. I believe that the one thing which is needful for New Zealand is to set the minds of some thousands of tenant farmers at rest. The deferred-payment settlers ought, without an hour's delay, to be relieved from disabilities under which they are now labouring. That is one thing. In the same way I think the village settlers who have been put on their settlements under such hard terms ought to be relieved from terms which certainly will oppress them. If honourable gentlemen saw some of the piteous letters I have had sent to me from all parts of the country I am sure they would feel that these two classes of men should have instantaneous relief. I think, therefore, the Fair Rent Bill ought certainly to be passed this session; and I think, also, that that Bill which would take off from the village settlers the hard conditions which now press them to the earth is a Bill which ought to be pressed through during the present session. I feel I

am right in contending that this ought to be done.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I often have the misfortune to be the cause of bringing the honourable member for Auckland Central to his feet, and the honourable gentleman sometimes is the cause of bringing me to my feet, and—

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member has exhausted his right to speak, and cannot speak again on this motion.

Mr. FISH.—I should like to say in corroboration of the honourable member for Auckland Central that there can be no doubt at all that the discussion which took place the other evening on the Bible-in-Schools Bill was a decided attempt on the part of three or four honourable members to prevent the Bill of the honourable member for Auckland Central from coming on—not so much by speaking themselves as by inciting other honourable members to speak, and holding themselves in reserve till all others were exhausted. It is amusing, too, to find that one honourable gentleman who took part in that course, in causing waste of time on that evening, is the same honourable gentleman who has on the Order Paper a motion to curtail the right of individual members to speak in this House. These little things show the inconsistency of the honourable gentlemen very markedly—they are capable of such action, and yet boast of their desire to shorten the debates in this House. It is notorious to the House, without mentioning names, who were the three or four members who made a determined and successful attempt on Friday evening to prevent the Bill of the honourable member for Auckland Central from coming on—a Bill which, if passed, would have the effect of interfering with their particular business.

Mr. MENTEATH.—To give some honourable gentlemen an opportunity of replying to certain accusations which have been made, and therefore to afford an opportunity of free discussion, which this House always desires, I move "the previous question."

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—Charges have been made this afternoon against some members of pursuing the pernicious practice of talking measures out. I have never had anything to do with talking measures out, but I consider that, so long as the custom of the House is what it is with regard to the way important measures are allowed to be carried through, the practice of talking out, far from being pernicious and far from being useless, is a practice of very great value to the country. So long as important Bills like Harbour Loan Bills, which inflict odious burdens of taxation on localities, are allowed to be brought in in the careless, reckless way in which they now are,—so long as a number of most important measures, inflicting most oppressive burdens on certain districts, are allowed, as a matter of course, to go through in one afternoon,—so long as votes are secured for these Bills for personal reasons, and so long as the information regarding them is so exceedingly scanty as it is now, so long do I think that honourable gentlemen who

know the evil these Bills inflict on the country are justified in using every legitimate means in their power to prevent the country from being burdened and weighted by these abominable measures.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I am glad to have an opportunity of making the remarks I wish to make, and which I was debarred from making just now by the forms of the House. The honourable member for Auckland Central claims for himself, apparently, the monopoly of imputing wrong motives to honourable members. He is continually asserting that members are actuated by motives certainly the most unworthy and, I might almost say, corrupt. And the honourable member for Christchurch North lately—whether or not it is for the purpose of conciliating the honourable member for Auckland Central and forming a close alliance and friendship with him, or for some other reason—is following closely in the path of the honourable member for Auckland Central, and frequently imputes bad motives to certain honourable gentlemen—I mean to the members of the legal profession. A more baseless charge than that made by the honourable member for Auckland Central was never made in this House. On the occasion referred to the talking was not done by the members of the legal profession, but by members who did not belong to the legal profession; nay, a good many of those who spoke were strong supporters of the measure introduced by the honourable member for Auckland Central. If there was any plot at all it looked very much as if it had been originated by the honourable member for Auckland Central himself, and as if he had placed his Bill below the Bible-reading in Schools Bill for the purpose of gagging honourable members who happened to be lawyers, and preventing them from speaking. Honourable members laugh; but who would laugh if the honourable member for Auckland Central had said that? I would never impute anything corrupt or bad to the honourable gentleman—far from it; but I say he is blind to the importance of other honourable members' Bills, and has a most absurd veneration for his own. I say that some of his Bills have been the most mischievous that could be conceived, and that he has brought forward legislation in this country which has made thousands of people miserable. In abolishing the period of apprenticeship previously required for lawyers he has ruined many a home, and he will only increase that ruin by this measure. The honourable member for Christchurch North referred to litigation as an industry; but I venture to say that the people of this colony do not want an increase and encouragement of such industry. If the honourable member for Auckland Central will look at *Hansard* he will find that many columns are occupied in the reporting of speeches of honourable members who are not lawyers upon the Bible-reading-in-schools question the other evening; and, if the honourable gentleman will look at the few columns occupied by the lawyers, if he has got any

sense of shame in him he will come down to this House and apologize for the baseless charge which he has made. It is perfectly true that I was pleased at seeing that his measure did not come on; but to say that it was through me or those who think as I do that the Bill was talked out is to say that which is absolutely not in accordance with fact. Considering the importance of the Bible-in-schools question, was it likely, simply because the honourable gentleman happened to have a Bill on the Order Paper close by, that I should permit myself to be debarred from speaking on the question? How many hours has the honourable gentleman occupied during this and past sessions in idle talk! I am surprised that the honourable gentleman should have the audacity to say that other honourable gentlemen should not say a word, simply because he has a Bill on the Order Paper. I shall not be tyrannized over like that. I am sorry to see that so many honourable members are carried away by their admiration and respect for the honourable gentleman, and are backing him up in the absurd opinions he holds as to the importance of his own Bills. Some time ago we had the honourable gentleman's Bill for the preservation of the lives of children by prohibiting the importation of lucifer-matches—a Bill introduced, no doubt, with the very best intention, but a Bill which he has since abandoned. We remember the scene which took place on that occasion. By his great eloquence and his prestige he carried the second reading of that Bill by a large majority. I venture to say that there were not five men in the House who really approved of the Bill, and yet the honourable gentleman carried the second reading. I will never be guilty of saying anything unworthy or wrong of the honourable member for Auckland Central, and I would scorn to use unworthy arguments towards him as he does to me, but the honourable gentleman makes a very great mistake if he thinks that so long as I retain my seat in this House he is going to make such charges as he has made uncontradicted. There are other members who are fond of making charges too. I am not going to reply to the honourable gentleman, who I consider made remarks to-day which he should not have made. I am not going to reply to the honourable member for Dunedin South on this occasion, nor on any other occasion. But the honourable member for Auckland Central holds such a high position that, to a gentleman of his standing and education, a gentleman who has such an honourable name in this colony as he has, I would say, "Be careful how you use the high position you have acquired for the purpose of doing damage to young men who have not gained the position which you have; be careful you use that eloquence aright; be careful to judge impartially and honestly, and do not impute corrupt motives to other people." I trust that the honourable gentleman will not in future be influenced by people who whisper mischievous things into his ears, and that he will not in future believe too readily—as he

Mr. W. P. Reeves

has done in the past—evil of his brother-members in this House.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I cannot submit to the honourable gentleman's statement that I am always making imputations on the legal profession. I do not think I have ever spoken on the question of the Law Practitioners Bill. I made reference the other night to the question in a very mild manner; but the honourable gentleman is so saturated with the question that whenever it is mentioned it brings him up, and he makes one of his stereotyped speeches on the subject. Since other honourable members have challenged my statement, I say that, to my mind, it is scandalous that a number of persons should have the control of the examinations, and arrange them in such a way that they can reduce or increase as they like the number of persons who will follow the legal profession. Take the case of England. A few years ago the qualification for a barrister was that he should be able to eat three substantial dinners. That qualification has been increased by the Inns of Court wishing to reduce the facilities with which persons can obtain introduction to the profession. I should like to know, in the case of a barrister, why there should be any legal examination or general-knowledge examination. If I had a case in which a scientific question was at issue I would sooner have a scientific man in charge of the case than the best lawyer in the colony. If I had a case which referred to some special subject, in the same way I should like an authority on that subject to take charge of the case. The opinion is gaining ground that persons who wish to be defended in Courts of law should be at liberty to employ whomever they think best for the purpose. There is no reason why there should be any obstacle; but an obstacle is raised by those in the profession. I asked a young gentleman the other day who had passed an examination in general knowledge in England what he had to go through. He said he was asked what books in Greek or Latin he was accustomed to study. He stated what those books were, and before he left the hall he was told he had passed. Let us contrast that with the system here. I know of two young gentlemen who, because they could not obtain accurate information as to how they were to be admitted to the profession, passed a wrong examination, and then they were told that it was of no use to them. Then, for five weeks these two young gentlemen were sent from pillar to post to inquire how they were going to be admitted, and then they were not able to obtain satisfactory information until some one made an application direct to the Chief Justice. Then, look at the mode in which it is carried out. As a preliminary, a subscription of £5 each has to be paid two months in advance of the examination. If anything happens to prevent a candidate from going up for examination, do you think the money is returned? No. If a candidate goes up again, he has to pay the same sum. This money is used to save lawyers in practice the expense of keeping up a proper law library.

They use the money of these young aspirants of the profession to meet the expenditure of increasing the law library. Here is another case: A gentleman came here with, it is not too much to say, the most brilliant of recommendations. If he had remained at Home he must inevitably have taken one of the very highest positions in the legal profession. What happened to this gentleman was this: He went up for the legal examination—a mere plaything to him—and they kept him six weeks before they allowed him to know whether he had passed or not. So disgusted was he that he left the colony. For six weeks he was kept idle. I do not say that the honourable member for New Plymouth has any personal motive in this matter—from all accounts, the honourable gentleman has more business than he can attend to: but I say the present system means a hedging-round of the profession, and prevents many from entering it. The honourable gentleman says that it is not an industry. Let me tell him that the lawyer who is most distinguished is he who stops most litigation. In the same way a surgeon is the most distinguished who saves most operations, instead of performing them. The legal profession should be open to the youth of the colony. As to saying that there is no room for others, the general impression is that it is a very remunerative profession. I have long wished to have an opportunity of saying what I have now said, and of saying a great deal more, but I am not disposed to take up the time of the House further.

Mr. SEDDON.—If I were to tell the Government that they were, by their action, swelling the ranks of the unemployed in the colony,—if I were to tell them that in not dealing with one question on the Order Paper they were causing large numbers of our miners to leave our shores, I should only be telling them what is absolutely true. I charge this Government and the late Government with knowingly admitting Chinese into the colony without paying the poll-tax as provided by law, and these persons are coming here by the score. I have been told that permits are given to the Chinese to return to the colony, to be used by other Chinese; and it is a fact that a steamer can come alongside the Wellington wharf, and may have on board a number of Chinese, and they are allowed to land on the wharf and go to the Chinese dens in Wellington, and to swell the number of Chinese in the colony, without any supervision. With regard to the evasion of the Customs dues, we know very well that that is carried on to a very large extent. Some check, it is true, is employed in regard to that, but with reference to the introduction of Chinese there is no check whatever; and this is doing a serious wrong to the colony. In connection with the furniture trade the Chinese are driving *bonâ fide* tradesmen out of the trade. I refer to Auckland in particular. In this town of Wellington also the same thing prevails at the present moment. I contend that by this the Government and the Parliament are conniving at the introduction into this colony of the fell diseases of leprosy and small-pox. We

know that sooner or later we shall have these diseases amongst us. It is only the other day that a steamer came to Wellington with a number of Chinese on board, having come from a steamer that had small-pox on board, and, in addition to their paying no poll-tax, the Chinese got away to the West Coast without supervision, and the Government had to send detectives after them, but they only found five out of the ten Chinese who had come by the steamer. Suppose small-pox had broken out at Greymouth, who would have been to blame? We find that in the neighbouring colony of Victoria recently the quarantine regulations were enforced, and at the time persons were coming from Victoria to Tasmania, while we were admitting vessels free coming from Tasmania to New Zealand. Who is responsible for that? This is what is being done, and it is bad enough in all truth. I am, perhaps, speaking very strongly on this matter; but I know, and the Premier knows, that it is in his power to have the matter tested by inquiring of the detectives of Wellington the number of young girls who are visiting at the present time these Chinese dens in Te Aro. I have a list, taken by a person interested in this matter, and from this it appears that there are over twenty-five girls, of from eleven to sixteen years of age, who are frequently in those dens, and there is no doubt whatever that serious immorality exists. And there is not a word said about it. The Government must know something about it, because they could ask the detectives of this city what is the state of these dens, who frequent them, and whether the charge is true which I now make that they are frequented by girls of tender years. If so, I say that those who encourage them there should be at once taken to justice. Are we to go on like this? Are we to have them increased by the hundred? I, for one, protest. In the West Coast goldfields the Chinese are taking ground that Europeans could work, and the Chinese there are in large numbers and have acquired the water-rights, and they thus command these gullies to the detriment of the European population. I only need to point out to the Government and Parliament what is taking place with regard to the Chinese in Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia. There they have passed restrictive legislation, and unless this Parliament follows suit we shall have New Zealand a happy hunting-ground for the whole of the Chinese. That means that, bad as we are now, we shall then be considerably worse. Victoria has refused to grant any more letters of naturalisation to Chinese, and has also refused to grant any further permits to the Chinese; and it devolves on this Parliament, before the adjournment takes place, that legislation on this point should be effected. I undertake to say that if the Government will have a return prepared of the number of Chinese that have come to the colony during the last year they will find that not one Chinaman in ten has paid the tax, and they will also find that the permits issued have been used by different Chinamen over and over again. And if they inquire into what is being done

*Mr. Seddon*

in these dens they will come to the conclusion that a measure of the kind to which I have referred ought to be passed. I do not wish to claim any special consideration for myself, but I wish to save New Zealand from being dragged down to the same position as other colonies in respect to the Chinese, and I, in the interest of the welfare of New Zealand, demand that the Parliament legislate on the subject this session.

Mr. FISH.—While I am unwilling to detain the House on this question, I do not care to allow the remarks of the honourable member for New Plymouth to pass without a word or two of comment. That honourable member started his remarks by deprecating the bad habit of the honourable members for Christchurch North and Auckland Central, in imputing bad motives. He had scarcely got that out of his mouth when he himself charged those very gentlemen with all sorts of bad motives. He told the House that a large proportion of its members were neither more nor less than idiots, inasmuch as he said the Law Practitioners Bill was a most mischievous measure; and yet, if I recollect aright, it was passed by fifty or sixty members to a very small number on the other side, and therefore, if it is a most mischievous measure, there must be a large proportion of this House who were idiots to pass the measure. And he goes on to tell us that, although the Bill was carried by such a large majority, there was not one member in the House who voted for the Bill who really believed in it. In using language of this kind he is really insulting those members who voted for this Bill, of whom I was one. Those who have had the pleasure of the honourable gentleman's acquaintance in the House must have noticed that he has always seemed to assume a dominating position, and a greater knowledge than any other member on any subject under the sun, and he would have you believe that he is brim-full of common-sense and intelligence and argument. But I think he will find that honourable members will get very tired of him. Whilst he himself and one or two other members of the legal profession—and I do not by any means include the whole of the members of the legal profession in this House in what I say—incited a large number of members to speak on that debate, one would have imagined, from the virtuous indignation he assumed, that it was quite foreign to his nature to do anything of that kind. That kind of thing has been done before and will be done again; but when we find him getting up and talking in tones of righteous indignation about the impossibility of his doing it, it becomes ludicrous in the extreme.

Major ATKINSON.—I should like to say, in regard to the remarks of the honourable member for Kumara, that the question he has raised is no doubt one of very great importance. However, the Government have the matter under their consideration, and we are in communication with Melbourne and Sydney on the subject. I am of opinion that it is a question



whether the time has not arrived when we should effect similar legislation to that enacted in the other colonies.

Mr. SEDDON.—On this point I should like to add that I shall be happy to give the Minister of Justice the list of names I have referred to that has been supplied to me of young girls who have visited the places in question, and I think he will find, on reference to the detective department, that it is correct. If the Minister will follow the example of the other colonies in this matter he will be doing a just thing to all concerned.

"Previous question" agreed to.

#### CUSTOMS TARIFF.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, under the circumstances, it will not be necessary for me to say more than a few words in moving the resolution of which I have given notice. There appears to be a difference of opinion as to whether it is the desire of this House that there should be a revision of the tariff this session. Some honourable members appear to think that it is possible and desirable; but the Government, after careful consideration, have come to the conclusion that it is impossible satisfactorily to revise the tariff this session. It must also be clear to the House that no Government could submit to have a tariff proposed by somebody else for their adoption. It therefore seemed to the Government, under the circumstances, desirable, there being so short a time left for the transaction of business, that this question should be settled once for all. I may say that, personally, I very much desired to revise the tariff this session. I thought over the matter before I came into the Government, and I have given it very careful consideration since, and I give it as my deliberate opinion that there is no man capable of satisfactorily revising the tariff during the time which the House can now devote to the matter. I would further point out that if we were to adopt the course which some honourable gentlemen seem to think right,—if we were to adjourn the House for a couple of months, and then meet again, knowing that it would be impossible to give due attention to the reorganization of the Civil Service, which the House has determined on as the first step towards placing the finances of the country on a proper basis—I say it would be impossible in two months to do both that and revise the tariff in a satisfactory manner. I am quite sure that it is only a moderate time to take till next session for those purposes. That is the deliberate opinion of the Government, and therefore we have felt that it is our duty, in order that we may get on with the retrenchment which the House has determined on, and after what occurred last week, to have this question decided at once. I must also tell the House once more what I have already told it: that every day we sit here renders retrenchment more and more impossible within the time we proposed. When we told the House that we proposed to make a certain amount of retrenchment within the year, we hoped that the House would have

risen by the beginning of December. It is impossible to effect those retrenchments without devoting considerable time to them. The machinery is too large to be set in motion in a short time. To set it in motion before we can direct the lines on which it shall run would be impossible. It would be quite easy to cut off a salary here and there, and turn this officer and that away; but that is not what the House wants. It wants the Service to be properly carried out, and at a less cost than hitherto; and sufficient time must be given to us to do that. I venture to say, after considerable experience, that I am not capable, and would not pretend, to do these two great works this session. I hope the House will agree to the motion, and then the Government will be pledged to effect retrenchment as soon as possible, and to bring in a revision of the tariff next session.

Sir G. GREY.—I should like the honourable gentleman to give us one piece of information before he sits down, and that is, to explain the meaning of the words "a thorough revision of the tariff." Does he intend by his motion that, if an honourable member thought it would be advisable and in the immediate interest of the country to make one alteration in the tariff, such a motion could not be put to the House and discussed?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; that is the meaning of the resolution. The Government are not prepared to permit any alteration of the tariff this session. I say that, however much they may regret it, they feel that it would not be right to revise the tariff this session.

Sir G. GREY.—Will it prevent any motion from being made by an honourable member? If we pass this resolution will it close our mouths as to any alteration whatever in the tariff? Is that what we are to understand by the words "thorough revision of the tariff"?

Major ATKINSON.—It would entirely depend on the motion brought forward. If it were a motion dealing with the tariff, the Government would have to treat it as a vote of want of confidence.

Sir G. GREY.—I mean, can we still bring a motion forward if we choose?

Major ATKINSON.—Undoubtedly.

Mr. SEDDON.—Will the honourable member consider one point—that is, with regard to the importation of flour into New Zealand? By a statement published the other day, I saw that it could be imported at £6 10s. a ton; while New Zealand has now more than six months' supply in hand. I should like to know whether the honourable gentleman would take a motion on a matter of that kind as one of want of confidence. I seriously put this question in the interest of the people of New Zealand.

Major ATKINSON.—Of course I cannot say what the Government would do until the motion is brought forward. It would be my duty to give it careful consideration; but, speaking generally, if the House passes any motion generally revising the tariff, I should regard it as a no-confidence motion. I shall consider

further what should be done if any motion is brought forward.

Motion made, and question proposed, "(1.) That, in the opinion of this House, the imperative demand by the colony that the public expenditure should be brought within the revenue, and the necessity, in order to prevent serious embarrassment, that that object should be effected without delay, renders it the first duty of the Government to press on the necessary financial measures. (2.) That the time to be devoted to these measures renders it impracticable to give sufficient consideration in the present session to such a thorough revision of the Customs tariff as is required, and therefore such revision should not be now attempted, but should be undertaken during the recess, and submitted to Parliament at the beginning of next session."—(*Major Atkinson.*)

Sir J. VOGEL.—I think the answer to the question put by the honourable member for Auckland Central may be found in the terms of the resolution itself. We have not to do with what was the intention of the honourable member at the head of the Government. No doubt he stated that last week; but he has not been very happy in giving effect to it. As the resolution stands, it says there shall not be a "thorough revision;" therefore it is open to any honourable member to bring down a motion with regard to any item of the tariff, so long as he does not go through the whole tariff, so as to bring it under the designation of "thorough." However, that question is not of much importance, for there is no doubt the Government wishes to take the view of the House as to whether there should be a revision of the tariff this session or not. Before discussing the resolution itself I should like to refer to the circumstances under which it has been brought down. About a week ago I proposed to ask the Government to fix a day for discussing the question of a new tariff. I did not consider that the question raised by the motion of the honourable member for Parnell, as to whether a certain petition should be referred to the Government, as recommended by the Public Petitions Committee, or whether it should be dealt with by the House, was a sufficiently direct way of raising the issue as to revising the Customs tariff. The indignation of the honourable member for Egmont, I may tell honourable members who are new to exhibitions of that kind, was a mere piece of strategy. That the honourable gentleman really objected to one in my position asking him in the most courteous and conciliatory manner for facilities to consider such a question cannot but be doubted when we actually know that not very long since—about five or six years ago—he subsisted under a notice by the leader of the Opposition of a motion of want of confidence, and by a series of tactics, of a kind I hesitate to describe lest you, Sir, should stop me, prevented that motion from being brought on until he managed to arrange with four members to go over to the Government side. The memory of that must pass away from the present generation before we can be-

*Major Atkinson*

lieve in exhibitions of indignation of the kind we had last week. And then, as pointing the charge which the honourable gentleman tries to raise against me of wasting the time of the House and preventing it from going on with business, we have, ever since Monday or Tuesday last—some five days—been going on with all kinds of business, although, after that exhibition of indignation, he asked for twenty-four hours because he refused to proceed with business, and yet only now brings down this motion. On that day the honourable member for Wellington East and the honourable member for Egmont were very ready to attack me, because I had exhausted my opportunity of reply. That is what they have done on previous occasions when I had no opportunity of speaking; but when there was a contingency of my following them they remained perfectly silent. I hope I shall not be exceeding the limits of parliamentary phraseology when I say that it seems to me a piece of the grossest presumption—is that parliamentary, Sir?—that the honourable gentleman who is at the head of the Education Department should presume to tell me that I am wasting the time of the House. In my opinion many years must elapse before the country considers that, whether I am in opposition or in the Government, my services are worth less than those of the honourable gentleman. I have been seventeen years in this House, and the honourable gentleman's parliamentary experience is confined to three years—the first session he was returned he was too ill to take part in the business of the House. The honourable gentleman referred to my conduct last session, and he also referred to my conduct last week. With regard to that point, I have to say that, whilst honourable members on different sides of the House have begged me not to bring that incident up again, the conduct of the honourable member in referring to it may be interpreted by honourable members as rendering it necessary for me to do so. If he did not desire that, he should have had more control over his temper. As to my conduct last session, I will give one little instance by way of contrast to his conduct. During the three years that the honourable gentleman has been in Parliament he has been in the habit of immediately following Ministers of the Crown or one of those speakers whose remarks are considered of special importance. He thought he thereby assumed to himself the position and dignity of being called upon to reply to the remarks of those honourable gentlemen. Last year he made a very long speech—a speech which very few people listened to, and certainly very few people read. It was full of figures, and on two occasions during the course of its delivery he solemnly declared that every figure he quoted was correct. Under ordinary circumstances those figures would have passed without revision, and nothing could be safer than for the honourable gentleman to declare that they were absolutely correct; but after the session he published his speech, sent it round, and said

that every man and woman in Wellington should read it. By accident I did read it, and I can say that it was one mass of misstatements, misrepresentations, and falsehoods from beginning to end. I had to speak before a Wellington audience, and I turned the speech inside out, and showed how utterly unreliable it was, notwithstanding the statement of the honourable gentleman. The papers published in Wellington have not facilities sufficient to enable them to report at length, and, luckily for the honourable gentleman, what I said was not reported, and the public did not have full knowledge of that honourable gentleman's inaccuracy; but, so far as I am concerned, I may say that I shall not feel justified in the future in taking any figures brought down by the honourable gentleman, no matter how solemnly they are stated by him, unless I am able to verify them. As regards the charge of wasting time made against me by the honourable member for Egmont, his remarks are entitled to greater consideration; but I will say this: I have been seventeen years in Parliament, and I have never spoken less than I have during the present session. I have frequently avoided speaking. I have spoken three times upon questions of policy, once when the honourable gentleman wanted to adjourn the House for a fortnight, once upon the Financial Statement, and once when I goaded the Government into bringing down their policy Bills, which they were disposed to keep back. Those are the only three times that I have spoken on policy questions. The charge of the honourable gentleman, that I have wasted time, I throw back upon himself. The honourable gentleman is said to be an astute tactician; but one thing is very certain, this: that the honourable gentleman has lost his control over the House, or he has, for some reason of his own, wished to keep the business of this House back; for a more miserably-managed session than this since we have been here I have never seen in the course of my long experience, and I think I may appeal to honourable gentlemen who have been long in the House to agree with me in what I have said. I give the honourable gentleman his choice between either a concealed intention or partial imbecility, and he may take his choice. Now, it is quite true that, in my opinion, the convenience of honourable members should have no place in the consideration of the question as to how long they should sit. Therefore I myself did not convert Christmas into a landmark beyond which the session of the House should not extend; but, as I have said, I have no wish to prolong the session; and I am able to say this: that I believe that the feeling in the House—at any rate, of those honourable gentlemen who are kind enough to act with me—is in favour of the session ending by Christmas. So much in reference to the way in which these resolutions come before us. Now as regards the question of an alteration of the Customs tariff. The honourable gentleman's statement, that it is impossible for us to deal with it before Christmas, is quite a

puerile one. To show that this is so I will just refer to a few items in the tariff—not many of them, but just a few—to show how much there is in the honourable gentleman's contention. The first item of alteration would be in respect of those goods which are now subject to an *ad valorem* duty of 15 per cent. These articles have been all grouped together for a long time, so that there could be no possible difficulty in deciding whether or not the duty on them should be increased 3, 4, or 5 per cent. There is no necessity to regroup them. As they stand they cover quite a number of articles, the increase on which would in some cases be purely for revenue, whilst in others the increase would yield revenue, and at the same time afford encouragement to local industry. There is another grouping—a very important grouping, no doubt, but about which honourable members are quite prepared to express an opinion—that is, as to whether there should be an increase of duty on boots and shoes. Then, there is the question of ironwork. That is a question which is of importance not only to the local industries of the colony, but also to the consumers, because it has been well shown that, while these small items, or, for that matter, large items, are imported under conditions owing to which local industries are unable to compete, no sooner is a small protective duty imposed, and the local manufacturer able to get to work, than the importers are no longer able to charge those large prices which have affected the consumers to an enormous extent. I will give a short example to show this. In an admirable paper, read before the Industrial Association of Auckland by Mr. William Leys, this point is suggestively touched on, and he says,—

“But to show how difficult it sometimes is to establish any industry in the colonies, and how the importers endeavour to crush out of existence any article that competes with them, I will give a simple illustration. The other day I required a small gate-fastener, and entered the shop of one of our largest Queen Street ironmongers. I was shown one, sold for 1s. In the course of the purchase the shopman stated that their old price for the same article was 2s. 6d. I replied, ‘Then, how is it you now charge only 1s.?’ ‘Because a local blacksmith started to produce them at that price, and we were compelled to reduce our price accordingly.’ That is an absolute fact. If, therefore, this local blacksmith had not started his industry, the public would still be paying the importer 2s. 6d. for that which can now be purchased for 1s.”

That is one of numberless examples that could be shown to prove that, if you do not give a fair chance to the initiation of local industries, the consumers of the colony must be made to suffer by the heavy prices charged by importers. As regards steam-engines of every kind for various purposes, nothing can be more desirable than to teach the colonists how to make large machinery of this description, and so to render themselves independent of the chances that may intervene between our ob-

taining such goods from places thousands of miles distant. Then, there is another line of importance with which it is not difficult to deal. I refer to sweetened and perfumed spirits—spirits under proof. Importers were informed, in May last, that an increased duty would be charged upon those spirits. Is there any reason in the world why we should lose £12,000 a year, £1,000 a month, on that item because the honourable gentleman has not the courage to bring down a Bill to impose this duty, or, rather, to alter the duty, on this article? That is purely a waste of money, to be charged to the account of the honourable gentleman. Now I come to another important article—plain galvanised iron. That is admitted free of duty, but 2s. is charged upon corrugated iron. I may explain that this is a question of both Free-trade and Protection, and also of revenue. It does not merely come under the head of Protection—just the contrary. In this case some trifling inexpensive machinery is used to convert plain galvanised iron into corrugated iron, something like what washerwomen use for what is termed “goffering” frills. And on account of the plain iron coming in free we lose many thousands of pounds of revenue upon the corrugated sheet-iron, which is charged 2s. per cwt. It is admitted that this is money purely thrown away, for a differentiation of 6d. would be quite sufficient to protect the interests of the local corrugators, and a duty of 1s. 6d. might very fairly be charged upon the plain sheet-iron. Then, there is the item of preserved fish. The quality of the mullet which is preserved in Auckland is, of course, a matter of taste. I can only say this: that I myself, and a great many of my friends, consider it nicer than the salmon which is imported from America. Many thousand of tins of the latter are brought in from America, though quite as good an article can be efficiently supplied in the colony. Then, there is another article—cement. That article is being made of great excellence in the colony, and a little assistance would establish an industry of a most important character—important not only to those persons engaged in it, but important to the colony at large, as tending to facilitate the cheaper execution of works in which cement is largely used. Then, a duty might very well be put on an article with the taxation of which the honourable member for Kumara would heartily sympathize—rice. It would yield a large revenue, and would secure a considerable amount from a class of people who at present do not contribute their fair share to the taxation of the colony. I shall not go into other items, but I think I have said enough to show honourable members that the difficulty of a partial revision of the tariff has been exaggerated, as certain alterations might at once be made with great advantage to the colony. Now, as to the resolutions proposed by the honourable gentleman, and which have been read by you, Sir, I may say, as regards the first one, that it seems to me to cover what is not the case, for the

*Sir J. Vogel*

“necessary financial measures” are not before us. It is meant in this resolution to say that retrenchment should be brought forward before any other measure. I ask honourable members, has the honourable gentleman allowed us to consider the question of retrenchment? Has he not attempted to conceal from us his measures of retrenchment? Has he not stated that he will not allow us to deal with that question? It was for the honourable gentleman to have come down and said, “We propose to retrench in this way and that way, in this shape and that shape. I ask honourable members to have the courage of their opinions, not to fear the disagreeable duties they have now to perform, but to help the Government in making the proposed retrenchments.” Instead of which the honourable gentleman came down and declined to allow the House to express any opinion on the question of retrenchment, or the manner in which retrenchment is to be carried out. He treated as a want-of-confidence motion a question put upon the Order Paper by the honourable member for Wanganui asking for details of the Government scheme of retrenchment, so far as they had been arrived at. The honourable gentlemen on those benches propose to deal in a drastic way with the public service of this colony—to turn things upside down, as the Minister of Education elegantly put it, with reference to the Government Buildings; and they propose to do it without the sanction of the House—without taking honourable members into their confidence. The only measures that are before us, and which by this first resolution we are asked to declare are so important that we cannot consider the tariff, are those relating to a reduction of salaries to be paid to the Governor and to Ministers, and of the honorarium paid to members of both Houses. These are the only financial measures before us which deal with the question of retrenchment; and am I to be told that these few Bills are so difficult to deal with that all other questions must be put on one side? There is another measure that the honourable gentleman may possibly consider a great financial measure; and—to the extent to which it is important as a financial measure—I am sorry to say it is terribly mischievous. So far as I am able to judge, the Land Bill to which I refer is simply a Bill to enable the lands yet remaining to the colony to be snapped up by capitalists without the merest suspicion of control in the way of safeguarding settlement. It appears to me that the honourable gentleman proposes to try and sell, really for what they will fetch, all the Crown lands of the colony, and to obtain a revenue in that manner. If I am right in that suspicion, then we may add the Land Bill to the measures referred to in this first paragraph; but, to the extent that we are able to add it, to such an extent is the Bill opposed to all the sympathies of the majority of the colony, and to the work not only of the late Government, but to that of the Government which preceded it, and of which the honourable gentleman was the head. Then, as regards the second resolution, it is a

resolution to the effect that there should not be a thorough revision of the tariff. But, as regards both resolutions, this is to be remarked: that it is an innovation on previous practice. It is borrowing from the French custom, of a Government moving a vote of confidence in itself. As far as I am aware, such a practice is not adopted in Great Britain, except in the case of the House of Lords having passed a vote of want of confidence, when it is held constitutional that the Lower House—the House of Commons—should declare a vote of confidence in the Government. Otherwise, as I say, it is an innovation. And so keenly do we feel the mischievousness of this innovation that this resolution has been arrived at by a number of honourable gentlemen; and, as I think it will be of interest to the House, I will read it:—

“That, in the opinion of this meeting, it is not desirable to debate Major Atkinson’s proposition: Sir Julius Vogel to state, on behalf of the party, that he considers the proposition unconstitutional, useless, and a waste of time; that the Opposition have therefore determined neither to debate the question nor to vote upon it.”

But, Sir, if it is a new precedent, I may say that it is also a very unkind thing on the part of the honourable member to his supporters from the Auckland District. Let me recall to the House what has taken place with respect to this. A number of Auckland members said to members on this side of the House, “Will you come and attend a meeting in order to put pressure upon the Government to get a revision of the tariff this session?” A meeting was held, a deputation appointed duly waited upon the Premier, and he gave it to be understood that unless he could be assured that the Protectionists would support him in everything he was not to be “had.” Some of the Auckland gentlemen were satisfied with what took place, and did not attend the next meeting. Others did, and a resolution was carried to the effect that the action of the Government, or the answer of the Government, was exceedingly unsatisfactory; and that seems to be the opinion of the people of Auckland and of a portion of the Auckland Press. I was struck by an article in one of the papers—the Auckland *Evening Star*, which said that it was positively cruel of the Government to ask the Auckland members to vote in a direction so opposed to their pledges and to their expressed opinions. The honourable gentleman is not generous. He reminds me of an exhibition I saw years ago—an exhibition which is not uncommon now; an exhibition which Professor Rarey started, but has had many followers since—in which fine young colts, unbroken, are brought upon the stage. The professor, after a series of manipulations, gets the horse down, kneels upon his head, and kisses his hand to the audience. But there is a still further exhibition humiliating to the noble animal. The professor puts his foot on the animal’s head, and waves an umbrella up and down. Now, it seems to me that that

is what the honourable gentleman is doing to the Auckland members. Not content with having “Rarey-fied” them—broken them in—he is determined that they shall thank him for making them false to the assurances which they have given to their constituents. From the Auckland address to which I have referred before, I should like, especially for the benefit of the Minister who presides over the public works, to read a little paragraph. Mr. Leys seems to be a very wise man, and I may say so although he opposes me, because he seems to consider what candidates ought to do. He says,—

“Then, you have the great financial reform politician, who will tell you that the main cause of the depression is the extravagant expenditure in the various Government departments, and endeavour to show that by reducing the annual cost of these departments prosperity would at once arise. This is a strange way of proposing to revive trade and restore prosperity. If such a line of policy were carried into effect a greater state of depression would exist; for it simply means the discharge of a large number of Government employés, thereby increasing the ranks of the unemployed. Then, we have the bland politician, who will tell the working-man that he is in favour of encouraging colonial industry, that we have great mineral resources and natural products that require developing, and that he will do all in his power to assist these if elected, but when elected will never be found to have opened his mouth in Parliament in support of those promises. These gentry are your worst enemies, and should be made an example of.”

Sir, is it right that the honourable gentleman should, if I may use the expression, ram this resolution down the throats of those to whom he knows it is most distasteful? Now I shall come to the question of the position of the Government, and what we mean to do with regard to it. Perhaps I might describe it in three ways, the first two of which are not particularly refined, but I shall endeavour in the third to make up for that. First, our idea is, that if we give the Government rope enough a very sure result of a familiar character will follow; next, we are of opinion that it is not undesirable the Government should stew in its own juice; and, thirdly, we shall leave the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government—and now I am going to borrow from mythological history, and the honourable member at the head of the Education Department will doubtless explain the meaning to his colleagues—we shall leave the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government to the fate of that gentleman in mythological history who inadvertently happened, in a walk he was taking, to invade the precincts of a quiet lake where some ladies were bathing. I will leave the honourable gentleman to explain who was the person and what was the fate that overtook him. Now, as regards the honourable members who are associated with me, we shall endeavour to shorten

the session, and shall not speak at more length than we consider our duty obliges us to do; but I must not lead the honourable gentleman to suppose that we will permit measures that we disapprove of to pass without reasonable opposition. But generally he will find us inclined to help him in pushing on the work of the session. Now, as regards the position of the Government, I should like to say this: that I disclaim desiring to give any personal offence if I speak of the desire of the Government to cling to office. I wish it to be clearly understood that I am not referring to any sordid reasons. Indeed, the Bill that has been brought down by the honourable gentlemen in relation to their salaries speaks for itself as to their not being wanting in generosity or disinterestedness. But surely it is a great position for six men in the community to be selected from their fellows to govern the State, and surely such a position has attractions sufficient to enable us to refer to an anxiety to retain office without imputing sordid motives. Therefore I trust the honourable members of the Government will accept this assurance once for all when we take exception to their desire to retain office; for, as far as I can see, their only desire this session is to retain office, and their only plan of doing so is by mollifying their supporters who hold different views. The honourable member at the head of the Government, I am sorry to say, appears to me to have lost all his old power, to have fallen away enormously in ability, whilst, unfortunately, his faults have survived, and stand therefore exposed in cruel prominence—those faults of arrogance and a disposition to coercion, for which the honourable gentleman was famed in former times, and which positively make honourable members on this side of the House fearful of rising to express their opinions. And, Sir, he is utterly wanting in knowledge of the condition of the colony, and has no conception of what is required to retrieve it. He has hold of papers showing that retrenchment was most spoken of during the elections, and his idea is that if he can retrench he will do sufficient without going into the question at all of what is required under the very difficult circumstances in which a very large number of colonists are placed owing to the decrease of industrial enterprise. Now, I say this, and I say it with all seriousness and all solemnity: that the honourable gentleman principally owes his seat to the personal hostility he has contrived to raise against me, and that this will prove a most disastrous thing to the colony. I am prepared, having studied and carefully thought over the circumstances of the colony, and the remedies which have been applied to meet its conditions I am prepared, and I state so solemnly to the country and to the House, to bring down proposals which would enable us to reduce taxation, to abstain from placing further loans on the London market for years to come, and to proceed with the railways now under construction at a moderate rate of progress. I am prepared, Sir, to bring down proposals of that kind, and I dare not do so, for such is the state

of the House with regard to myself, owing to the action of the honourable gentleman, that to bring down proposals of that kind would simply lead to my being subjected to jeers and insults. Sir, on that honourable gentleman rests the responsibility that these proposals have now to be postponed. The honourable gentleman laughs.

Ah! laugh'st thou, Loehiel, my vision to scorn!  
Proud bird of Mount Egmont, thy plumes shall be torn.

Sir, it is safe for the honourable gentleman to laugh now; the time will come when the colony will call upon him to account for what I have stated. I could not have a better proof of what I have said than the very fact that the mere stating that I have such proposals to make is met by jeers and insults on the part of the honourable gentleman—that I, I who brought down the public-works policy, I who took that honourable member into the Government at a very critical time, and made a great mistake in doing so—there was a choice between two gentlemen, and I did not select wisely—that I, when I say I have such proposals to make, should be met by jeers and laughter on the part of the honourable gentleman. Sir, I pledged myself in 1884 that I would not increase the taxation, notwithstanding the large deficit left by the honourable member and the fact that the expenditure was some quarter of a million over the revenue. I knew the means by which it would not be necessary to impose the large increased taxation which the country dreaded. I carried that proposal out. The honourable member for Egmont opposed it on every occasion, and now that he has come into office he is glad to take advantage of it. The proposals I have now are of a different character, suited to the very different condition of the colony—the difference being that, whereas in 1870 we had not prepared the colony to be the home of the thousands within it, to whom it ought to have offered attractions, we have now gone in excess of the requirements of the population, and require to take a new course. That course I indicate by saying that it is one which will mean reduced taxation, refraining from introducing loans to the English money-market for years, and proceeding at a reasonable rate with the railways now under construction, instead of paralysing the country by the inaction which the honourable gentleman either has in view or has left us to suppose he has, under a mistake or misapprehension. I must add this: that whilst I have spoken of those advantages, honourable members must not suppose that I am insensible to the question of a radical retrenchment. I have pledged myself that I would move and aid in the matter, and, no matter how disagreeable action of the kind may be, I am prepared to have the courage of my opinions, and to assist in bringing into effect a large and radical retrenchment. And I feel ashamed of honourable members who have the fear of unpopularity, who, from no other cause, are allowing the Government to say to them: “We will do this dirty work. Leave it to us,

*Sir J. Vogel*

and we will save you from the odium and disagreeableness associated with it." Those who have the courage of their opinions ought to say: "We will not submit to reductions, to retrenchments, without knowing what they are; and if we approve of them we will support you, no matter how unpopular they may prove to be." The honourable gentleman's policy, in my opinion, is a spurious retrenchment. I do not believe it is his intention to carry out any real retrenchment. I think, Sir, he is amusing us or himself, as the case may be, and is shutting out from us any consideration of what we may or might do to relieve the difficulties under which the colony labours. Meanwhile, Sir, although it is stated in the resolution that the revenue should meet the expenditure, although he has the audacity to state that his policy is that the revenue should meet the expenditure, the honourable gentleman comes down with proposals to the effect that, whatever deficiency there may be, it should be recouped by deficiency bills or Treasury bills; in fact, that, instead of the revenue meeting the expenditure, the revenue should be made up to such an extent as may be necessary out of borrowed money. I do not like to take to prophecy. I will only say that I fear, if this policy is pursued, and no steps are taken to equalise the revenue with the expenditure, we shall find that our stocks at Home will further suffer—and they have gone down  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. since the honourable gentleman made his Financial Statement. And that, Sir, may not even be the worst, for I greatly fear that unless the credit of the colony is improved it may stand in the way of obtaining money for other industrial enterprises, such as the Midland Railway, the Otago Central Railway, and other works for which capital should be so readily provided from Home. I have explained the circumstances under which the resolution has been brought down, our past action, and our intention not to discuss or vote upon this resolution. We shall at once walk out of the House, and leave those honourable gentlemen to take what course they may. My honourable friends from Auckland, who remain, will be safe in voting, without any danger of turning the Government out; they will have the luxury of voting as they like without imperilling the Government position. We shall leave the Government the luxury of dealing with its own friends, and I think they will have a great deal of such luxury also in the future. But I wish to emphatically declare before we go,—before I conclude my remarks,—that if those honourable gentlemen for whom I am speaking, and I myself, thought that there was by any possibility a means of forcing the Government into revising the tariff during the present session, we would not take the action we are now about to do. We take that action, Sir, as a protest against the resolutions of the honourable gentleman. We take that action because we do not approve the nature of the resolutions and the new practice they introduce. And we see no reason why we should not take that action,

because it is obvious to us that it is not in our power to force on a revision of the tariff; although we know that if the country were polled three-fourths of the people in it would proclaim, in as earnest a manner as possible, the necessity of making such a revision.

Sir J. VOGEL and other honourable members here withdrew.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; I should clear out at once, because you will hear some unpleasant truths.

Mr. FISHER.—Ta-ran-ta-ra!

Mr. FELDWICK.—Sir, before you put the question I merely wish to say that I intend to demand a division. I do not know whether you are going to put the question in one or two parts; but, in any case, it is my intention to demand a division. I pledged myself to the electors that, if no one else moved a vote in favour of the tariff being dealt with this session, I should do so. I intend to vote against the second part of the resolution, and to call for a division. I do so purely as an independent member. I am neither a supporter of Sir Julius Vogel nor of Major Atkinson, and I wish to state that what I am doing now I am doing as an absolutely independent member. I intend to call for a division because I do not believe that the statement is correct that the tariff cannot be revised this session. I am confident it could be done in seven or eight hours, if the Government wished to do it. There is no doubt about it that many industries in the country require that the tariff should be revised. I have received several letters—which I shall be glad to hand over to the Colonial Treasurer—asking that certain items in the tariff shall be dealt with this session. I have one asking that the tariff should be revised in the direction of keeping out all fruit that can be grown in the colony, and also asking that steps should be taken to deal with the large quantities of pulp-fruit that are introduced to the colony, some of it in a very bad condition. I have also been asked to move in the direction of procuring encouragement for several other industries. However, I am powerless in the matter, and, having explained my position and what I intend to do, I now beg to say that, after the Premier has replied, I shall call for a division.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—Before the reply is made, I want to indicate why I neither walk out of the House nor oppose the resolution. I look upon it as quite an absurdity for this House to pretend to do any more work between now and the end of the year than the Government propose to deal with; and I believe this House is not serious in pretending that it wishes to remain over that time. I look at the time that has been spent since we met, and I say that we have done absolutely nothing, and we know now that we are bordering on the first day of December, and it is beyond all reason to expect that we could do anything more than adjust the finances, pass whatever Bills are necessary, and get ready for an early session next year. That appears to me to be a far more reasonable proposition; and, in the in-

terests of the country, I do not see why the Government should be disturbed in their arrangements. It is my object rather to facilitate them in order that they may have a full opportunity for considering their proposals, and, when I see what changes they intend to make, I shall then see on which side I shall vote. In the meantime I take the attitude of one who independently watches over the interests of the country, and I think it is best to leave those honourable gentlemen to have a fair chance with their measures. But I say I do not agree with many of their proposals. I think the proposal of the Premier to take from the subsidies of the outlying country districts an unwise one. To terminate railways and roadworks seems to me a great mistake. When I heard the honourable member for Christchurch North it struck me very much that that honourable gentleman had running in his mind some of the thoughts I have freely enunciated. I think that, as colonial works, the railways should be put a stop to, and that their construction should be handed over to private companies, the same as the Manawatu, the Midland, and the Otago Central. But discontinue the central railway in this Island, and all other lines of that kind, and hand them over to private companies. Devote the money thus placed at your disposal to the opening-up of land for settlement in the outlying districts. Surely every honourable member must know that it is by the railways that we have been brought to our present position. It is by making railways to compete with sea-carriage, which they can never hope to succeed in, that we have been brought to the position of having a revenue which does not meet our expenditure and the more railways are built the more we shall sink in that position. That must be so, for the products of the country are such, and the conformation of the country is such, that of necessity the railways must depend almost entirely on their passenger traffic. There are no great quantities of products to send to any one central portion of the colony. All we require, and all we ever did require, are short lines to connect the interior with the ports. But, instead of that, we have gone in for magnificent schemes of railway communication, going from end to end of each Island, with many branches from them, and made quite regardless of the physical difficulties to be met with. And now we are paying the penalty for this, and the more railways we make the greater will the penalty be, partly for the reason I have stated, and partly because our railways are governed by political influence, and not on a commercial basis. Excuses are always being found for reducing the charges for railway-carriage—whenever there is an influential community to be served, pressure is applied to reduce the charges—and therefore it is impossible for our railways to pay as they should. I hope the Government will study the views that have been expressed in this House, so that when we meet here again they will submit to us proposals calculated to meet the requirements of the country; and in that hope I intend to support these resolutions.

*Mr. O'Connor*

**Mr. WARD.**—The unique distinction of being able to take part in debating a vote of confidence in the Government moved by themselves is a privilege I am anxious not to lose the pleasure of. The two resolutions are of such a nature that I am put in a predicament. If they are put together I must walk out without voting, though I do not wish it to be understood I am doing so as a follower of the honourable member for Christchurch North; but if they are put singly I shall vote for the first and against the second. Sir, I hope the question will be quickly decided one way or the other, and that we shall then set ourselves to the business of the country, because I am painfully sensible of the fact that up to the present there has been a great waste of time, and it seems to me that the time is so limited that there should be a united effort on both sides to get to dealing with the measures the Government desire to place before the country.

**Mr. SAMUEL.**—As one opposed to the present Government during the past four sessions, and now an independent member, and as one who believes that the tariff should be arranged with a due regard to Protection, I have felt in doubt as to how I should vote on this question. But it seems to me that, the Government having been placed in office to carry out one task of primary importance—that is, to effect retrenchment and economy—we should not fetter their hands by compelling them to take such another large task as revising the tariff this session. They have got the great task of retrenchment to discharge, and they are in office to undertake it, and I think it is a very good job that they will not have the extra revenue that a revised tariff would bring them, or they would have one incentive less to effect that rigid economy which the country desires. For that reason I shall vote for both of these motions.

**Mr. GRIMMOND.**—Sir, as a Free-trader I can see no chance of the alteration of the tariff in the present financial position of the colony resulting in a reduction of the amount to be collected at the Customs, and I shall therefore vote for the resolution before the House.

**Mr. FITZHERBERT.**—I, like some other honourable members, intend to have a division on this question, so that we may see who will vote with the Government and who will not. I was not returned either as a Protectionist or as a Free-trader; I was returned here unpledged, an entirely independent member, to vote as I think fit. I did not advocate Protection on the hustings, because I saw it would be impossible to adopt such a scheme—that the colony could not possibly do without the £1,400,000 it derives every year from the import duties, and so it could not do with Protection. It would have been an absurdity to carry out the tariff proposed last year, which put taxation on articles required for ordinary use, and which would have put a heavy impost on many articles of general consumption. Out of the proposed increased duties, £110,000 of the total of £180,000 was on cotton goods, and, as we have no cotton production or cotton-mills



here, and cotton is required in every-day life—even the wrappers in which we send away our frozen mutton are of cotton—that increase would have been most severely felt, and would even have checked industry. Therefore, during my election I declared that I was opposed to absolute Protection, and I also declared that I was opposed to an absolute Free-trade policy. What I advocated was, that we should so foster and encourage local industries as to enable goods which are manufactured, or can be manufactured, in the colony to be sold at a fair profit; and beyond that I would not go. Now, as to the position of this Government with regard to the tariff, there can be no doubt the last Government were defeated on their tariff proposals; and, no doubt, that was the main question before the country when we went to the electors; and, of course, every member now sitting on the Government benches believed that the tariff would be revised this session, and must have come to a conclusion in his own mind as to what increases of duties there should be; and I say, that being so, the Government should have brought in tariff proposals this session. I did not hear the Financial Statement read in this House, being away in a distant part of the country for the benefit of my health; but when I read it I was astonished to find it did not state that a revised tariff would be submitted this session. I was also surprised at some other features in the Financial Statement; but I am not going to deal with that subject now, and will merely say that I shall remain to vote on this question, and shall vote against the resolutions of the Premier.

Mr. KERR.—Sir, I hold that when we went to the country it was entirely on the tariff question.—(No.)—Yes, it was. Retrenchment was agreed on by both sides, and the late Government was retrenching, and had been all along. The tariff was the question of the day; and when the late Government brought down their tariff it was rejected, and we went to the country on it. In my election the whole thing was fought on that. My opponent was for retrenchment right through, and was not for Protection at all, and he did not want the tariff touched. While he was for retrenchment I declared myself for an increased tariff, and the country upheld me, considering that it was not fair to put the whole of the increased taxation on land alone; that the farmers should not be made to bear more than their fair share of the burden, but that all alike should be taxed fairly. I was elected by a large majority because I pledged myself, as far as in me lay, to get a better tariff at the same time as a tax on land—to increase the Customs duties so far that the farmers should not be compelled to bear the whole burden. That is the reason why I have tried my best to get the tariff raised this session. I may state that I am just as independent as any member in this House. I have no leader; but I pledged myself, if I came back to the House, to compel any Government to bring down a better tariff this session, and I

am satisfied that, as surely as I stand here, honourable members will deeply regret that they have not compelled the Government to alter the tariff this session, for I am certain that the Government will not deal satisfactorily with the question next session. I believe that the Government are really deterred from bringing down a tariff through fear of losing their seats on these benches, though if they had brought one down I should have helped them whether they stood or fell by it.

Major ATKINSON.—I am very sorry to have to make a speech on this occasion, but some of the statements made by the honourable gentleman opposite I am bound to answer. Sir, we have very good evidence of the honourable gentleman's courage and his courtesy in the course he has chosen to follow this afternoon. I am not going to grumble at it. It is what we might reasonably have expected from his proceedings this session. The Government have treated the honourable gentleman with exceptional consideration, and this is the result. Well, the honourable gentleman may understand that he will have no more of that consideration for the rest of the session. I want that distinctly understood. I say we have treated him with every and great consideration, and this is the result. And what, Sir, is the result due to? Fear, simply fear. The honourable gentleman is afraid to face the storm he has raised himself. He challenged the Government, and then he pretended that the resolution he proposed to bring down insisting on the tariff being revised this session was intended for the purpose of assisting the Government. Sir, was ever a greater sham attempted to be imposed on this House? And, I say, the honourable gentleman knows it was a sham, and so do some honourable gentlemen opposite, though I admit that there are some other gentlemen opposite who do not and cannot comprehend such action. And, Sir, we have just heard some more sham. The honourable gentleman who has just told us that he has no leader is, at all events, a faithful follower, for never does the member for Christchurch North go into a lobby but he is followed by the honourable member for Motueka. I say, away with such pretences at independence as that, and also that of the honourable member for the Hutt! It is simply pretence, and very weak pretence at that. Honourable gentlemen who make these declarations are simply ashamed of their champion—they would vote with him, but they are ashamed of him. There can be no doubt whatever that the conduct of the honourable gentleman this session has been such as to disturb the equanimity of his followers. Mistake after mistake—to use the mildest possible term—has been made by him; and his last and greatest mistake was when he challenged the Government on this question, and asserted positively that a majority of this House were determined to have, this session, a revision of the tariff. Now, with regard to the alleged unconstitutional action, as declared in that wonderful resolution which was carried by some half-dozen honourable members—the rest

would not go to the meeting,—those who declared the Government's action to be unconstitutional know as little about what is constitutional as some of them care. The honourable gentleman opposite wants to be very constitutional, and says I do not meet him constitutionally. How am I to meet him? He alleges positively that this House wants a revised tariff this session; yet he has not the courage to put the question to the House. He has not the courage to ask the House whether it is so or not, though he himself declares that it is. How am I to answer him?

Mr. KERR.—He wants to help you.

Major ATKINSON.—Help me! This is not a case of helping a lame dog over a stile. When I want help of the honourable gentleman I will ask him; but it will be a very long time before I do.

Mr. KERR.—It appears to me you are not answering the question.

Major ATKINSON.—I am going to answer it in my own way, and not in the way which the honourable member for Waimea thinks I should. We have had an exhibition of the patriotism of the honourable member for Christchurch North, as well as of his courage. What is the extraordinary position he has taken up before the country and the House? I hope the country and the House will mark it. What is the position the honourable gentleman dares to take up in the face of the House and the country? He has a scheme which would raise us out of our difficulties—a scheme which would avoid borrowing, and which would make all local industries prosper, and enable us to go on with our railways; and what is the reason he does not bring it forward? It is, that the honourable gentleman has not got such a scheme: that is the reason. He has, foolishly, now placed himself in the position of a man who has a scheme, and yet he says that it is my power in this House which prevents his submitting the scheme to the country. If we are to believe that the honourable gentleman has such a scheme, there is not one of his followers, who have so ignominiously walked out with their tails between their legs, who would not instantly have demanded it from the honourable gentleman. As a patriot, he was bound to produce it for the benefit of the House and of the country. I will go further. He says that I am utterly incompetent, and that the Government only occupies its position on sufferance; and yet he alleges I have power over this House such as he describes. What must be the condition of honourable members of this House if that is true? I say it is a nice compliment to members of this House, that, because I laughed, a scheme that would regenerate the country is to disappear. It is preposterous. We have had enough of the honourable gentleman's schemes. We had his scheme of 1884, and it has landed us exactly in the position we foretold at that date. In regard to the seizure of the Sinking Fund, did the honourable gentleman not tell the House that directly it was taken it would

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do away with borrowing for unproductive works? The result, however, has been quite the opposite. Here we are, every nest-egg gone. And last session the honourable gentleman was going to redeem us by borrowing, and by a tariff, which was instantly laughed out of the House. This year he tells us that borrowing must cease—that we cannot afford to borrow. How can we believe any honourable gentleman who shifts round all the points of the compass just to suit the times? The honourable gentleman talked of 1874. I am not going into that question now, but some day I will expose the state of the finance left by the honourable gentleman when he left office, and I venture to say that he will not come out the best. I say that never were the finances of the country in a more shameful state than when that honourable gentleman left office. Then, the honourable gentleman tells us that in 1879 I was a member of a Government which kept back a motion of want of confidence which was hanging over us for a time. That is true in one sense; but it is not true in the way in which he wanted the House to believe it true. I am not going into the circumstances of that matter, but I must answer the honourable gentleman. The Government of Sir George Grey had been defeated and another Government had been installed, and before that Government had time to examine the finances or make any statement to the House a notice of want of confidence was tabled. What did the Government do? The Opposition, not being quite up to the forms of the House, put the notice of motion in a form in which they could not get it on without the consent of the Government; and what did the Government do? They did what they were bound to do in justice to the country and itself, for they said, "We want seven days to make our statement in. As soon as we have that time we will bring up your notice of motion at once." "No," said the Opposition; "we will have it up at once." Then I said, "Get it up at once if you can." They said, "All right; we will get it up at once." They did not succeed in getting it up. We made our statement to the House, and as soon as we did so we were in a majority. The truth is this: that our Government had a good case. It was only petulance on my part, says the honourable gentleman, that I moved this resolution the other night. Only petulance! Yes, it may have been petulance, but I venture to say that if it had been that honourable gentleman who was on these benches the motion would have been the height of wisdom. The result has been that those honourable gentlemen dare not face us. Where are they? They have sneaked out of the House. They are not going to discuss the question. The honourable gentleman makes a most violent speech of an hour and a half, and then stumps out of the House. I saw shame on the faces of his followers. I saw how much they felt that the honourable gentleman had failed in every course he had recommended to the party. They went out with shame on their faces. Only eight went out with him, I noticed, and I

see a good sprinkling of the honourable gentleman's followers present now.

Mr. KERR.—There was no shame.

Major ATKINSON.—There are some honourable gentlemen who cannot feel shame; I am talking of those honourable gentlemen who can feel shame, and who occasionally do show it. The honourable member for Waimea seems very unhappy.

Mr. KERR.—I see what you want to do.

Mr. SEDDON.—You are talking against time.

Major ATKINSON.—Perhaps it would not take five minutes to reply to the honourable gentleman, although he spoke for an hour and a half, but I do propose to say a few words with the permission of the honourable member for Waimea. If I have not finished at half-past five I shall do myself the pleasure of resuming the debate at half-past seven. Well, then, we come to the attack the honourable gentleman made on the Minister of Education. First of all, he tells us that the House and the country think very little of the Minister of Education; that all his figures are wrong, and that he does not know however he is going to answer. I notice, however, this peculiarity: that, although the honourable gentleman is always telling us when he speaks that my honourable colleague ought not to be considered, the honourable member for Christchurch North invariably picks him out to spend twenty minutes or half an hour upon. I would advise the honourable member for Christchurch North not to be so sure of the insignificance of the honourable gentleman. I venture to think that my honourable colleague will hold his own against even so great a man as the honourable member for Christchurch North. "Puerile," says the honourable gentleman—he is very fond of strong words when he has very little argument; the honourable gentleman says it is puerile to deal with this question in this way. A great authority the honourable gentleman is on tariffs, is he not? We have had a great deal of experience of the honourable gentleman and his tariffs. The honourable gentleman has produced two tariffs after having had a year's time to consider each. In one case he had two years. What were they when they were brought down? My honourable friend says that one was the "banana" tariff. Many honourable members suppose that the proposal was to put a penny on preserved bananas; but it seems it was really to take a penny off. A "banana" tariff! On the strength of such tariffs as those the honourable gentleman can speak with great authority on tariffs. The honourable member for Invercargill says he could prepare a tariff in seven or eight hours. It would not take the House seven or eight hours to deal with it. I can assure the House that the present Government have no idea of bringing in a tariff which is going to be treated as the honourable gentleman's tariff opposite was treated. We are going to stand or fall by it. An honourable gentleman says, Put 5 or 10 per cent. on *ad valorem* duties. We have had experience of putting a

duty on that class of goods. In 1879 the tariff was revised hastily. We increased the tariff in that year very largely, and the *ad valorem* duties were raised 10 or 15 per cent., and we did not get a single half penny additional revenue. The tariff, if it is to be revised at all—and the Government have said distinctly that it is to be revised—I say must be revised with great care and consideration; and I say there is no man here who can pretend to say what revenue we can necessarily raise by the tariff next year. The honourable member for New Plymouth referred to a point which it is very important for the House to consider—that is, giving increased taxation until we have seen the greatest retrenchment which can possibly be made. That is the stand the Opposition took last session. They said, "We will not vote any additional taxation until we are certain that the public expenditure has been reduced to the lowest possible amount." I say this House, if it is wise, will adhere to the same rule. The people of New Zealand will not object to the taxation necessary to carry on the services economically; but the vast majority of the taxpayers of this colony are not prepared haphazard, for any purpose whatever, to give a greater revenue to the Government than at present until they are satisfied that the utmost retrenchment has taken place. I say that is an important principle.

Mr. SEDDON.—Why did you increase the property-tax?

Major ATKINSON.—Why did we increase the property-tax?

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

#### HOUSE RESUMED.

The House resumed at half-past seven o'clock.

Major ATKINSON.—When the House rose at half-past five o'clock I was referring to the amendment of the tariff which the honourable member for Christchurch North had alluded to. The honourable member went on to tell us that it was not a question of Protection that we had to deal with now, but simply a matter of revenue. The whole tenor of his speech showed that he was not considering the question of revenue at all, but was trying to excite in the minds of honourable members a fear of their constituents. I am happy to say that the members of this House, at any rate those who are supporting the Government, know very well what is the real feeling of their constituents, and they know very well that they are giving effect to what their constituents desire in the action they are now taking. They are not to be led away by the device of the honourable gentleman into doing what they know is an impossibility. What their constituents desire is not that galvanised iron should have a special duty put upon it this session, but that the tariff should receive a general revision. That it is what they desire; and I venture to think—and the action of the honourable gentleman shows that he thinks so also, although he told us the exact opposite the

other day—the opinion of the House is that the tariff cannot be revised during the present session. So much, then, for the tariff. Then, the honourable gentleman goes on to say, “I accuse the Government of keeping their retrenchment proposals back.” I do not know what the honourable gentleman means. How any honourable member can make such a statement as that, with the facts before him, I am at a loss to understand; because it is contrary to the facts of the case. And it is contrary to the facts which the honourable gentleman accepted himself. The honourable gentleman accepted the Financial Statement as a statement of the policy of the Government. He asked time to consider that Statement, and was not ready to go on with it on the Friday, the Statement having been delivered on the previous Tuesday. It took him to the following Tuesday to get ready to discuss the policy of the Government. The Government gave him that time. He accepted the Statement and the House and the country looked upon the Statement as a clear exposition of the policy of the Government in regard to retrenchment and other matters. And I say that a full scheme of retrenchment is contained in that Statement and the Bills we have brought down since. And I say that the honourable gentleman accepted it, and it was not until he made that wretched speech—that abortive failure, which occupied two hours and a half, in which he told us absolutely nothing, and controverted not a single point in the Statement—it was not till then that he found there was no policy in the Statement. The honourable gentleman thought of upsetting the Statement by a speech which took a week to prepare, and which fell as flat as possible on the House; and one after another of his own supporters in the Press of the country has declared that not one point of the Statement has been shaken. Notoriety seems to be the life of the honourable gentleman. It does not matter what it is, he must have notoriety or he feels that, having failed politically, he will disappear altogether from the thoughts of the people of this country. He tells us to-night—and I was astonished at his temerity—that the promises he made in 1884 he has carried out. This is insulting the intelligence of this House. I say that not one single promise which the honourable gentleman made in 1884 has been given effect to, except this: that he would take the Sinking Fund; and he has now landed us in as great a debt as when he borrowed it. That he has accomplished, to our sorrow, and it is to-day we have to meet the difficulty face to face. And it is in consequence of the terrible muddle and the utter failure of the honourable gentleman's promises to relieve us of taxation, or give us retrenchment, or restore us to prosperity by “leaps and bounds”—it is this failure, I say, that has rendered these drastic proposals of the Government absolutely necessary. And yet the honourable gentleman, at this eleventh hour, comes down with a scheme—no; I beg his pardon; he does not come down with it; he has got it in his breast,

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and, for fear it should be laughed out of the House, he proposes to keep it there. The members of this House and the country will be able to value such a statement as that at its true worth. I should like to ask the honourable gentleman when he hatched this new scheme,—when he devised it. A regular practitioner who had a patent medicine, a universal medicine with which he could cure everybody, and yet who followed the old lines of the profession, I venture to say would be called a great charlatan. As the words are not allowable in this House, I am not going to apply them to the honourable gentleman; but I was going to ask, where is the patriotism of this honourable gentleman, this saviour of the country? The honourable gentleman came into Parliament to restore prosperity by “leaps and bounds.” He pledged himself to do it, and he tells us he has done it; that every one of his pledges has been fulfilled. Still, I ask how his supporters would feel when they heard the honourable gentleman make such a boast as that. Then, again, I come back and I ask him when it was that he conceived this great scheme. How long ago was it, and under what circumstances? Last session he told us, in the boldest possible language, that retrenchment was all a sham; that it could not be made; that there was no possibility of doing it, and that we must immediately put on taxation to the extent of a quarter of a million. This he told us was absolutely necessary, and he threatened if we would not accept it he would go to the country, and that the country would very soon send us, who disbelieved in that mode of business, about our business. But what answer did the country return? That the honourable gentleman was unfit to govern us. The answer of the country is that it will not trust the honourable gentleman, and will not have him here at all. What has been the action of the honourable gentleman ever since the vote of the country has been taken? Has it not been a constant endeavour to obtain coalition with my side of the House? That is what he has been working for silently and publicly. He says, after the elections, I was bound to go to him. But, when I heard the honourable gentleman declare last session that retrenchment was a sham, all possibility of attaining the object of the honourable gentleman was out of the question. I felt that a coalition, or a proposition of that sort, would have been treacherous to the country, and I made up my mind that under no circumstances would I coalesce with the honourable gentleman, because I felt, as every member on our side of the House felt, that the honourable gentleman meant to go in for extravagance, and spending money merely to keep him in office, and after him would come the flood. Then, the honourable gentleman declares in his place in Parliament that he raised me into office. Then, I ask him, if he believes me to be what he has represented me to be—which I doubt—I ask, to what depth must the honourable gentleman have fallen to be excluded from the position he desires! If what he describes be true, at any rate my friends have had

the strength to eject him from office by the will of the country, and I venture to say that the will of the country is that the honourable gentleman should be precluded from ever again taking a place on these benches. And this office I now hold is no seeking of mine, as all my friends know, every one of them; and it is within the knowledge of the honourable member for Auckland Central, who has gone against the Government, that I was perfectly willing to stand aside entirely, and support any Government that would support retrenchment. Then, I ask, what does the honourable gentleman mean by telling us he has this scheme? What does he mean? Is he a patriot? Why does he not divulge his scheme, if he has one? His talk is as idle and inaccurate as it was when the country had confidence in him, and returned him, in 1884, to lead us into this terrible state of financial difficulties which we have to face now. He says, "Look at the securities of the colony; see how they have gone down since the present Government took office." It is true they have gone down, and, if I judge the times aright, they will go down more. And why is it? Not because this Government is in office, but because the English market knows now what is the real state of the colony, the state to which the honourable gentleman opposite has brought it by his wretched financing. Never were the finances of the colony, not even in 1874, when they were bad enough, so bad as they have been for the last three or four years. Well, to come back to the statement of retrenchment, he says we have not put our scheme before the country. I say that we have, and fully, and I say that the further particulars which the honourable gentleman asks for were told in the Statement. We have told him in the debate that we were willing to give every possible explanation, as far as explanation could be given; but to ask this House to go into the question of reorganization is to show an utter recklessness or an ignorance of the subject on which the honourable gentleman is speaking. The House could no more go into the question of the reorganization of the Civil Service than it could fly. After the session, and the Government had reorganized the Service, the House could say whether it was reorganization of which it approves. If the House sees fit it might determine the salaries, the highest and the lowest; but to pretend to say that the House was to determine the number of officers in any department, or the work of that department, is to show an utter ignorance of the question. We should have been at the particulars of this retrenchment but for the waste of time by the honourable gentleman opposite. He has always been in this position: that he has always been looking out for a coalition. He has been intriguing for a coalition; he has been doing everything possible to bring about a coalition; and, having utterly failed in that, he has turned round upon the Government and accuses it of bringing him into disrepute. But it is just the reverse. The Government have treated him with the utmost leniency. They have given

him every opportunity, and he has made the mistake—as many a man has done before him—of looking at the attitude of forbearance which we, under the circumstances, have extended to him, as a sign of weakness in us. But he will find now that it is not weakness on the part of the Government. We have been ready to make every allowance for the honourable gentleman. But I say that his speech to-day and his action on several other occasions have put him out of court entirely; and I say no more forbearance is the Government prepared to extend to the honourable gentleman from this day forth. We will treat him with all due respect as the leader of the Opposition; but further than that I, for one, at any rate, shall not be prepared to go. Then, the honourable gentleman told us he is going to give the Government rope enough. Well, is not that kind! Think of the kindness of the honourable gentleman, with eight or ten followers—I do not know that he has more: I know there are more than that in opposition to the Government, but I do not believe that more follow the honourable gentleman. Fancy, with that following, he is going to give us rope!—

Mr. SEDDON.—He might as well give you the tree, at the same time, to put the rope across.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; but I fancy he has not found it yet. Indeed, I am afraid it has not yet grown, for, if I mistake not, the life of this Government is going to be a pretty long one. I remember very well that in 1879, when we came into power, it was foretold that we should last a day, then it was to be a fortnight, then it was to be till the next session, then it was to be till the next year, and so it went on and on; and then the rope got long enough and the Ministry had to go. I fancy the chances are very much against the honourable gentleman being in at the death on this occasion. In my opinion he is neither giving us rope nor pulling us in, for, under the present circumstances, he is utterly unable to do either. Therefore the threats of the honourable gentleman may be treated as idle boasting: especially may that be the case with the honourable gentleman's statement the other day that a majority of the House was determined to have this question settled and would have it. Now what do we see? We see the honourable gentleman himself is away in the lobbies. Then, we are described by the honourable gentleman, in very elegant language, as being allowed to "stew in our own juice." I wish it were that, with all my heart; but it is the muddle and confusion and the terribly wretched administration of the late Government that we have to stew in. That is our unfortunate position—we have to retrieve the position which he has left behind to us. And he has never yet gone out of office without leaving a position of that kind behind him. It is not in a condition of our own making that we are to stew, as the honourable gentleman tells us; but we have to get the country out of difficulties arising from the wretched government and the wretched finance of the honourable gentleman. And, Sir, just let us follow out the simile. I

venture to say that, after we have stewed a little, we shall turn out a very nice dish.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sauerkraut.

Major ATKINSON.—We shall see. Sauerkraut requires fermentation; but we are not going to ferment. Then, we have that classical allusion made, not to the Government, but to me personally. I do not know what portion of the legend he was alluding to, but I suppose it was that portion where the gentleman saw the ladies bathing, and for that was turned into a stag and eaten by his own dogs. Well, that may be my fate, but I do not think it will be, because I am not at all likely to be spying about where I ought not to look, in the first place, and, in the second, I venture to think that the gentlemen with whom I am working are not in the least likely to eat me. I have had a little experience in parliamentary life, and I am happy to say that the gentlemen who work with me worked with me twenty years ago, and it has been my fortune to be connected with the side which was always able to maintain its true members. There are always floating members, or a Government would not be turned out; and I am not going to blame members who change their opinions—it is right they should do so if their conscience renders it necessary; but I say, if I were to change from Free-trade to Protection, from leaps and bounds of prosperity to larger taxation, to no retrenchment, to a scheme of no borrowing but carrying on our railways reasonably and encouraging local industries, and so reducing taxation,—I venture to say that if I made changes like that, from month to month, from one side to the other, those honourable members who have hitherto supported me would turn round and devour me, as the friends of the honourable gentleman have already eaten him. The honourable gentleman is very fond of telling the House that I have no idea of the state of the country, that I have lost all my power, and I do not know what else, and that the members opposite were afraid of me. It is a most confused statement; I have lost my power, have no idea of the state of the country, and yet the members opposite are afraid to speak. It seems very extraordinary. I think I have seen several honourable gentlemen who are not afraid to speak. I have yet to find who are those who are afraid to speak. The honourable member for Kumara is one on the other side with the honourable member for Christchurch North. They have constantly got up one after the other. All others may have deserted them, but there are still left the honourable member for Christchurch North and the honourable member for Kumara, and it is ridiculous for the honourable gentleman to say that the honourable member for Kumara is likely to be afraid to speak. But I think I can leave that part of the argument alone. It shows what straits the honourable gentleman has got to when he is obliged to talk such—as we should call it outside—nonsense; but I will not use the term, as it might be unparliamentary. I have notes of a great many other points on which I might dwell, but I will not trouble the House with

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them. As my speech has been broken up a little, I will summarise the position of the honourable gentleman—the extraordinary position which he has taken up. He is now posing as a patriot, as a constitutionalist, and as a person far above all the tactics of parliamentary life. But consider his position: he deliberately makes a most violent attack on me, not only as a member of the Government, but also as member for Egmont. He accuses me of having for a considerable time done nothing but spread distrust of him. I call upon any of my friends, I call upon any honourable member on the opposite side of the House, to say whether I have ever said an unkind word about the honourable gentleman since this Parliament was elected or before it. I have done quite the reverse. I have even offended my friends, and I think, reasonably, by the way I have acted towards him, and by the lenient way in which I have submitted to his actions. And yet the honourable gentleman, as I say, accuses me of having spread this distrust in him! If I were the person he describes me to be it would be possible for me to do so. I might have done it, but I did not think it right, in the state of the country or in the state of the honourable gentleman, to take any such action. But I felt that what the honourable gentleman desired—coalition—was impossible, and would be a great risk to the country. So much did I feel that that was the case that directly His Excellency did me the honour to send for me and asked me if I would undertake to form a Ministry, I told him then and there that it would be absolutely impossible that any coalition between myself and Sir Julius Vogel could be formed. In saying that, I treated him with the highest respect; and I told all my friends and all the honourable gentlemen who were returned to oppose the late Government the same thing; but I did not in any possible way or form, by act or word, attempt to produce distrust in the honourable gentleman. Well, Sir, he has been talking to us this afternoon about courtesy; and now look at the courtesy which he displays! He points to me and directs against me a speech of an hour's or an hour and a half's duration, in which he accuses me of all sorts of crimes and misdemeanours, and then he has the courtesy to walk out of the House. Is that parliamentary? I have no objection to his going out to represent the feelings of his party; but I tell him if he goes on as he is doing now his seat will be an empty one and his vote useless. If he desires to occupy that position it is not for me to object; but I venture to say that he will occupy it, if he goes on as he has done to-day. Then, as to his courage, he is afraid to remain here and hear what his opponents have to say. He pretends that it is on constitutional grounds that he walks out; but I ask him to consider the position of a distinguished member of the House who has a scheme to lift the colony out of its difficulties—a scheme totally different from that which he proposed in 1884—a scheme under which he is to carry on our railways reasonably, to reduce taxation, to give us a large share of retrenchment, to raise our local indus-

tries to a state of prosperity, and save us from borrowing in the London money-market for years;—I ask him to consider the position of an honourable member who has such a scheme in his breast, and yet—I will not say sneaks, but—marches out of the House and declines to produce this great scheme because he is afraid I should laugh it out of the House. That is the position taken up by an honourable gentleman who tells us that he came back three years ago not intending to remain here, but was persuaded to stay for a few months to get the colony out of its difficulties. Does this House believe it? Does the country believe it? The time is past for such idle boasting. If the honourable gentleman believes his own statement, and if his party believe it, they are bound to make the honourable gentleman bring down his scheme to-morrow, for it must be all out and dry; and I venture to say that if there is any honourable member here who has such a scheme the House will rise as one man and give effect to it. I would myself. I say that if the honourable member has any such scheme he is bound, in common honesty to his constituents, let alone any higher consideration, to bring forward that scheme. I venture to say that any man who professes to have such a scheme, and does not bring it down simply because I should laugh at him, is not a fit man to have a seat in this House; and I believe the country would say the same. I am sorry to have troubled the House at this length, but I was obliged to answer some of the statements of the honourable gentleman. And now, in conclusion, I ask that, having had this debate, if we may call it a debate—at any rate, after the vote; for we are to have a vote, I understand, as some honourable gentlemen will not follow the honourable member for Christchurch North out of the chamber—we shall address ourselves to the business now before us, namely, the necessary retrenchment measures. I am not one of those who say that this Parliament has not done any great work. In my opinion it has done a great work. It has displaced the late Government, and I hold that one of the greatest functions of Parliament is to select a fit and proper Government, and to keep them on these benches; and if Parliament does that it can never be said that the session has been wasted. The government of the country by efficient Ministers is of first-rate importance, far more important, in my opinion, than a large portion of the legislation which takes place in this House.

The House divided.

AYES, 44.

Allen	Fisher	Mackenzie, M.
Anderson	Goldie	Marchant
Atkinson	Graham	McGregor
Barron	Hamlin	Mills
Beetham	Hislop	Moat,
Bruce	Hobbs	Monk
Buchanan	Hodgkinson	Newman
Carroll	Izard	Peacock
Cowan	Jackson	Pearson
Fergus	Lawry	Rhodes

Richardson, G.	Taiwhanga	Whyte
Ross	Tanner	Withy.
Seymour	Thompson, R.	Tellers.
S.-Menteath	Thompson, T.	O'Connor
Taipua	Valentine	Samuel.

NOES, 4.

Duncan	Tellers.
Stewart, W. D.	Feldwick
	Fitzherbert.

Majority for, 40.

Resolutions agreed to.

#### GOVERNOR'S SALARY AND ALLOWANCES BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, in moving the second reading of this Bill, the House will not expect a lengthy speech from me. But I should like to anticipate what I suppose will be the chief objection to it—namely, that by reducing the salary of the Governor we shall lose standing with the Home Government. All the colonies having Governors with a salary of £5,000 a year are classed as first-class colonies, and are supposed, therefore, to receive most experienced and competent Governors; and there is no doubt that it is very desirable that we should receive the most experienced men that we can get. But under the proposal of the Government we shall still retain our position, because the salary is to remain at what it is now—£5,000 a year. Some honourable gentlemen object that, if we keep the salary at £5,000, and do not make any provision for allowance specially, the Governor may not consider it his duty to travel. At present, as honourable gentlemen are aware, the salary is £5,000, and the Governor receives £1,000 a year for travelling allowances, and £1,500 a year for the maintenance of what is called his “establishment;” out of which he has to pay the Clerk to the Executive Council, besides his Aide-de-camp and his Private Secretary. The Government had this matter under consideration, and at first they were disposed to make an allowance for what is termed establishment and travelling allowances, and reduce the salary, they being of opinion that the total cost to the colony of a Governor and establishment and travelling should not exceed £5,000. But, upon considering the matter and looking at the precedent of Tasmania, it was determined that we should get what we want—that is, a reduction of £2,500 a year from the present cost of the Governor and establishment—and that we should get that by taking the salary at £5,000, as is done in Tasmania, and saying that that includes travelling expenses and the allowance for the Governor's establishment. The objection that we shall not get a first-class Governor has fallen to the ground, as we shall retain the salary at the amount which keeps us at the Colonial Office as a first-class colony. But I would go further and say that, looking at the present position of affairs, it would be far better to be classed as second-class or any other class, so far as the Governor is concerned, as long as we show to the world that we mean to pay our way. That

seems to be our first duty, and I believe there is a determination on the part of the people of the colony to do that. Still, it seems desirable to the Government to submit the Bill as we have done; for I do not think that, in the present position of the colony, it matters much whether we are classed as a first-class colony or not. In the early days it did matter, because our means of communication with the Home country was practically only through our Governor; but since then the colonies have become established, and we communicate, as it were, direct, and not through the Governor, and are heard in a way that we were not heard before. But, as I say, our first duty is to look to ourselves, and to say what we can afford to pay; and, looking at the necessity for retrenchment, and the desire that exists to return to a more simple mode of life, I venture to say that £5,000 a year is ample for all the services of the Governor, including the allowance for travelling and for establishment. That being so, the Government have fixed the amount I have named.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—This is a Bill with the general principles of which, I fancy, the House will agree. But there are two or three points which will require consideration, and I would direct the Premier's attention to the provisions of section 10 of "The Governor's Salary and Allowances Act, 1873." As I understand that Act, if the Governor absents himself from the colony the person administering the colony—that is, his *locum tenens*—is entitled to half salary. Section 10 provides that "the officer so administering the Government shall be entitled to the full establishment allowance to the Governor, and to the full travelling allowance, if money is available for travelling-expenses." Now, the point is this: What is the position of the person administering the government of the colony during the absence of the Governor? Is he to receive half salary *plus* the travelling-allowance, and the other allowances provided by section 10? Under the provisions of the Act it seems to me that a person occupying the position of Governor would get his full pay of £5,000, and also his proportionate part of the travelling-allowance and establishment-allowance, within the meaning of this section. I do not know whether that is the meaning of this Bill; but, it seems to me that, as it is at present drawn, it would entitle the *locum tenens* of the Governor not only to half-pay, but to travelling and establishment-allowance. I think the Premier should look into this. I have only had an opportunity of looking somewhat hurriedly through the Bill, but I think there is a serious doubt concerning the matter; and not only is there a doubt, but, so far as I can see, if the Bill passed as at present it would entitle the party administering the government to be in a better position than the Governor himself. The other provisions of the Bill seem to be very much in accord with the general opinion throughout the colony as expressed during the general election, that the salary of the Governor should be reduced.

Major Atkinson

Mr. SEDDON.—With some diffidence, I ask the Premier whether he will accept an amendment to the effect that all the words after "That" be omitted, with a view to inserting the following: "the debate on this Bill be adjourned until some conclusion has been arrived at upon the financial proposals of the Government." I scarcely think it is a usual custom to go on with the details of Bills whilst no opinion has been expressed by the House itself upon the proposals as a whole. It is rather an unusual course that is proposed, and perhaps some explanation might be given. As that may be so, I will refrain from moving my amendment till I have that explanation. I do think it would be more regular, more convenient, and in every way preferable for us to conclude the debate on the financial proposals of the Government before discussing the details of the Bills. Perhaps the explanation that may be given will prevent the necessity for my moving the amendment. Will the honourable gentleman give his explanation?

Major ATKINSON.—I should be very glad to do it, but I should be out of order.

Mr. SEDDON.—The explanation might prevent my moving an amendment.

Major ATKINSON.—I have no objection to give it at all; but to give the reasons might introduce debatable matter. The Government brought on the Bills because the Opposition declared that they wanted details of the scheme, and that there was nothing in the Financial Statement to discuss. That statement was made by the leader of the Opposition the other day. Then, again, the session is drawing on, and the debate on the Financial Statement seems to have died a natural death; and it is desirable that some of the measures of the Government should be got into another place as soon as possible, so that they should not be hurried at the end of the session. Therefore, looking at the whole position, the Government thought the House had better discuss these particular matters upon the Bills; and it is the intention of the Government to move all these Bills forward before they bring the Financial Statement up again, because they think that will be most convenient.

Mr. SEDDON.—Then I move the amendment which I notified my intention of moving, That the debate upon this Bill be adjourned until the financial proposals of the Government have been dealt with. After such a motion as has just been carried, I should have thought the Premier would have moved the postponement of all the other orders of the day so as to bring up Supply. The passing of that motion by forty-four votes to four should have given him heart and courage, having proved to him that he has a majority in the House; but it appears that he is afraid of taking a direct issue upon his financial proposals. How can the honourable gentleman say that the debate on the Financial Statement has died a natural death, when he knows that he and those who follow him have strangled it, and time after time have drawn red-herrings across the scent in order to prevent the House and the country



from intelligently dealing with the proposals of the Government? I put it fairly to the House, What has the Opposition contended for? What we have contended for is that we have a right to have the details before us. The honourable gentleman surely does not mean to say that he thinks the intelligence of New Zealand is to be so blinded as to believe that showing a proposal to take off £2,500 a year from the salary of the Governor is giving details of the financial proposals of the Government. Does the Premier suppose for a moment that, because he holds himself cheap, and does not consider those with him on the Government benches worth more than £800 a year, that is giving details of the financial proposals?—and that is what the country requires some enlightenment upon. When the honourable gentleman had far less experience than he has now—when, I believe, he was not as fit to hold the position as he is now—I heard the honourable gentleman tell the House and the colony that it was impossible for any Minister of the Crown to live in Wellington and do justice to his position and to himself upon less than £1,000 a year. What has caused the change since then, that he should bring down this proposal to make the salary £800?

Major ATKINSON.—I rise to a point of order. The honourable gentleman is discussing the next Bill on the Order Paper. I think he should confine himself to the Governor's Salary Bill.

Mr. SEDDON.—The amendment I have moved deals with the financial proposals as a whole; and I am simply discussing what is contained in the financial proposals of the Government. If the Premier says the point of order is that the financial proposals do not embrace the question of the reduction of Ministers' salaries, then, of course, it is good; but my remarks referred to the financial proposals, and not directly to the Bill the Hon. the Premier has just now referred to. I will take your ruling, Sir, on the point.

Mr. SPEAKER.—You are not out of order.

Mr. SEDDON.—I think the Premier might with profit take a lesson or two on parliamentary procedure: he would then refrain from raising frivolous points of order. He must for the moment have begun to think that he was still speaking to empty benches. The point at issue, and one that I and the country require further information upon, is not contained in the Order Paper at all. I say, without hesitation, that the country is not enlightened at all upon the proposals contained in the Financial Statement, and it is very unfair, under existing circumstances, for the Government to bring on these measures without putting the financial proposals before us. I should like to know if the Premier will tell the House—it may or may not be so—what bearing the Land Bill has on the financial proposals of the Government, with the exception of saving the expenses of members of Land Boards. I know positively there are a large number of members in this House who have speeches prepared dealing par-

ticularly with the proposals as a whole; and if honourable members are forced to debate each item Bill by Bill it simply means burking a fair and free discussion upon the financial proposals. I am inclined to believe that it is done with a purpose, because on the first occasion when honourable members were paying attention to finance and the proposals of the Government we find the Government diverting honourable members' attention away from that subject by introducing the East and West Coast Railway proposition. That took some time, and took honourable members' attention away. That is precisely the custom which the present leader of the House has always adopted. Whenever a debate waxed warm, and when he finds a few of his supporters acting the part of the candid friend, and taking the part that the honourable member for Thorndon has done, who talked to him as a candid friend—so soon as he finds a debate drifting into that channel, so soon does the Premier change altogether the course of events. That is what he is doing now, and he is doing this wilfully, knowingly—I will not say maliciously. He calls upon the House, coolly and calmly, to go on with the Order Paper, such as we have to-night, and to leave alone the proposals of the Government, telling us that it is the wish of honourable members that these proposals should not be longer debated. It would facilitate business if the Premier would agree to postpone the orders of the day, and call on Supply, so as to get the financial proposals debated and concluded. We shall then have a clear Order Paper, and go on with the business in a way that, to my mind, would be beneficial to the colony. I hope I shall not provoke the Premier to follow the same course he took the other day with the honourable member for Christchurch North, and accept a proposal of this kind as a vote of no confidence.

Major ATKINSON.—Indeed I shall not.

Mr. SEDDON.—I felt positive that would have been the case, or I would not have moved the amendment. I think that one no-confidence debate each day will be quite sufficient. To have two on one evening would be rather too much of a good thing, and I know it is upon that ground the Premier has not accepted the challenge in that light. With a view of testing the feeling of the House, I beg to move, as an amendment, That this debate be adjourned until the financial proposals as a whole have been dealt with.

Mr. FISHER.—I would point out that this is the case of the drummer-boy over again—hit high, hit low, there is no pleasing these honourable gentlemen. When there were no Bills before them they said, "Here we are again waiting, and no business to be done." Now that we bring down our Bills to be pushed forward a stage the honourable gentleman says he would prefer not to have the Bills,—he would rather go on with the financial debate. This may appear to be very ingenious, and I readily grant that the honourable gentleman is a little adroit in his manner of doing it; but I think the House ought to have clearly

placed before it what his drift, aim, and object are. Now, it is clear that the object of the honourable gentleman is not to discuss the business of the Government, nor is it his object to get before the House the Government measures. There are certain other Bills on the Order Paper which the honourable gentleman knows will come forward in due course; and it is his aim, by the tactics he is adopting, to prevent these Bills from coming forward and being dealt with this session, if possible. I should like the honourable gentleman not to suppose that he is playing this game so ingeniously that we do not know what his game is; and, having let him know thoroughly well that we are quite aware of what he is doing, we shall be satisfied if the House allows him to proceed in his own particular way. What is the duration of a day, and what is involved in the loss of a day? Let me tell the taxpayer, in whose interest the honourable gentleman is so completely absorbed, what a day's proceedings in this House costs. To begin with, the sitting of Parliament costs £400 a day. Then, the retrenchments which the Government propose to carry out will amount to £600 a day. So that each day needlessly wasted costs the country £1,000. Now, the average duration of a day's work in this House is eight hours; and if the honourable gentleman takes up half an hour's discussion upon this Bill, an hour's discussion on another, half an hour upon another, and an hour on another, he himself has consumed three hours out of the day of eight hours; and it does not take any great arithmetical power to be able to tell how much of the time of the House one honourable member may absorb during a session. The honourable member has his little speech on this Bill—not that he is the least interested in it—and he has his little speech on another, and when he comes to a Bill in which he shows great anxiety he has a speech of perhaps an hour—and we are told, on the authority of the honourable member for Dunedin South, that the man who cannot speak for an hour has no capacity or ability. I am not now discussing this Bill, but I want to point out to the House what the tactics of certain honourable gentlemen are. The object is as clear as possible to those who will take the trouble to penetrate beneath the surface: it is to stave off certain Bills which have not yet come forward; and perhaps it is as well that we should have a plain understanding upon that point on both sides. Those Bills are going to be pushed through, no matter how long the session lasts, and the honourable gentleman will gain nothing by temporarily staving them off. This Bill is simple enough. I merely wish to point out how impossible it is to satisfy the honourable gentleman in particular: I will not single out any others. But when there are no Government Bills before the House the great contention is that the House is wasting its time because there is no Government business before it. Now, here is Government business, and the honourable gentleman is not satisfied because he wants a discussion which is really

*Mr. Fisher*

dead and gone to go on in place of these Bills. I say this to show how impossible it is to satisfy certain honourable gentlemen on that side of the House. As to these Bills which we have pledged ourselves to get through, they will be got through this session, and no attempt to stave off discussion on these Bills is likely to succeed. I hope the honourable gentleman, when he comes to discuss the proposals of the Government, will take into consideration that we are not to be put aside in that particular way; and, above all, let him understand that we fully understand what he is driving at.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, this being the first time I have had an opportunity of speaking since the Premier made an appeal to me, I think I ought to answer that appeal. He stated that no one knew better than myself that there was no anxiety on his part to assume his present position if any person could be found to satisfy the House better. He is perfectly right in that. Nothing could be more disinterested than his conduct was on that occasion, and I am glad to be able to say so when appealed to on the point. But, nevertheless, Sir, I think at the present moment the Government are going a little wrong. The last speaker said that the financial question was dead and gone—there was an end of it.

Mr. FISHER.—Not of the question, but the financial debate.

Sir G. GREY.—Well, the financial debate is dead and gone. I think that is one of the most extraordinary statements I ever heard. Why, there are several of us who have not had an opportunity of saying a word. I tried to get up once or twice, but did not succeed; and why am I to be told that the thing is dead and gone? If the honourable member for Kumara had not moved in this I intended, when the next Bill—the Ministers' Salaries Bill—came on, to point out that before dealing with that measure it was necessary the financial debate should be concluded. The Premier will excuse me, but I must testify to the House that upon several occasions in several sessions myself and another Auckland member (Mr. Reader Wood) have tried in vain to be heard upon the financial question, and we have utterly failed. The Premier has managed to keep us from bringing before the country our views on the financial position of the country. I do not mean to say these were the intended tactics on the present occasion, but I was sorry when I found the honourable member for Kumara raise the question in the manner he did, because my firm belief was that if I appealed to the Premier, when the question of Ministerial salaries came up, to allow us an opportunity of having the financial debate finished, he would be obliged to give us that opportunity. I believed he would acquiesce in that; and I hope he will do so still. To some extent I was afraid that the motion might perhaps be defeated, and that a debate would not be allowed to take place. Then I do not know exactly what would be our position, for I felt that when the Ministers' Salaries Bill did come on I could bring the question of finance up in spite of

the Government. I could raise the whole financial question and make a financial speech, and those who chose to follow me would be able to do so too. I still do hope that the Government will allow the financial debate to be resumed before the second Bill on the Order Paper comes on, and that an opportunity will be given to those who have not yet spoken on that motion to give their opinions regarding what the Government propose. I believe I could show that their financial proposals are by no means adequate to the occasion; that much larger reductions might be made on a permanent basis; and I think I ought to have an opportunity of being heard by the House on that subject. I still trust that when the next Bill comes on we shall be allowed to debate the subject. And I can assure the honourable member who spoke last that, as far as I am concerned, I have no wish to keep any measure back—no such idea ever entered my mind; and if the honourable member for Kumara is in possession of some information respecting Bills to be introduced, and is determined to do what he can to prevent their being brought in, I know nothing about it; but I intended to enter on the financial debate with a true desire of influencing the Government to adopt my views, and to set before the country a better policy than they wish the House to adopt. I think the Government would be inclined to coincide with some of my recommendations. If this motion is not pressed to a division I will, when the next Bill is moved, go into the financial question as concerned in that; and I do not think it will be in the power of the Government to stop me. If we have not some special power to compel it, I think the opportunity ought to be given to us to resume the most important debate of the session.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I wish first to refer to a remark, or, rather, a series of remarks, which I understand were made by the Premier this afternoon.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, I rise to a point of order. The honourable gentleman did not choose to be present, and that debate has closed, and I submit it is not competent for him to reopen it.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Clearly, it is out of order for the honourable gentleman to refer to a previous debate.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The honourable member for Auckland Central was allowed just now to refer to something the Premier said this afternoon; and why should I be debarred?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member for Auckland Central was appealed to by the Premier to corroborate a statement, and was permitted to make an explanation on the subject. The honourable gentleman would be quite out of order in reopening a closed debate. If the honourable gentleman has a personal explanation which he wishes to make, no doubt the House will allow him to make it.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I do not wish to make an explanation now; but, as the honourable member for Auckland Central was allowed just now

to refer to the debate this afternoon, I do not see why I should not too.

Mr. SPEAKER.—He only referred to an appeal made to him by the Premier, outside the subject of the debate, as to something which took place when the Ministry was formed. The honourable member may make a personal explanation, by the indulgence of the House.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, can I speak on the subject on a motion to adjourn the House?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I cannot receive a motion to adjourn the House while there is a motion before the House to adjourn the debate.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Then, Sir, I will move the adjournment of the House presently; but I think that, as the honourable member for Auckland Central was allowed to refer to a previous debate, the same permission should be accorded to me. I wish to make a personal explanation.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have already informed the honourable gentleman that he can make a personal explanation if he wishes to do so. The House is always willing to extend that indulgence to an honourable member on reasonable grounds being given.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Then, Sir, I will say what I wish under the guise of a personal explanation. I am informed that the Premier has stated that I have endeavoured in various ways to effect a coalition with him. I wish to state that the honourable gentleman is entirely mistaken—to put it as emphatically as you, Sir, will allow me to do. I have not made overtures to him myself—the honourable gentleman cannot say that I have; and if any one has led him to suppose that I have authorised any person to make such overtures he is mistaken entirely. I have given no one authority to make overtures to that effect. When I ceased to hold office under my late regretted colleague, Sir Robert Stout, I made up my mind not to hold office in New Zealand again except as Premier. That there ought to be a coalition Government now, a strong Government to suit the wants and requirements of the colony, I have stated over and over again in this House. I have also stated that it need not necessarily include—more than that, I may say I think it should not include—the head of the present Government. As to the subject at this moment under consideration, I am going, as I said this afternoon, to assist the Government in getting through their business quickly; and, after my having said that this afternoon, I feel bound to remark on the unwisdom, if not the impropriety, of the remarks of the honourable member for Wellington East addressed to the honourable member for Kumara, telling him in so many words that he occupied an undue amount of the time of the House in trying to show how great were his services to the colony. Does the honourable gentleman suppose that such remarks can have any other effect than to cause the honourable member for Kumara to speak as an assertion of his right not to be addressed in that manner? The honourable member for Kumara, or any

other honourable member, has a full right to express his views to this House, and it is a great impropriety in any member of the Government to speak in such a recriminatory manner as the honourable member for Wellington East has done. That is not the way to expedite the business of the House. There is a general desire on the part of honourable members to expedite the business of the House; but it will not be expedited by the honourable member for Wellington East attributing motives, and saying honourable members are wasting time in order to delay business until more Bills are brought on. The honourable gentleman says that without a shadow of justification. I have stated that I am of opinion that honourable members on this side of the House are now as anxious to expedite business as they can be; but they will not allow measures to pass through without opposing those they think they should oppose. Therefore I venture, in all humility, to tender a word of advice to the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government. The difficulty which the House has got into throughout the session has arisen through his not taking the financial debate right through from day to day; and, Sir, as long as that debate is left open he will encounter what he is encountering now. No matter what is the desire of the honourable gentlemen to expedite business, he cannot avoid—I say it subject to your ruling, Sir—it being an obvious fact that all these Bills are mentioned in the Financial Statement—I say in those circumstances he cannot prevent honourable members talking all round the Financial Statement on each of these Bills. If the honourable gentleman wants to see the business put through quickly he will take my advice and, as soon as this Bill is disposed of—no doubt the honourable member for Kumara would, on receiving an assurance from the Premier, withdraw his amendment—allow the Financial Statement to be resumed. There are a number of honourable members who have prepared with great care speeches on the Financial Statement, and their utterances are of importance to this House and to the country. The honourable member for Wellington East smiles that sort of smile which means that he does not believe anybody's speech in the House is worth listening to. That is not the general opinion, and I could name honourable members on both sides of the House who have not spoken in the financial debate, and whose utterances are looked forward to with great anxiety by many other honourable members on both sides of the House. Now, as regards that financial debate, there has been no undue absorption of the discussion by honourable members on this side of the House. I believe I am correct in saying that nearly member for member has been put up during the debate, except on one or two occasions, when several honourable members on the Government side spoke in succession. I think the easiest course, and the one that would most promote the despatch of business, would be to allow the financial debate to

be resumed and finished as soon as possible—as soon as we have disposed of this stage of the Bill before us. Regarding the measure itself, I may say that it is my intention to vote for its second reading; but I shall strongly urge upon the Premier to alter it in Committee. If it passes as it is now, it will be no measure of retrenchment or economy at all. I know, by what absolutely took place in former years, that if you fix the salary of the Governor at the amount fixed here, and with no specific amount for travelling-expenses, you will not only find the total expenditure to be much larger, but the House will be constantly troubled with the most disagreeable discussions concerning the Queen's representative. With the Bill passed as it is now, when the Governor wants to go away from Wellington to some other part of the colony for a time, he will ask if the Government are prepared to pay his expenses, saying that otherwise he cannot stay at Dunedin, Christchurch, or Auckland. What occurred before will occur again. My advice is, to reduce the salary by £1,000, and put on £1,000 for travelling-expenses separately. The allowances to the staff would then come out of the £4,000, and the colony would, as proposed by this Bill, pay the salary of the Clerk of the Executive Council. As against that argument I understand the Premier urges that a salary of £5,000 carries a right to a first-class pension; and therefore the colony would be entitled to a first-class Governor. Now, gentlemen who come out to the colony to undertake the charge of the government look very keenly after the question of what are the emoluments. I am not speaking without book: it is a regular profession like the diplomatic service, the profession of the English Colonial Department, and there are regular rises in it which are looked forward to with as much anxiety as rises in other departments. If you therefore make it nominally a first-class Governorship with a salary of £5,000, and no additions, you will make it an unprofitable Governorship. The result will simply be this: New Zealand will be used as a colony for working off what I may call the "dead horses." There are always some Governors who have outlived their usefulness, or who have made mistakes and are removed from important Governorships, and whom it is difficult to know what to do with, because it would be too severe a punishment to send them to inferior Governorships and so reduce their pensions. Now, if you make this an unprofitable Governorship, these "dead horses"—I speak with no disrespect, I hope—would be the gentlemen appointed to New Zealand. It would be far better to have the young vigorous man who is working his way up in the Colonial Department, and who would be glad to come here, and would be very careful to do all he ought to do, because of being on his way to promotion. It would be far better to have such gentlemen at a thousand a year less salary, and a specified sum for travelling, than to have a gentleman of the class I have referred to trying to work out two or three years more until he would be entitled to claim his pension. And

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then, in any case, there would be a constant encroachment on the good-nature of the Government to find the means for travelling-expenses unless a specific sum were set apart for that; and I strongly recommend the honourable gentleman to adopt the proposal of making the salary £4,000 with a travelling-allowance of £1,000. That is a question which can be discussed in Committee; meanwhile I shall have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. SEDDON.—I ask leave to withdraw my amendment, especially after the reference of the honourable member for Auckland Central; and I also personally give this assurance to the House: that the remarks of the Minister of Education, to the effect that my amendment was made to prevent other Bills from coming on, were entirely without foundation. I have not consulted with any member of the House as to my moving an amendment, and I think it is the duty of the honourable gentleman to apologize to me for making such an unwarrantable and uncalled-for statement.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. FISH.—I cannot refrain from expressing my surprise at the way in which the honourable member for Kumara was treated by the Minister of Education. The honourable gentleman's remarks were out of place altogether. If he thinks that he can frighten members of the House into keeping their tongues quiet, he has made a great mistake. When he referred to the great waste caused—the cost of the House being £400 a day—he must surely have forgotten the fact that so much time has been wasted by the way the Government have conducted the business since the adjournment. How much was lost by a discussion a short time ago! and how much was lost by the adjournment of the House for a long period!

Sir G. GREY.—I imagine this is a Bill relating to the finances of the country, and, being part of the Financial Statement, it will be in my power to discuss the whole subject. It may as well, perhaps, be done upon this Bill as upon any other. Really the fixing of any one of these salaries involves the whole question of the finances. The proposed reduction of the Governor's salary arises from the circumstances in which the colony is plunged; and the question is, How are we to retrieve the colony, to free it from the position of difficulty in which it is now placed? I must candidly say, in reference to that, I do not think all the blame rests upon the late Government or, really, upon several Governments, but I think I must candidly say, in looking at the salaries, that the honourable member for Egmont is as much to blame as any other person for what has taken place—in fact, I think more largely than any other man in New Zealand. I think I can make that perfectly clear to the House, and that I can do it in such a manner that I can lead the House to avoid the errors into which I think he has fallen. First, I will say that I believe a perfect financial settlement of New Zealand can only be achieved by dealing with all classes

of the entire community, and I believe that the class we first of all have to deal with and specially to consider is the agricultural population of this country. I would call to the mind of honourable gentlemen here present, some of whom must recollect it, and I appeal to the honourable member for Egmont himself, who will also bear me out—I am satisfied in this: that upon this subject I several years ago earnestly besought the Government of the day, which included the present Premier, to think of the wretched position in which the farming classes were getting placed. I pointed out then especially the case of the deferred-payment settlers, and of other people who had been located on the land under somewhat similar arrangements, and I contended that it was absolutely necessary to pass a law by which their position should be fairly considered by a Court constituted for that purpose. I pointed out how the Court should be composed, what the duties of the Court should be—that every individual should have the power of bringing before the Court the amount of rent he was compelled to pay to the Government and the charges levied upon his land, and that the Court should have the power of determining whether those charges were just or not; that, if the Court found that they were oppressive and must end in the ruin of the individual ultimately, the Court should have the power of adjusting the rent and the charges to what would be called perfectly fair terms, just to the Government and just to the individual. For proposing so just a measure harsh language was used towards me. I have made a few extracts of what was said. I was told, if the Bill was passed the Government would be continually in hot water, that it was a great temptation to the people to repudiate their engagements, that that was the true purpose of the Bill, that the spirit of self-reliance was to be broken down in the people of this country, that the Bill would break it down altogether.

Major ATKINSON.—What year was this?

Sir G. GREY.—It was spoken on the 6th July, 1882. I was told that the Bill was totally unworthy of my high reputation; that it would tempt men to be dishonest, and to fall into bad practices. The present Premier on that occasion told the House he was satisfied that the remedy contained in the Bill would not be adopted by the House, and that the honourable member for Timaru was, in point of fact, right in the accusations he had made against me on the subject. The result was that the Bill was rejected, and the further result was that hundreds of families have been plunged in misery from that time to the present date. I have heard from many of them that for months together they have not known a night's rest or peace. Burdens were laid upon them they were quite incompetent to bear. This session I brought forward a Bill for the same purpose. I was encouraged to do so by recollecting that there is one honourable gentleman here now who then said that the honourable member for Auckland East had

often brought forward Bills in the House which had been opposed in equally violent language, and which the Government, some year or two afterwards, or some time afterwards, were compelled to adopt and make their own—in fact, to filch them away from myself, who had brought them forward in the first instance. In preparing a Bill this session for the same purpose, so completely was the subject impressed upon my mind that I drew it in the very same words I had used in the former Bill. The Bill is in operation in Ireland. In fact, my first Bill was in part drawn from a Bill then in operation in Ireland, but which measure I made suitable to New Zealand; and the remedy I then recommended is being adopted in many civilised countries throughout the world. I feel confident that the Premier himself approved of the measure I have brought forward now, and must know that in keeping the country from the benefit of the measure for so many years he himself is greatly responsible for the difficulties in which the agricultural interests are at present involved. Therefore I do not think all the blame for the present depressed state of the colony is to be thrown on the honourable member for Christchurch North, or upon any other persons who have held office in this country. In 1877, ten years ago, I got a colleague to bring forward a Bill for reducing the salaries of Ministers, and I then laid much stress upon it. It is a singular thing that it was on the 29th November, 1877, and I am now speaking at the very close of the 28th November, 1887. It was exactly ten years ago. I had a Bill then brought forward for reducing the salaries of Ministers. The present Premier defeated it in spite of all that I could do. This identical Bill that he himself has brought forward, with the trifling exception that his salaries are rather lower for some Ministers, is the very Bill I brought forward ten years ago, and which he then declared was not suited to the circumstances of the colony. I then used this language to him. I said, "What we feel and what we sincerely believe is this: that at the present time you are founding the local bodies all through the colony, and that whatever example you set to them, either of prudence and economy or extravagance, they will certainly follow, and that the example being set in the salaries being given to Ministers is an example of extravagance." He then had the choice put before him of setting an example of economy to all the local bodies about to be formed; and I believe that if that example had been set New Zealand would now be in a very different position. I said that a system of gross extravagance was growing up in this country—a system of extravagance in the Government, and which would spread, as it has done, from the General Government to other bodies in the country. I said, "The Government has an opportunity to say to the inhabitants that, in its opinion, the Government should be prudent. If the Government is thoroughly extravagant, and if the Government considers that high salaries are necessary for the maintenance of the Govern-

ment, it is quite certain that the local bodies now constituted will follow the example set by the General Government, and a system of extravagance will be established throughout the colony." That was my prophecy at the time. I ask, has not that been carried out? Does it not appear almost as a judgment that ten years ago, all but one day, I should have said that; that these difficulties should have arisen; and that the Prime Minister who at that time defeated the proposal is the same individual who is now trying to get the Bill passed?

Major ATKINSON.—I think you were Premier on the 28th November, 1877.

Sir G. GREY.—I was Premier then, but you led a powerful Opposition; and I shall go on to show on some of these things you defeated me, and stopped the thing altogether. If I recollect rightly, this Bill got into Committee—that can be easily ascertained—and I think that when I moved that we go into Committee on the Bill it was by your casting-vote, Sir, that we got into Committee. You said you felt bound to give your vote in favour of economy. The present Premier then moved that the Chairman do leave the chair, and at last managed to carry that by a majority of one, and the measure consequently was lost. And now, at the end of ten years, I stand here and say, when he accuses all others of having encouraged extravagance, he was one of the men who did not seek to prevent it, but forced it on the colony. Ten years have elapsed since that time—there is only one day wanting—when he himself is obliged to bring forward the measure he then prevented me from carrying to save New Zealand from these difficulties, which have prevented me from saving the agriculturists of New Zealand from the penury into which they are now plunged, and from the debts which encumber them. The other night he might have rescued the Bills I had in hand to succour the agricultural population, and they might have been the law of the land. He prevented that from being done, to my sorrow, and he has left New Zealand in the position it now occupies. I was anxious to say these things on behalf of other men, to show that he is not the one saviour of the country, that he is the man who has plunged us into these difficulties, because, in my opinion, he has been the guiding genius which has mostly led New Zealand into the difficulties in which it is now involved. The next thing I shall look at, passing from the salary of the Governor and those of the Ministers, is this question: Are the proposals of the Government for reductions such as a statesman ought to make? Is there anything of permanence about them? We cannot exactly tell; but certainly no proposition of that kind has been made to us. Why should the Government hesitate to allow us to debate the whole subject? We have been told distinctly that we shall not be allowed to go into it. Why could he not have stood up in the House, as I stand up now, and have sketched out one general plan which all could understand? I will ask this: When has such an opportunity presented

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itself as the present one, when the whole colony is bent upon doing something to ameliorate its condition permanently, when a Minister can do almost what he likes with the people and with the departments, when the plastic clay is placed in his hands which he has to mould either into some permanent statue to last for all time, or else into some half-formed creature whose purport none can make out? Which is the proper course for him to pursue in these two cases? I say this: that he has proposed to create a being which none of us exactly understands, of the purport of or the use of which we can tell nothing; that he is going to leave a mass of excrescences on the form before he has completed it. Let us now refer to the Insurance Department. Has he touched that, or has he proposed to touch it? And yet it is a subject of vast importance. Is it right that in that department—

Major ATKINSON.—May I say that I propose to deal with that subject when the estimates come down? It is not a part of the general revenue of the colony, and therefore is not dealt with in the Financial Statement; but I had intended to touch upon it.

Sir G. GREY.—It is a pity the honourable gentleman did not mention that in his speech. Until I mentioned it I heard nothing about it. The honourable gentleman may laugh; but I say it is a strange thing that, in mentioning all things, the most important matter of all was never even glanced at. Where is his plan? The House will not be deluded in that manner. I say it is wrong that great salaries should be given in that department, equal to those of Ministers of the Crown.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Greater.

Sir G. GREY.—They are greater.

Major ATKINSON.—They must be greater.

Sir G. GREY.—There is the voice, "They must be greater." Why? For what reason? Because other insurance bodies give greater sums. But why should our officers in our Insurance Department be paid any more than our officers in other departments? Why should a friend of the Minister, without any previous experience of the subject, at once have £1,000 a year given to him? Is that just to the nation or to the Civil Service? I say that it is our business, for the sake of those of our countrymen who insure their lives in the department, that the salaries of officers in these institutions should be kept to the level of the Civil Service, and that as large an amount as possible should be gained for those who insure in their national office.

Major ATKINSON.—You gave £1,000 a year.

Sir G. GREY.—I did not give £1,000 a year. I strove for less, as the honourable gentleman knows. It was the honourable gentleman who gave the full £800. I refused to consent to it. The honourable gentleman did it: that was the example set. I contend that the department ought to be made a portion of the Civil Service, exactly as any other branch of the Civil Service, and not a separate department; and in that way you will open new

offices and new objects to your Civil Service, and give the officers a spirit they have not now got, because the introduction of strangers into this department and the neglect of just claims must have the effect of lowering the Civil servants in their self-respect. Then, I ask you about your Legislative Department. Why should that be a separate department? Is that right? Why are strangers to be introduced into the Legislative Department? Why should not that department be under the same government as any other department? I say that the inevitable result of separating your departments in this way will be to make them small family appanages, instead of being for the common good of all. In the Justice Department, why not open that, like the East India Company's service, to the whole of the Service? Train some of them, take out of some other branch of the Civil Service deserving men fitted for it, and give them the chance of rising to the highest position in the law in that way. Then, again, the Public Trust Office should be a department of the Service above all others, I think, and that will give openings in many parts of the colony, and prevent agents being appointed to most responsible positions who, I fear, must be unknown to the very persons who appoint them. And I would open all other departments in the same way. I appeal to the House whether the Government has proposed to rearrange the Civil Service in that way, and to make it really an object of pride and satisfaction to the country that they have so great a Civil Service as it will become. Then you will imbue men with some respect for the position they occupy, and, instead of depressing them by seeing persons in other departments suddenly elevated to salaries greater than they can earn by years in the Civil Service at the present moment, by doing that you would give them fresh courage; you would, in fact, give them self-respect, which I do not believe they can now truly feel. And how much better would your affairs be administered! I ask if you want to look at the manner in which the accounts of the Insurance Department are administered at the present day. If they require insurance buildings, do they call for tenders for insurance sites? Is that done?

Major ATKINSON.—At present it would have to be voted by the House. You are thinking of when the Board was in existence.

Sir G. GREY.—I am thinking of when the Board was in existence; but I am not at all sure what will be done in the future—I only take what is past. Whether under the present system a different mode of obtaining sites will be followed I cannot tell.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; they must come to the House.

Sir G. GREY.—Yes; they must come to the House for the money, I suppose. That may be the case. But I believe a great deal of laxity has been allowed to creep into that department which it would be hard now to sweep out from it. That is my conviction. I have seen notices in the newspapers of things done formerly—before the Board was constituted, I

believe, or, at all events, very soon after, though I cannot recollect the dates; but I know they left a feeling of dissatisfaction on my mind which I cannot express as to the way in which the department was conducted in reference to things of that kind. I only appeal to honourable gentlemen as to whether any proposal for the amalgamation of offices has been made. Have the Government told us that they have ever thought of such a thing as this? I say they have done nothing of the kind. Then, I come again to another point; and I must say this: When I put down here this question of a reduction being made in the case of interest on Sinking Fund, I recollect some seven or eight years ago I brought before the House two propositions—one that the Sinking Fund should be taken; and that was scouted with scorn. Again, the same kind of language was used to me as had been used in reference to the deferred-payment settlers. The proposals I made were rejected; and yet what has since then taken place? After several years, that was done in reference to the Sinking Fund which I had sought to have done, and was told that I was not an honest man to propose it, or words to that purport. Then, further, I at the same time showed that this colony was entitled, as I believe, by law, and ought to have enforced its power, to make all persons drawing funds from New Zealand pay, under the property-tax, the same amount as persons resident in New Zealand have to pay. I showed, in point of fact, that the law required that to be done; and I am still of the same opinion. I showed that it was hard in the extreme that those residing out of New Zealand, and who were deriving such advantages from the interest they drew from it, should not have to pay such tax, while those who resided here had to pay it. That was a manifest injustice. Everybody who resided in New Zealand and drew money from the Government, and everybody out of New Zealand who drew money from the Government, were all bound to pay under the property-tax. The language of the Act is precise. It says that the word "property" is to mean property of every kind and description whatever; and I say that since I raised this question upwards of a million has been unlawfully taken out of the pockets of the colonists—one million more than was necessary has been added to their debt. As to this, a position has been taken up by some that is inconceivable to me. The question is raised whether a gentleman having a considerable pension from New Zealand has to pay the property-tax, and the answer made is this: "The State contracted to pay him so much a year if he remained so long in the Service; and therefore if you take anything from that amount you cheat him and do him a wrong by giving him less than you promised him." The fact is that every nation interprets the matter in this way: They say to the person to whom they are going to pay the pension, "I have the money ready to give you, and it is your property, and, like every other person, you will have to pay the property-tax, and contribute your fair

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share to the necessities of the country. You were not promised any exemption from taxation." This is the rule. In the same way, every nation now, at the present time, I believe, deducts from those who draw revenues from the public securities exactly the same proportion that it deducts from the inhabitants of the country who pay the sums from which these revenues are derived by other persons. Why should we alone be subjected to this: that we do not get from those who receive money from us that which every other nation gets from those who receive money from that nation? It is quite clear that the moment the money is handed over to the Treasury from our pockets to pay gentlemen so much, it is property in the colony which is subject to property-tax. The moment it is so paid to your own citizens living here, you tell them it is property which must pay property-tax; and why is the non-resident entitled to an advantage which you take from the residents in the colony, who benefit you by spending the money here which they draw from you? It is eminently unjust. People say this: that those who would have to pay these amounts would object, and that they would think they were treated unfairly; but I believe the direct contrary. What is the sum they would have to pay? Take the case of a man who gets £100 a year remitted to him from this country. He would have to pay 8s. 3d. or 8s. 4d.; and the man who gets £1,000 would have to pay £4 3s. and some odd pence. Does any one think that the individual who had to pay would not feel it was his duty to assist the country the inhabitants of which were striving their utmost to pay him his large income of £1,000 a year? He would feel that such a contribution was nothing at all worthy of consideration, in order that he might secure a certainty of the payment he was entitled to. We have to preserve peace, law, and order; and—I will put it stronger than that—every man in New Zealand has to work so many days in a year for nothing and to give up his earnings for those days to pay the foreigner living out of the country; and ought not that foreigner who receives the money to pay his share for those people in times of sickness, probably arising from the very work in which they were engaged to get the money for him? Is he to pay nothing to help to support the families of those persons in times of sickness, while they have to sacrifice so much in order that he may get his money? Why, if all other nations decide in the way I reason, and reasoned several years ago, why should New Zealand alone compel its overburdened people to pay a thing of this kind to people out of the colony? At least, if you do that, relieve likewise those who are living in this country. You should do one of two things. I say the fair thing is to make those who are living out of the country pay, in the same way as the people of England make those pay who draw incomes from the funds.

Major ATKINSON.—That we do, just as it is done in England.

Sir G. GREY.—No; England deducts the tax from her dividends and her pensions, and



it is for you to deduct the same from your pensions paid to persons living in England. You have not done that. I say the law demands it, and it is not done. I say the word "property" takes that, in the way it is put. I ask any honourable gentleman to look into the terms. If England says it is right and just and fair, why not New Zealand? Let me put it to the House in this way: I go to a man as a tax-collector and say, "You have a pension of £600 a year paid by the people of New Zealand: that is property; so much must be deducted from your pension on that account." He will say, "No, that is dishonest; you will not give me that to which I am entitled." But you put a tax upon every article he wears, and upon the tea he drinks: why do you take that from his pension? The things are equally taxation for the public good, and he, as a citizen, must know he is liable to pay for the public use something which all the rest of his fellow-citizens have to pay. I am quite sure he would admit that is the case. That would give you at once £148,000 a year now; and, as I say, you have lost, perhaps, £1,000,000, and you had no right to lose it. Years ago I asked for this, and if it had been granted New Zealand would be in a very different position from that in which it is now. The answer then made was, "It will prevent our raising further loans; it will interfere with that." But, I ask, will any honest, fair man say that we should not do what every other nation does? We should do that which the law requires should be done, and then we should ease our unfortunate people, who have to pay so much to that expenditure: £148,000 would be a very great sum—very large indeed. However small it might be, I would not take it if to do so was not just; but, I contend, no more just and proper thing was ever asked for or demanded than that which I demanded then; and I say the language used towards me when I demanded it was unfair. Precisely the same thing was said about dealing with the Sinking Fund, but when that was brought down afterwards every one admitted its fairness. Every other nation does the same thing. It is a useless pretence to pay Sinking Fund when we are borrowing to pay it, and pretending at the same time that it is being charged on the Consolidated Fund. When proposed finally by the honourable member for Christchurch North it was conceded without difficulty. I say there is another thing which the Government ought to do. It should not have tried to prevent this debate, so that these matters might be brought forward, and to say that the financial debate had ceased to live was pure nonsense. These great questions ought to be discussed and thoroughly understood and reasoned out, and it is only by dealing with matters of this sort that New Zealand can be drawn out of the difficulties in which it is at present involved. Well, now I pass again to our legislative body, and I contend that a larger reduction ought to be made in this House than Ministers propose. I know that is a very unpopular thing to say, and probably many persons would not like it; but I only ask them to

compare this young New Zealand nation with other nations, and let them say is there any other nation in the world that has so large a number of representatives in proportion to population as this? I mentioned previously that, in my belief, fifty members is quite a sufficient number for New Zealand to have. The United States have 325 representatives of the people in their Congress. That is for sixty millions of persons; and we have close upon a third of that number for half a million of persons. Then, the same thing holds good with respect to the Upper House. They have seventy-six senators in the United States for sixty millions of people, and they perform great duties. Is it necessary for us to have some fifty? I ask, also, is it a fair plan proposed for consideration by the Premier with regard to the Legislative Council? What advantage will it be to us to have the Councillors limited to a certain number, if they are to be nominated as they are now? What advantage is it to us to have so many paid members of the House? What would be said in England if, looking at the number of the population here and that in Great Britain, it was proposed to have some four thousand or five thousand peers paid by the State? If a member of this House were to dare to go Home to England and get up and propose that, he would be shut up in a lunatic asylum and never seen again, whilst, if he escaped and reached this country again, he would be made Premier of New Zealand and have a long tenure of office. I think the thing is absurd in itself. The Government have no regard to our legislative reduction, and have made no proper proposals. Then, again, with regard to the salaries of the officers in our Legislative Department, I must say I think Ministers have placed them much too high, considering the time which is occupied by those officers in their duties, and the short period of the year during which they are engaged. I say that much more considerable reductions could be made, and that such reductions will be of considerable advantage to the country, in the good example they will afford. Then, with regard to the number of Ministers, I still contend that four Ministers would be ample for New Zealand. We have as many Ministers here as they have in the United States for sixty millions of people. I say that, if the number of Ministers were reduced to four, and if you had four Under-Secretaries selected from this House, who were placed at the head of the four departments into which the New Zealand government was divided, you would have a much more efficient Government, a Government which would be much more in sympathy with the people, and one which would train the young members of the House to a knowledge of what their most important duties were. I contend that it is impossible for men now suddenly made Ministers, without any previous training in public life, at once to perform their duties. It must take them a period of several months, probably not less than twelve months, to learn what their duties are. A Minister ap-

pointed for the first time under present circumstances is completely an infant born into a new world, and handed over to a wet-nurse in the shape of some Civil servant, brought up on very unpalatable sour milk, and it is long indeed before he can gain that experience and knowledge which will enable him to walk alone, instead of which he is kept in leading-strings by one or two of the officers of the Civil Service, himself knowing nothing about the new world that surrounds him. There is to be no improvement on that system by what we have proposed by the Government. It is only by the adoption of such a measure as I have frequently proposed that you can bring up in New Zealand a race of statesmen to be a credit to their country and an honour to their families. But there is no proposal of this kind in the Ministerial programme. To my mind, it is absolutely wanting in a broad, comprehensive view; but I submit that it is only by giving effect to views of that kind that New Zealand can be extricated from the difficulties in which it is now involved. I do not go into details of the reductions proposed in the various departments; but I say we ought to have an opportunity of doing that by going into the estimates. I am told that the Government intend to confine us to this first paper—this first page. I understood the Premier distinctly to say that he would not allow any discussion upon the items of the estimates. Whether he adheres to that I do not know; but in my own mind I resolved that I would agree to no such proposition while I could fight against it. I feel that we should have no chance of extricating ourselves from our difficulties unless we were to go into details; for every one of the measures I have recommended to the House requires a corresponding modification in the various departments. The Premier was good enough to say that there was no man in the House who was capable of giving an opinion on that subject, no man who could understand it. I say that honourable gentlemen, if they will go into Committee upon this subject as they ought to do, and devote their attention to it, will be quite capable of understanding the matter in such a way that they can intelligently and usefully vote. If they have not that opportunity I believe that such things as I speak of can never be done, at least at the present time; but I believe that, just as the Premier comes forward to-night and takes up the question of Ministerial salaries, at some future time he will come forward and take up a great many of the things I have recommended to his notice to-night; that, just in the same way as now, when most of the deferred-payment settlers have been ruined and it is almost impossible to restore prosperity to them, he comes forward and says they ought to be relieved, so will he come forward, when it is too late, and propose to carry out nearly all the things that I now say ought to be done. Just in the same manner as he, after showing violent opposition to the proposal as to the Sinking Fund, allowed it to be carried, in the same manner will he, some day, allow this

*Sir G. Grey*

\$148,000 to be collected to help the people of New Zealand in the struggle they are carrying on against unnecessary difficulties. I feel certain that, if he does not do it now, he will surely do it some day. But the difficulty is that he may do these things too late. If the remedies were applied at a certain moment they would be effectual; but apply them after a lapse of time and they cease to be remedies. Those who have not died before the remedies are carried out will have the benefit of them, but before the relief is applied a large number of persons will have been irretrievably ruined. In fact, I believe that, unless we can have such control over the Premier that we can force him to bring in these measures, the prosperity which we are looking for and waiting for will recede farther from us.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I am of opinion, with the honourable member for Kumara and the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, that it would have been much better if we had completed the financial debate, and seen how far we could apply remedial measures, rather than proceed to these extreme ones which have been brought forward by the Government. I admit freely that there is stern need for retrenchment throughout the colony, though not, probably, to the extent which the honourable gentleman proposes; but I think our duty should, first, have been to see how far every person in the colony was bearing his fair proportion of the burdens. It must be evident to every member of this House, and to every one who considers the matter, that there are a large number of people in the colony who are not bearing their fair proportion of taxation. This must be evident to the House when it considers the papers presented by the late Government, and sees exactly how the property is divided. And, then, it must be evident that those who hold large properties are shutting them up to the exclusion of those who would occupy them profitably, those who would produce greater wealth than the present owners, and also increase the Customs returns very much indeed. No one who considers the position of the country, and looks through the statements that have been submitted, can arrive at any other conclusion than that the Customs is one of the causes whereby the present crisis has been brought about. It must be evident also, to any one who considers it, that the indebtedness of private individuals is one of the causes of the present trouble. People have, in their greediness, grasped large tracts of land which they cannot use profitably themselves, and which they prevent other people from using profitably; and they have, in consequence, to send out large sums of money to the foreign creditor. The private indebtedness of this colony is estimated to be about sixty millions of money, and the interest payable on that money is about three millions; and, if you come to look at the value of the produce of the colony, you see at once how much this is the cause of the depression. There is no doubt that our powers of production are much too limited, because the best parts of the country are not carrying

the population that they should do. They are occupied by sheep, in connection with which there is the least labour employed; and so the land does not support the population it should. Now, we produce from our wool something like £3,367,000; from gold, about a million; from the agricultural products we get about £620,000; from sheep, mutton, and preserved meats, about £680,000; forests, kauri-gum, &c., yield about £417,000; and from other manufactures, fish, &c., we get £200,000. Now, we are not producing nearly enough to pay for the goods we import and for the interest which we send out of the colony. Setting apart the amount paid by the Government and the sums which they send out, and what is required for the purchase of goods, we have to send out seven millions. The private indebtedness, added to this, brings up the sum which we have to send out to about ten millions. We send out produce to the amount of seven millions to meet that. So that, if you take a million for profits, there is no doubt whatever that the colony is now, and has been for a number of years, sending out a million or two millions beyond what it has been producing. This we have done by borrowing, and this we shall have to do by borrowing, or great trouble will come upon us. Our Customs revenue this year is estimated to yield a million and a quarter; but I would point out that if these large landed properties were taxed to the extent they should pay they would yield us far more than the sum they do pay. In the South Island alone there are ninety estates which total in area something like three millions of acres, and the whole population upon these runs, upon these vast tracts of land, amounts to something like two thousand seven hundred people. I doubt whether more than thirty people are employed on each of these vast estates, taking the average. These estates should carry—and if they were properly taxed they soon would carry—a hundred and thirty-two thousand people. There is no doubt in my mind that one of the great causes of the failure of the late Government was their proposal to impose a progressive property-tax. The late Premier stated in his place that that was one of the great reasons of the opposition he experienced. For that cause alone all the great influence of the banks and loan corporations and others was brought to bear upon the elections. I do not believe there is a single member of this House whose election was not influenced very much by the power which they brought to bear upon it. There is no doubt whatever that a vast influence was exercised by those people, and that that was the cause of the defeat of the late Government. I very much regret not to have heard in any of the many speeches we have had from the late Colonial Treasurer any reference to this; but probably when the question of the Property-tax Bill arises that will give him the best opportunity of calling attention to it. Of course we are met with a very fair objection. It is said, "Very well; these men bought the estates; they have paid for them, and they have a right to do what they like with their

own." It seems to me that that is a feasible argument, and I know it meets with general approbation, because there is always that feeling amongst English people that every man has a right to do what he likes with his own. The unfortunate thing is, that we are in the position of having borrowed £34,000,000, and of having spent that money in giving increased value to these estates; and not only have we done that, but we have done it on the assumption that this land would be used in the interests of the Government. We have borrowed money in order to settle people on these properties, with the hope that with the increased population we should be able not only to pay interest on the money, but to increase the prosperity and happiness of the country; and, if any Government is going to allow the holders of these large properties to retain possession of them without contributing a fair proportion to the necessities of the State it will be acting unjustly and unwisely. In the papers laid before the House by the late Colonial Treasurer we find that 34,000 people hold twenty-four million pounds' worth of real property, and that 1,807 people hold twenty-eight millions' worth of property. The fair inference to be drawn from that is that those who hold large possessions should pay a larger property-tax than the small holders. If land and labour give wealth, then they have all that gives wealth. These properties should pay for the money that has been expended in giving them increased value. It is a fair argument to say, "I have paid for these lands, and have a perfect right to do with them as I like. It is no matter of the State's what I do with them; they are my property." But then the State would immediately step in upon this ground, and tell the owners that they held large properties from which the State had the right to expect to derive revenue. I will take one of these estates that I know of—an estate of forty thousand acres. It is one of the best in the colony, and it has on it ten persons besides the owners—that is to say, there are twenty-two people on the whole of that valuable country,—and it is within ten miles of a railway, and is the finest wheat-producing land in the country. On that land we have twenty people, contributing to the Customs duties, say, £3 a year per head; so that the State derives from that property £66 a year beyond what is paid in property-tax. This property is capable of settling two thousand people, besides giving indirect benefit to a large number of other people, arising from the trade that would be created by so many settlers; so that from that land alone the State is losing £10,000 a year, in consequence of this property not being sufficiently occupied. Then comes the question, How far is it the duty of the Government, under these circumstances, to tax these holdings, and to what extent should they be taxed? If the State taxes them to the extent of its loss upon such a property, it would tax such a one as that mentioned to the extent of £10,000 a year; but it may be said that the estate is heavily mortgaged, and could not pay the taxation; and in that case it should be taxed until

it is cut up and sold. We take our indebtedness, I think, as a matter of too little consequence. Let us for a moment think of what the honourable member for Auckland Central stated; compare ourselves with England, and imagine England sending out interest on her national debt—£750,000,000—sending it to China, draining it out of the country. How long would England be a first-class, a second-class, or even a third-class Power if that were done? But there is this other side of the question to be considered: Suppose she was not only sending that out, but that she was sending out, too, the interest on her private indebtedness—sending out for that double the amount of money sent as interest on the national debt—what would be the result? The thing is self-evident: to any country it would mean ruin; but here we sit, with the most complete stupidity, and we say we will willingly cut down everything, but we are not going to propose any remedy. I should have hoped that in any scheme brought forward by the Colonial Treasurer that would be considered; but he has probably taken warning from the fate of his predecessor, and thinks that it is a thing to be avoided. But it is a question that, in the interests of the colony, should be brought forward and debated. We are told that it is contrary to Stuart Mill or to Adam Smith to propose progressive taxation; but I do not think our ideas of political economy are to be stereotyped because Adam Smith or Stuart Mill said such-and-such a thing. Notwithstanding what might have been said to the contrary, progressive taxation is just and fair. I am not going to enter at any great length into this question, but will just briefly mention the objections I feel to the Statement. The Statement proposes to retrench during the present session to the amount of £71,000, and the table of revenue and expenditure appended by the Colonial Treasurer points to retrenchment to the extent of £300,000 during the next twelve months. I do not know whether the honourable gentleman—he will pardon me for saying so—has considered what the effect of the retrenchment will be, and whether he thinks it likely that he will meet the House next session with anything but a similar deficiency to that which exists upon the present occasion. Then, the honourable gentleman proposes to cut down the public-works expenditure by £27,000 a month. I say it cannot be done; it is impossible; the country will sink under it. You will not retrench from money you are sending out of the colony, but from money that is being spent and is circulating among yourselves; and that is one of the great evils of it. If the retrenchment were such that it would not affect the community here, but simply save money that was being sent out of the colony, I could understand such a course restoring prosperity; but to take £300,000 out of circulation in this way will simply intensify the distress. Now, there is one thing besides the severity of the retrenchment to which I will refer, and it is one portion of the retrenchment which I think the people will not allow, and

*Mr. Turnbull*

which I should be very sorry to take any part in. I do not think for a moment that this House will sanction the proposal to reduce by £60,000 our education vote. I am quite aware that the capitation grant of £17,000 might be fairly cut off, and I think we might go into the question of reducing the school-age to fourteen years; and that, I think, would give ample retrenchment with regard to the education vote. The ages of the children attending the schools are as follow: From five to seven years, 21,024; from thirteen to fifteen, 10,882; and over fifteen, 2,190; so that by reducing the highest school-age to fourteen years, and not by increasing the age at which children should be admitted to the schools, a saving might be made. To raise the school-age of admission would be, to a certain extent, to cut off those who could least afford to miss their education; because a great number of the 82,000 children now attending the public schools have to leave as soon as they are able to go to the factories or to work;—they have to leave when about twelve years of age: it would be a great injustice to make retrenchment at that end of our education system. There is one part of the education expenditure that, I am sorry to say, has not been alluded to, and that is, that it is costing the colony something like £35,000 a year for our high schools. It appears that there are something like 2,143 children attending the high schools, and that something like £15 per head is contributed by the State towards the education of these children, and children, generally, of very wealthy parents. If there was to be any saving effected in education it would have been far better, before applying the axe to the primary-education system, to see how much could be saved from the children attending the high schools. Sir, I do not anticipate that the proposal of the Government on this matter will at all meet with the approval of the House, and it is one of those retrenchments I think they must be prepared to drop. There is one item here in which I shall find myself entirely with the Government; but I am bound to state that I cannot see how it is possible to reduce £180,000 from so small a number as the Government propose. There are 1,301 people to whom this reduction would apply. The Premier states that there are 5,862 Civil servants whose income is under £150 a year. How is it possible from the 1,300 left to make the reduction which the Premier proposes on this occasion? Setting apart £10,500 for Legislative, which I admit to be just, and taking Defence, £46,000, that would leave £170,000 which is to be struck off from these different departments. I think the House can justly demand to know how far this is to be done. The working railways alone is £38,000; and yet the Colonial Treasurer appears to think that there will be some slight increase in the department during the next twelve months. But this £38,000 is a sum about which the House should insist on knowing something. The proposition for the repeal of the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act I imagine to be

a very just and fair one. I shall do my best to support the proposal for borrowing, because I feel that there is an absolute necessity for importing this money and giving employment to the people. The sooner our railway system is brought to an end the better for the country. I think that, when he is going into the market, the Colonial Treasurer ought to calculate the exact sum that will be required to fill up the gaps between the different lines; and it will be necessary, unless extraordinary burdens are to be laid on the people, to borrow £500,000, to be placed in the hands of School Commissioners for school and other buildings. I shall give the Government my most hearty support on their borrowing and Crown and Native Lands Rating Act repeal proposals. Of course a great discussion will arise on the Land Fund. I shall support them there also. It seems to me clear that the land which has been bought out of loan, and which is costing the colony something like £50,000 a year in the shape of interest, should not be allowed to lie unproductive. If the Government can obtain what it cost them they ought to get the land off their hands, and save payment of the large amount of interest which is accumulating from year to year on these different properties. The Land Fund is not one that will directly benefit the consolidated revenue, because it is kept separate and distinct; but we must be prepared for this: Instead of an increased territorial revenue we shall have to consider whether some considerable reduction will not arise from it. A paper which has been laid on the table shows a diminution of £11,000 from land handed over to the Midland Railway Company, &c. There is another question, as to whether we are raising sufficient money from the lighthouses. The cost is very considerably beyond the first outlay. It may be said that, if you raise the light-dues, eventually it falls upon the people. Well, it will fall on the few who travel; but that consideration ought not to enter into the mind of the Government. I think the Union Company's steamers should contribute a great deal more to the revenue than they do. As far as the Bill before us is concerned, I should scarcely like to give an opinion upon the matter until I see how far it is possible to raise a just revenue from the estates I have mentioned. I think the revenue ought to be increased from the property-tax beyond what is proposed to be raised by the Government. If large properties were taxed as they should be, they would yield considerably more than £200,000 to the revenue. Persons have no business to hold these large properties to the loss of the State.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Take them from them.

Mr. TURNBULL.—There is no desire to take them, but they have no business to hold them to the loss or injury of the State. This land ought to be classed either as agricultural or pastoral land, and the amount of population, not sheep, which they would carry should be calculated. They should be made to bear a fair proportion of the taxation they would yield if they were inhabited, and were produc-

ing more wealth. In considering this Bill, we must look at the alteration which has taken place in the condition of the colony since the £5,000 was voted for the Governor's salary. Looking to the large number of persons availing themselves of the hospitality of the Governor, looking at the position he should occupy, that he is the first in acts of liberality and kindness, I think it would be much better if we fixed the salary at £6,000. There must be very large calls upon a gentleman holding the high position he does here, and we should be careful not to cut him down too much. Last year we spent something like £10,000; but there was a very great deal of expense incurred in altering the grounds and other expenses of a like nature. But I should be very sorry to see the sum insufficient for a gentleman to come out here and hold such a high position as he should do. We do not want any example of meanness—unfortunately we have had too many—and we want our Governors to show an example of liberality. I think that probably the Governor would be the best judge in a matter of this kind; and if he has courage he will veto this Bill, just as President Grant had the courage to veto the Bill for the reduction of his salary to £5,000. I doubt whether legislation of this kind, when it got Home, would obtain the consent of the Queen. As to the other Bills, I shall express my opinion upon them when they are brought forward; but, if there is an amendment made to fix the salary at £5,000 and the travelling allowances at £1,000, I shall support such amendment; and I think we should be doing that which is for the best interests of the country by adopting that sum.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I find that the discussion on this Bill has simply resolved itself into a discussion of the financial policy of the Government. Having spoken on the financial policy of the Government, I do not intend to take up any further time in that direction. But I contend that the Governor's salary as stated in this Bill is ample, and I should be inclined to support the Government in a proposal to reduce it by £500 more than the sum mentioned here. The whole of the trouble to-night has arisen from a false expression on the part of the Premier with reference to the financial debate having been dead and buried, because the honourable member must have known that the honourable member for Parnell and the honourable member for Mount Ida have not spoken, and he must have known that he would certainly "rile" those honourable gentlemen upon a matter which I think should be dealt with in a different way. I do not know whether those honourable gentlemen who spoke so elaborately to-night will have a right to go over the same ground on the Financial Statement.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Then, I hope those honourable gentlemen will abstain when the matter comes fairly before us, and will let us go to a vote as soon as possible.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—On looking at this

Bill more carefully, I find that it is not open to the objection which I said it was.

Major ATKINSON.—I am much obliged to the honourable gentleman for that statement.

Mr. WARD.—I think it would have been very much better if, instead of submitting an amendment to the House upon the Act of 1873, the Government had repealed that Act and brought down a fresh Bill. I find, on referring to the Act of 1873, that the Governor really receives a salary equal to £7,500 a year—that is, a salary of £5,000, £1,500 for expenses for his servants, and £1,000 for travelling allowance. And under this Bill the Governor will receive a salary of £5,000 per annum, £300 a year for the Clerk of the Executive Council, and £350 a year for his gardeners—£5,650 a year. It is also provided under the old Act—and is to continue under the Act now under discussion—that the colony has to keep the rooms painted and papered yearly, and furniture is to be provided at the cost of the colony. It appears to me that the only saving intended by the Act now before the House is that of £1,000 travelling allowance provided for in the Act of 1873.

Major ATKINSON.—And the establishment: £2,500 is the exact saving.

Mr. WARD.—What I am anxious to bring before the House is this: I am aware of the reason for putting it in this way, but I think it would have been better to have stated a fixed salary to cover everything—

Major ATKINSON.—That is not considered to belong to the Governor. We are obliged to keep up the grounds.

Mr. WARD.—There is no estimate before the House of what that costs. I do not think we shall really make the saving of £2,500 which the Premier says. Again, though it is a small matter, I fail to see why the proviso in the old Act should be maintained, which provided that the new Governor shall receive half salary from the time of embarkation for the colony till his arrival here. I fail to see why Governors should, in this respect, be treated differently from all other officers. I think it would be quite just to pay them from the time of arriving and beginning their duties. I am of opinion that, instead of amending the old Act, we might better have had a new one altogether. I will not detain the House further; but in Committee I will move in the directions on several points in which I have expressed myself.

Mr. WALKER.—I ask the Premier if he will not consider the advisability of getting to the financial debate again as soon as possible, and letting it be finished. As far as this side of the House is concerned, I do not think it can be charged with unnecessarily prolonging the debate. We have put up man for man, and we have no desire for continuing the debate at unnecessary length. I think, if the Premier is really anxious to expedite business, as he professes, he might very easily, on the last night the Financial Statement was discussed, have said—as we have often heard him say before—that he thought the discussion might be brought to a close by a certain time. If that debate were finished I feel sure that his Bills would go

on a great deal better, and the public business would be done more quickly and with better results. I trust we shall not have any more of these desultory financial debates on the second reading of policy Bills. I feel quite certain it is not the right way of proceeding with business, and that the proper constitutional method is that the financial debate should be first closed.

Major ATKINSON.—I cannot accede to the proposal of the honourable member for Ashburton, and I am very much surprised that he should make it, in the circumstances. His chief has declared that debate a pure waste of time, and I understood that it was practically finished. Any one who listened to that debate could not but notice that no one was regarding it—that the Opposition had completely failed in the matter and their case had quite broken down, and that no one would listen to it. There was the least bit of life infused into it to-night by the honourable member for Auckland Central, but, as soon as honourable members heard him, they found that it was the same speech as he had made many times before, and he threw no new light into the matter. I say the Government must conduct the business in the way they think most conducive to get it through. The kind suggestions of my honourable friends opposite I have listened to too often. We have given way to their suggestions, even to delaying for a week, to give their leader time to prepare his attack; but, as I have said before, the honourable gentleman failed altogether in that attack, and then he came down and made a second speech, and said it was useless to go on with the debate. And now, one after another, Opposition members are getting up and telling us it is wasting time to go on with other business till the financial debate is finished. I venture to say that if I had put Supply at the top of the Paper we should not have got on with Supply work. Any honourable gentleman who has got an idea to offer or a speech to make has an ample opportunity to do it on any of these Bills. Did not the honourable member for Ashburton tell us, on the last occasion of the financial debate being on, that there were twenty-two members who were going to speak, and—

Mr. WALKER.—I do not like to contradict the honourable gentleman, but I must distinctly state, as the rules of the House do not allow me to go further, that I have no recollection whatever of mentioning the number twenty-two in connection with this matter.

Major ATKINSON.—I do not like, of course, to contradict the honourable gentleman, but I must say I think he is mistaken.

Mr. WALKER.—The honourable gentleman has an unfortunate habit of multiplying things by two.

Major ATKINSON.—I shall not multiply the Opposition by two at any rate. I accept the honourable gentleman's statement, of course, and will only add that either his memory or mine must be wrong. I was under the impression that he told me that.

Mr. W. D. Stewart

Mr. WALKER.—Was it direct from me or through a medium?

Major ATKINSON.—From the honourable gentleman himself, and I understood it was twenty-two.

Mr. WALKER.—I stated twelve; so that is nearly multiplying by two. The honourable gentleman not having closed the debate that night, the number might have increased afterwards.

Major ATKINSON.—I was very anxious that it should close, and I asked the honourable gentleman several times if his side did not object to getting it closed, and I could only get a negative answer: there was nothing definite. Then came the second speech of the honourable member for Christchurch North, saying it was useless continuing the debate; and the honourable gentleman having utterly failed to make out a case, and the debate being wholly disregarded, as the House emptied whenever any one spoke, I thought it better that we should get to some tangible business—something that we could get to a direct vote on. Now, we have an opportunity of advancing this Bill a stage; but, if we had moved for Supply, we should have had a desultory discussion, should have done no business, and should have had the same discussion again the next time that we moved Supply. And the Government have taken this course with a due regard to getting some work for the other Chamber to do. It seemed to us desirable, looking at the stage of the session, to get forward some of the business a stage, with a view to getting it to another place; and I venture to say we have the approval of a large majority of this House in taking this course. We do not want to stifle any debate, because any honourable gentleman has had a full opportunity of making a general speech on this Bill, and all will have other opportunities on other Bills. Sir, I think it would do no good to follow the honourable member for Auckland Central through his speech, but there are two or three points I will refer to. No one who heard the honourable gentleman would think that it was his Ministry which committed the very sins which he wishes the House to believe I am guilty of. Now, the honourable gentleman blamed us for not intending to deal with the Insurance Department. He evidently doubted my statement that we intended to deal with this department as well as with others. I said I did not see any use in mixing up this matter with others, as the finance of this department is outside the public revenue, and therefore any reform of this department is quite outside the general subject. The honourable gentleman must know that the finance of this department has nothing to do with the consolidated revenue. I am astonished at the honourable gentleman asking why the officers of this department should be paid more than other officers. Does he not know that the insurance business is a special class of work? Why do private companies pay more than is paid in other occupations? It is because men capable of conducting such business are very

scarce, and can practically command their own price. These private offices have not the same publicity in their affairs as the Government Department necessarily has, but if we could look into them we should soon find that they made mistakes, and that our office would compare favourably with any of them. If any department of this kind is to be conducted successfully, we shall have to give much higher salaries than are to be paid to Ministers—that is to say, if we do not want all the best men to go to the private offices and our department to be obliged to take very inferior men. Now, the honourable gentleman said that we do not propose to effect any such reform as we might effect by amalgamating the different services. If the honourable gentleman had read the Financial Statement he would have seen that we say a great deal about that. It is the ground on which we are asking for the confidence of the House to enable us to amalgamate these services, and make one large service of them, as the honourable gentleman says, and to do away with the multiplicity of officers. The late Government, or the honourable member for Christchurch North, went somewhat in that direction. Under his authority, a certain number of departments were amalgamated with the view of making promotion run through the whole of the department. Any one who has looked into the matter cannot but know that, if there is to be any real reform in the Service, we must proceed on these lines—there must be a less number of heads, and we must give advancement right through the Service: there can be no question about that and the honourable gentleman said nothing new in that respect. The honourable gentleman said there were too many Ministers—that it was not right to have six Ministers in this House; we should have eight—four Ministers and four Under-Secretaries. Eight votes in the House! That would suit any Government extremely well, no doubt. The honourable gentleman was quite right about the state Ministers must be in, in going fresh to their work. He said they must go to their duties knowing nothing at all about them. But do they not go into departments which have thoroughly trained official heads to carry on the work of the departments? The honourable gentleman would have perfectly raw men to carry on the routine of the office instead of the permanent heads. He would have men taking charge of the ordinary departmental work without the slightest knowledge of it. Now, when a new Minister goes into office he finds, under the present system, a permanent head of the department, who knows his duties thoroughly, and is of very great assistance to the Minister. There are some Under-Secretaries, no doubt, who are not so competent as they might be; but that does not affect my contention. Now in regard to the appointment of the gentleman over the Insurance Department: The honourable gentleman has referred to that several times; and I am rather surprised that he has done so. The appointment was made by the Colonial Treasurer of his own Government, Mr. Ballance. This very appointment,

regarding which the honourable gentleman has been railing at me to-night, if I may use the expression, for having countenanced it, was made before I came into office. I found that this officer had been appointed by the honourable gentleman's Colonial Treasurer on a distinct promise of a particular salary; but the honourable gentleman so far got the upper hand of his own Colonial Treasurer that he would not allow him to give the salary which had been promised, so the Treasurer gave him £100 less—£700 instead of £800. The Treasurer had so far authority that he was able to insist on appointing him, and he was promised that he should have £800 as soon as the Treasurer could get it for him. I did not express approval in any way of that appointment; but when I took office I found that the appointment had been made, and the officer was there discharging the duties, and that he had the promise of a particular salary from the Government of which the honourable member for Auckland Central was the head, and I brought down to the House the estimates with the salary that had been promised by the honourable gentleman's Government, and the House voted it. Now, that is the scandalous appointment the honourable gentleman said I had the chief hand in promoting.

Mr. GUINNESS.—How did he get a thousand a year?

Major ATKINSON.—That was done by the Board when the department was turned into an Association. The House saw fit to pass an Act forming the department into an Association. The honourable member for Christchurch North was the promoter of the Bill, which I supported, and I take my share of the blame. If any one is to blame for that appointment it is the honourable member for Auckland Central. He is the man who is primarily responsible to this House. He let the appointment be made; and, as he says, a gentleman was appointed without having any qualifications for the office. I say the honourable gentleman cannot point to any single such appointment made by any Government of which I was a member. If he can, I ask him to do so. Then the honourable gentleman goes into all my doings. He begins from 1877. I do not know why he did not go back to 1878, when the Governor's Salary Act was passed, or to 1874, when the Ministers' Salaries Act was passed. I was in the House then. I am in a most unfortunate position. Whether I am in opposition, or a member of the Government, or a private member, I am held responsible for what occurs in the House. That is what he wants the House to believe. When the honourable gentleman was in a majority in 1887 I was able to come down and say that he should not have the Ministers' salaries reduced. The honourable gentleman knows as well as I do it was his own friends who would not have it. The honourable gentleman knows that quite well. Whether the honourable gentleman was sincere in wishing it I do not know.

Sir G. GREY.—Read your speech.

Major ATKINSON.—I am perfectly con-

*Major Atkinson*

sistent. I have read my speech. I have been looking over it. I expressed my opinions fearlessly, and I gave a vote accordingly. If the honourable gentleman had done the same, things might have been quite different. He thought nothing of voting in one way as Premier, while some of his Ministers remained out and did not vote. In 1877 I was against the reduction of Ministers' salaries and I was against the reduction of the members of this House. For this reason: I say a salary of £1,250 a year is not at all an excessive salary for Ministers of the Crown; and I say the same to-day. I have said it all through. I think it is only a reasonable salary, and, but for the state of the colony, as I have said, I should be resisting it this day as I did then; but I say our duty now is to make sacrifices ourselves, and to make them clearly and immediately, so that there shall be no mistake about it. This is a question affecting the opinions of the people, that they shall recognise, as we recognise, the great necessity for retrenchment. That is the point. Therefore I say I am perfectly consistent in the course I take. I say salaries might have been reduced but for the mismanagement chiefly of the honourable gentleman opposite. I do not say anything as to the management of the honourable member for Auckland Central, but I might say a great deal of that in the years 1877 to 1879, and I might look at many of the appointments which were made then. Then, so far, the honourable gentleman has thrown no light on this question. He has really not exposed to us a system which will do any good. What is the difference between the proposals of the Government and those of the honourable gentleman? So far as our retrenchment proposals go there is no difference whatever. There is some slight difference in this: We propose to keep six Ministers, and he would keep only four Ministers and four Under-Secretaries. Is that going to effect the salvation of the country? He would make the Service one Service in order that all promotions might be regular. Anybody who has considered this question knows that to have any effective reorganization that must be done; and that is the proposal of the Government. The honourable gentleman laughs as if wisdom only lived with himself. Then he said that when he proposed to take the Sinking Fund I resisted it, and then afterwards I agreed to its being taken. Everybody knows that I fought my utmost against it. There is the underlying assumption that, whether in office or out of office, I can do what I like. It is perfectly ridiculous. What could I do in a minority? I fought against it. I think that nothing has done so much harm to our credit as that transaction. I said that when the honourable gentleman proposed it, and I say exactly the same now. Then he goes on to the question of taxing the bondholders. The honourable gentleman does not seem to comprehend this question at all. I am astonished at him, and he seemed quite astonished to hear that we did here just the same as they do in England with regard to the bondholders.



The honourable gentleman does not understand the question with regard to these bondholders. We have to make a payment not at our Treasury here, but to the Crown Agents in London on a particular day. Mr. A, the holder of a bond for £100, has been promised that he will receive 4 per cent. He goes there, and gets it. Our bargain is to have the money there by a particular day. We have to have our money at the Bank of England many days before it is due. I say it is utterly impossible for us to tax those bondholders, and I will tell you why. Because we have agreed to have that money there, and I say the Courts of England would compel us to produce £5 for every £5 bond to the Agent on that particular day. The bonds which are issued in the colony, and upon which interest is paid out of our own Treasury, are taxed at the present time. When the holders come for their dividend it is stopped from them if it has not already been paid in as property-tax. That is quite reasonable and right; but the honourable gentleman must distinguish between the two operations. We pay the man £5, but stop it on another account. In the other case, we pay the money in London; it is out of our jurisdiction, and no one can touch it. Nobody would like better than I to tax the bondholders if only it was fair, and they would be taxed at the present moment.

Mr. VALENTINE.—They pay a tax at Home.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes, of course; but you cannot get away from the absolute bargain to pay this money in London, and as soon as the money gets to London it is out of our jurisdiction altogether. It is under the jurisdiction of the English Government, and therefore they rightly say, Whatever your income may be you shall pay on it. I should have thought anybody could have seen the distinction. Any attempt, such as is proposed by the honourable gentleman, would simply mean a forced reduction of the interest we have agreed to pay. It does not mean at all legitimate taxation, for by the bond we are bound to pay this money in London. Then the honourable gentleman was very angry with the Government for not having made proper proposals for reducing the number of members of the Legislative Council. We have not only proposed that, but I have no doubt we shall succeed in doing it. What was the action of the honourable gentleman in the two years he was in office? He made more appointments than were made by any other Government in three or four times that time. He beat the late Government in making appointments. Two evils do not make a good—I admit that thoroughly; but I say the honourable gentleman has acted in exactly an opposite direction to his creed, and we have acted according to our creed. No Government of which I was a member ever made large appointments. We always left that to the Government which succeeded us. In 1877 a large number of appointments were made. In 1884 the honourable gentlemen opposite succeeded us, and they made a large number of appointments. So that our action has been a reason-

able and proper one—that is, to reduce the number of members of the Legislative Council. I do not know that I need say any more. I could follow the honourable gentleman further; but I confess I have been a little disappointed with his speech, because I had hoped, from his large experience, that he would be able to make some really valuable suggestions; but for some reason, I do not know why, he has thought it better to attack me, and hold me up as the one man who is the cause of all the mischief in the country. I am not going to return the compliment to him in any way. When we get into Committee on these estimates I hope I shall be able to satisfy him that I know something about the matter, and that I shall satisfy him that what we propose is reasonable; and I can assure the honourable gentleman and every other honourable member of this: that any suggestion in the direction of making retrenchment more effective and clear I shall be only too delighted to receive. I beg to move the second reading of this Bill.

Sir G. GREY.—May I make a personal explanation? I have simply to say, in regard to the appointment to the Insurance Department, that I did not allude to the appointment which the Premier has mentioned. With a quickness which arises, I suppose, from practice, he shifted the appointment I was alluding to to one made in my time. I thought I would not shrink from the thing at all, and therefore permitted it to go on. I would simply add that I cannot admit the correctness of the description he has given of the appointment made at the time I was Minister. I will not go into the details.

Major ATKINSON.—Would the honourable gentleman kindly say what was the other appointment?

Sir G. GREY.—I am sure the honourable gentleman does know. He cannot tell me he does not know.

Major ATKINSON.—I do not know of any other. I shall be very happy to explain it fully if I had anything to do with it.

Sir G. GREY.—It appears there is a misunderstanding. I am not alluding to an appointment made in his time.

Major ATKINSON.—I wish the honourable gentleman to name it, because I should like the right persons to have the blame if there is blame, or have an opportunity of contradicting it if there is no blame.

Sir G. GREY.—The honourable gentleman knows as well as I do.

Major ATKINSON.—Does the honourable gentleman refer to the appointment of the District Agent in Dunedin?

Sir G. GREY.—The honourable gentleman knows perfectly well the appointment I mean.

Bill read a second time.

#### MINISTERS' SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, I beg to move the second reading of this Bill. I do not think it desirable that I should make any comments in doing so; therefore I will content myself by merely making the motion.

Mr. TAYLOR.—This is a very important question; and, as the Premier is aware, I have placed a question on the Order Paper bearing in this direction. What I wish Ministers to consider is this: that, in the reductions they are about to make throughout the departments, it should not so happen that a subordinate should receive more than a Minister of the Crown. I am prepared to admit that the Hon. the Premier is one of the best politicians in this country; and, if his services are not worth more than £1,000 a year, I trust he will have no subordinates alongside him drawing salaries larger than his. I merely mention the matter in order that the Government may deal with the subordinates in a proportionate manner. In one particular instance mentioned in the return that has been laid on the table, I find that the Property-tax Commissioner draws something like £1,240 a year, including bonuses. If that is to be continued, I believe the Premier of the colony should receive more than is proposed in the Bill; but, if the Government are going to make proportionate reductions all round, then they will have my support, because I believe, in the present state of the country, we must have the reductions that have been indicated. I agree with the Minister in his proposal not to touch those salaries which cannot bear it; but when you see men drawing large salaries, such as £1,000, or £900, or £800 a year, there is room for large reductions. I put these views clearly before the Ministry. I say that, if the head of the Government is prepared to take this sum, his subordinates have no right to grumble at a proportionate reduction.

Sir G. GREY.—“I also hope the House will not agree to this Bill being passed. In my opinion the proposal is a mere affectation of economy. It may be all very well for a gentleman who is in receipt of a pension of £1,000 a year from the public funds, and who has an ample private fortune besides, to make such a proposal; but I will say this with absolute certainty: that no gentleman can occupy the position of Minister in this town upon £1,000 a year; and I speak from some experience on the matter. The same testimony, I am sure, will be received from any gentleman who may have occupied the position of a Minister. If it is desirable that Ministers should live in cheap lodgings and be separated from their families, or that they should be men of large and independent means, then I can understand the proposal; but I think it would be unwise economy to ask public men to occupy such positions at pecuniary loss to themselves. There are very few in this House who possess the confidence of the House who can occupy such positions except at great personal inconvenience. I do not believe there is on those benches one gentleman who is not sacrificing a great deal of personal comfort in order to serve the country. Unless we desire to confine the Ministerial benches to gentlemen of one class, it will be quite impossible to obtain gentlemen to act as Ministers if the salaries are reduced in this way. The choice at present

is rather limited. There is now considerable difficulty in obtaining gentlemen to occupy the position of Ministers. A very large number of gentlemen are not in a position to do it; and when Ministries are being formed those gentlemen constantly refuse to accept office from various motives, but chiefly because they are not yet sufficiently independent to be able to leave their business to undertake the work of the country. I hope that the House will not, in a fit of false economy, rush into this reduction of salaries as proposed by Ministers.”

Sir, I have made my sentiments known to the House in the speech just delivered. I will quote from the speech of another very foolish gentleman who was subjected to much ridicule for making it:—

“What we feel and what we sincerely believe is that a system of gross extravagance has grown up in this country—a system of gross extravagance in the Government, and which has spread from the Government to other bodies in the community. The Government set an example, I may say, to the whole colony, of what, in their opinion, a Government should be. If that Government is thoroughly extravagant, if that Government considers high salaries necessary for the maintenance of good government, it is quite certain that all those local bodies we have established will follow the example set them by this General Government, and that a system of extravagance will be propagated throughout the whole colony.”

These two speeches were made this day ten years ago. The one was from the honourable gentleman who sits there, and the second was made by myself. He stood up in the House to-night and said I had at that time a large majority, and he could effect nothing. Let honourable members look at that admission, and then see how far what he states is to be relied upon. They will see I had no majority at all. In point of fact, in every good thing I proposed I was checked by the honourable gentleman. And now he does not hesitate to bring down this very measure which at that time he opposed.

Mr. BARRON.—As I understand it, the Prime Minister does not invite the House to take him as an example, but rather to look upon him as a warning; and as a warning I think his example is of a very salutary kind. It is to be hoped that no other honourable member will follow in the footsteps of the honourable member for Auckland Central by endeavouring to discourage the very laudable efforts at reform which the Prime Minister is making. For my part, I shall support him as far as I can in his reform. In this Bill I look for a reform which I do not find. Honourable members will recollect that in the early part of the session a motion was made by the honourable member for Waihemo to the effect that a reduction in the number of Ministers should be made; but supporters of the Government refused to vote for that motion, simply because they looked upon it as merely an endeavour to carry a vote of want of confidence in the Govern-

ment. Now, however, the Bill is brought down fixing the number of paid Ministers, and in that Bill there is a confirmation of the present law, which provides for six paid Ministers besides the Premier, making seven paid Ministers in all. I hope the Government will see their way immediately to reduce this number by at least one—that is to say, to reduce the number of Ministers, exclusive of the Premier, to five; and also to make provision for effecting a further reduction should there be a reduction in the number of members of this House. I hope that clause 8 will be amended so that the number “five” may be inserted where at present there is six; and that clause 4 will be altered so that, instead of providing for five Ministers, it shall provide for four in case of a reduction in the number of members of the House. In pursuance of my duty, if no other member of this House moves these amendments, and if the Government does not see its way to accept them in the meantime, I shall feel called upon to move them, and I give notice now, so that there may be no misunderstanding when we get into Committee on the Bill.

Mr. MOSS.—It was my intention, if the financial debate had proceeded in the ordinary course, to say a few words upon this particular point which I will now trouble the House with. One of the greatest objections I had to the Financial Statement was the way in which the question of retrenchment was treated. I mean the spirit in which it was treated. Questions merely affecting departments were mixed up with questions of large constitutional import. It seemed to me this was altogether leading the House astray; it was striking a false note. Surely we are not to consider a question which affects the whole structure of Government in the same spirit in which we regard questions that affect ordinary departmental expenditure. It was said in the Financial Statement that we must show a spirit of self-sacrifice; and the honourable member for Caversham has evidently taken that view, and gives it additional force by saying, “We will show the Government an example.” I hold that this is altogether a wrong view. How can we, in our varied circumstances, lay down what it is to make a self-sacrifice? To talk of self-sacrifice, it seems to me, is—I do not like to use the expression—an utter sham. Some honourable gentlemen speak of it knowing that the sacrifice they make is a very small matter to them, whilst to others it may be a very great matter. There is no equality in it. The first duty which we undertake in all Parliaments is to ascertain what is necessary—no more than necessary, but what really is necessary—to carry on the government of the country. Our own forms tell us that is the proper course. The first thing they direct is, to go into Committee of Supply. There we consider what is necessary for the good government of the country. Then we go into Committee of Ways and Means, and devise how we shall get the means with which to meet that expenditure. But now we have

people inverting the process, and, with wise shakes of the head, talking of cutting our coat according to our cloth. That is a simile which is entirely inapplicable to our case. We have no fixed revenue, no fixed quantity of cloth. It seems to me that the idea connected with this cutting-down of expenditure implies that past expenditure has been excessive, or that we are now going to reduce the expenditure below what is for the good government of the colony. It means one of those two things: either that we are going to cut the expenditure below what is good for the country, or else that those honourable gentlemen who have had control of the country for some years past have sanctioned gross extravagance in the administration of affairs. I hope the country will look at the matter from that point. So far as the salary of the Governor and the salaries in departments are concerned, those are solely matters of administration, and there is no large constitutional question mixed up with them; but when we speak of the salaries of Ministers and the payment to members, then we touch upon what are decidedly constitutional questions. These things are mixed up together in a most incongruous way in the Financial Statement. What we have to consider is the fair and moderate payment for performing public duties. The country has not come to that stage when it can call upon its Civil servants or any other individuals to put it under an obligation by making great sacrifices on its behalf. In regard to the question immediately before us, and looking at it from that point of view, I may say that I think a payment of £1,000 a year is sufficient for any Minister in New Zealand. I believe it will induce Ministers to set a personal example of economy which will be useful to the whole community. I do not regard them as objects of state and show. They have high and noble work to perform, and they occupy a position that ought, at all events, to save them from incurring any large personal outlay to maintain a position which gives them dignity. I cannot help thinking that it is a mistake to speak of pay drawn by Ministers in the same sense as pay drawn by departmental officers. The two strongest passions that possess any of us are, perhaps, ambition and avarice; and I hold that it is a sound principle not to gratify both of those passions in the same office. If you appoint a fellow-citizen to a position of great dignity, do not add to it great pay; for, if you do, it may make that office unworthily sought after. Now, the position of a Minister is a very high one, and one that we should all be proud to occupy; and it should be sufficient to have the dignity and a rate of pay attached to it such as will enable the holder to maintain it with modest decency. We want no show and pomp, and for that reason I think £1,000 ample to pay Ministers. But I observe in this Bill that it is called £800 and £1,000 a year with allowances of £200. I look upon that as misleading. Let us do away with these allowances. There is no necessity for them. It is understood that the houses occupied by Ministers are to be sold; and, if that is

done, they will be able to occupy such as their own taste or circumstances for the time being may render suitable. I am satisfied that £1,000 is ample, and I hope it will be called £1,000 a year, and not £800 with an allowance of £200 added. I want to get rid of this idea that we are called upon to make great self-sacrifice; because it must be a sham. For what are we called upon to make this self-sacrifice? To put it plainly, it is not for the good of the country, or, if it were, each one should be called upon to pay an income-tax according to his means. This is a pretence of cutting down expenditure, in a way which, I am sure, will seriously affect the future good government of the country. So far as departmental and other expenditure is concerned, that may be left to the discretion of the Government; but when it affects the whole future government of the country, and practically puts a property qualification on those who may occupy the Government benches, and those who may also occupy these benches as honourable members, then, I say, the question is too large to be considered solely as a financial question; and I hope the House will not consider it in that light.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I once had the pleasure of proposing that the salaries of Ministers should be cut down to £1,000, and the objection was then made by the present Premier that it was a most unreasonable proposition, and that he could not consider that gentlemen who occupied so high a position in the country should receive salaries which could only be classed with the salaries of loan agents or insurance agents. I have always been in favour of a reduction of the salaries to the amount I have stated, and am glad that the Premier has now come round to my view. When we get into Committee on the Bill I shall have to point out one or two matters which will require amendment. The Premier has put his propositions before us in a manner which, I may say, is rather illusory. There are to be a certain number of Ministers, as stated by the honourable member for Caversham, who has supported retrenchment ever since he has been in this House, and who supported me on the occasion to which I have referred. He says that five Ministers should be the number. Now, I think the honourable gentleman said, in his second statement, that this depends upon whether the House reduces its number. That means six Ministers for three years, because three years must elapse before we can reduce the numbers of the members of this House, even if the Bill be passed at once. There is another important question. I agree with the last speaker that it would be better to fix the salary at £1,000, and let Ministers find their own residences. I understand that it is intended to sell the Ministerial residences; and I believe that it would be a mistake not to do that, for I have only just understood that all the furnishings in these houses have to be paid for by the country; and that must mean a great deal. I think we should give Ministers £1,000, that sum to in-

Mr. Moss

clude all residential allowances. However, I think one house should be kept for the Premier. It is an important position which he occupies, and, as there is a constant inflow of visitors to the colony, he should be put in a position to receive them. I am rather astonished, therefore, to see that he has thrown himself with the other Ministers, for I think that should not have been done. Now, I want to refer to a paper which was laid on the table this evening. That paper shows that 1,140 absentees—and I take it that it means individuals, because companies are mentioned separately—possess real property to the amount of £8,672,741, and personal property to the amount of £5,000,000 and over, bringing up the total to £8,785,435: that is to say, these 1,140 persons resident in England own one-tenth of the real and personal property in New Zealand. I say that such a thing as that ought not to exist, and it could not exist if some other system of taxation were provided. One-tenth of the real and personal property in New Zealand belongs to 1,140 absentees—there is the statement. Five millions odd of that means sheep; and what does that mean? That the whole of the clip of wool of these sheep is taken to England, and comes back to us in no shape or form to benefit this country. How can we wonder that the country is well-nigh ruined? Unless some means be adopted to alter this state of things the country must drift into misery and ruin. It is high time that this House took into consideration some means by which this property could be got at; and, until some step is taken in that direction, it is of no use our trying to retrench ourselves out of our difficulties. An honourable gentleman has said to me, "A progressive property-tax! You will drive property away by that. Property and money will not come here;" and then I heard that old story about a man having come out here with a large sum of money, but, hearing talk of a progressive property-tax, would not invest it. This man puts me in mind of the mystical Jack Robinson, whom you always hear of and never see. "Some one else had somewhere read in some newspaper." Why, a man cannot come to this country and invest £10,000. He cannot find a property in which to do it. The property of the colony is all mortgaged up to the eyes to the loan companies and the banks, and we are sending out of the colony three millions a year to pay them interest. And, be a man ever so willing to find investments for his money, he could not do it, unless he will take barren mountain-tops, or land which is comparatively worthless. It is all held by land companies, or is mortgaged to the outside creditor. A man came up to me the other day and said, "You know the North Island pretty well. Where can I get land? I went to the Land Company at Oamaru and asked them for land, and they wanted £17 an acre for front sections, and £12 an acre for back sections. I went to Paeroa, and they asked the same price. I went to Levels, and they asked the same price." How can you expect people to farm land and get a living from it

at such prices as those? I have pointed out what would be the condition of England if she had to send out twice the amount of the interest on her National Debt, collecting no property-tax on it. The whole country would be ruined. Can we doubt that Gladstone, Hartington, and Salisbury would combine to take steps in the matter, to put a stop to such a state of things? We should have them putting a limit on the quantity of land that could be held, and we should not only find them taxing the foreign bondholder, but doing anything under which the people who were drawing this money out of the country could be made to pay a fair share of the taxation of the country. We talk of people coming here and investing their money. Why, under present conditions there is not room for the soles of their feet. What is the condition of the banks? Upwards of six millions of money lying on deposit, and three millions at interest. The savings-banks? A million and a half lying on deposit there. There is ten and a half millions which would be put into land if it could be had at any price which it would pay people to give. But there is no movement, no life. Consider the bank returns. A million less discount, a million worse off in their assets than they were last year. The country is going to ruin as fast as it can, because we will not institute the measures which would be for the good of the country. It is of no use tinkering about retrenchment. Your retrenchment will land you in greater difficulties. Your position will be very much worse next year than it is this year. The diminished expenditure will have its effect; and when the Premier meets Parliament next year he will have to tell us a much more sorrowful tale of deficiency than he has told us this year. I appeal to Ministers to rouse themselves. There are many men in this House who would support them, and endeavour to retain them in their present position if they would have—I will not say the honesty, but I will say—the straightforwardness to recognise the facts of the case, and come down and make propositions which the country is waiting for. The country wants but a chance. Fertile? None more so. Wealthy? None more so. In its bosom rest a productive soil, minerals, riches of all kinds. No country can compare with it. And these things lie dormant. Why? Because men cannot find room for investment. The lands are locked up. The facts disclosed by this return are the main causes of this depression at the present time. There are 1,140 persons, and they are absentees, who possess one-tenth of the whole of the real and personal property in the colony. The total taxable real property in New Zealand for 1886-87, as shown in the table to the Financial Statement, B.-6, p. 20, is £47,277,142; the total taxable personal property is set down at £43,505,588: total, £90,782,680. And by this return now laid on the table we find that one-tenth of that is owned by 1,140 people. Until some alteration is made in that condition of things—I do not know what the wisdom of the House will

devise—we can look for nothing but trouble and depression.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I intended to say a few words upon the Financial Statement, but, as it appears that the debate has collapsed, I shall not say what I intended to say. So far as this Bill is concerned, I cannot support it. I think £800 a year is not sufficient for Ministers, and I have not heard any argument in favour of this reduction—at least any good arguments. The only one I have heard was a bad one. It was made use of by the Minister of Education. He told us that, as long as we could get men like the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker to serve the country for £800 a year, it was idle to say that we could not get good men for the money. But I understand that Sir Frederick Whitaker has only accepted office for the session; and, if that is so, certainly he has not made any great sacrifice, because for a session's work he will get more than a session's honorarium. There is another proposal with which I do not agree at all—namely, that the Ministerial residences shall be sold; and I see, at the same time, that Ministers propose to increase the amount which they are to obtain as house-allowance from £150 to £200. I think that, when we have Ministers who may at any moment be turned off the benches, we can hardly expect them to take their furniture to Wellington and ship it back again; and I think as long as we have Responsible Government we must make provision for the Ministers. Now, we are told, also by the Minister of Education, that this is the first time within five years that any attempt has been made to live within our means. The honourable gentleman must remember—and he does remember, no doubt—that in 1885 the late Government did make an attempt to cause us to live within our means by increasing taxation. This Government say, "We will not increase taxation, but we will fund a lot of the debt and add it to the consolidated debt." Another clause in this Bill provides that the travelling-expenses shall not exceed £1,000 in one year. In speaking of travelling-allowances the Minister of Education said that, if the late Government had decreased the travelling-allowance expenses, they must have been very large in the past, as they were last year £57,000. When the honourable gentleman made that statement he was surely attempting to throw dust in the eyes of the people. The travelling-expenses of which we were speaking, and of which we have heard so much, were the expenses incurred by the Ministers, and the amount was something like £3,000 for the last year, which is said to be the largest sum expended by any Government, except by the Government in 1879, when the expenditure amounted to £3,558. I maintain that £1,000 for travelling-expenses is not enough; and, more than that, that the late Government considerably reduced the travelling-expenses as compared with what the Government preceding them spent. If you take the largest amount expended in one year, £3,000, and multiply it by the number of years they were

in office, that gives £9,000. Let us see what the previous period, from 1879 to 1884, was. It amounted to £12,121 18s. for travelling-expenses. But, besides the amount which they had for travelling-expenses, they had Royal Commissions which cost the country £80,419; or, altogether, from 1879 to 1884, £42,416 7s. 2d. was spent in travelling-expenses. And what was the result of the expenditure? It was nothing. I will say, at the same time, that this included the survey of the West Coast, and the expenses of the Commissioners of the Melbourne Exhibition; but the other expenditure incurred was such as was no earthly good to the country: for instance, the inquiry into the constitution of the Civil Service, which cost £1,696 11s. 7d.; and the inquiry into the commercial value of the railways yet to be constructed, which cost £2,732 0s. 3d. Then there were a number of other Commissions: for instance, I can mention one, as to which was the best route for the main trunk line—the East Coast or the inland route—and after the money had been spent the Government had not the courage to make up its mind which line should be chosen. It is all very well to blame the late Government for having spent money in travelling, but I maintain that the travelling they undertook did a vast amount of good to the country, and gave a great deal of satisfaction. During the time that Government was in office we had no complaint that this district or that was neglected, and I believe that every district received justice. I have a large number of notes that I made upon the Financial Statement, but, as the subject has been pretty well threshed out, I do not intend to detain the House. I merely make these few remarks on the Bill now under consideration, and say that I object to it *in toto*. I object to the reduction of the salaries, because I believe that, if we ask men to conduct our affairs, we should at all events place them in such a position that they will not be sacrificing themselves and their families for the good of the country. I believe also that the travelling-allowances are too small, and that it is very unwise to place a limit upon them, because, if you do, it really means Royal Commissions again, and Royal Commissions are responsible to no one. If we have a Government, it is responsible, and I think its members should make themselves acquainted with all parts of the country. I shall not support the second reading of the Bill.

Colonel FRASER.—In the few remarks I am going to make I shall confine myself entirely to the Bill now before the House. I shall support the Government in the reductions they propose in this as in their other Bills; but I decidedly object to the increase in Ministerial house-allowances from £150 to £200, and I also think that the number of Ministers should be reduced to five. The proposal is to reduce them when the reduction in the number of the members of the House takes place. That, we know, cannot possibly take place for three years. When the Bill goes into Committee I shall certainly support

Mr. Levestam

the idea of the honourable member for Caversham, that the number of Ministers be reduced to six at once, instead of at the end of three years. This, however, is a matter that can be further discussed in Committee, and I shall not further take up the time of the House.

Dr. NEWMAN.—When this Bill goes into Committee there are two or three amendments I should like to make. It seems to me that a clause should be inserted to this effect: that when a Ministry is defeated in this House its pay should cease. Under the present arrangement, when a Ministry is defeated the honourable gentlemen composing it have one of two choices. If they go out of office at once, all the emoluments and *et-ceteras* of office go with them; but if they appeal to the Governor, and the Governor gives them a dissolution, they can hang on to office for four or five months, and have all the luxuries and sweets of office, and a chance of continuing in office afterwards. It must always appeal to them in this way: "Shall we go out of office at once and lose all the sweets of office, or appeal to the country?" I know that in a great majority of cases they appeal to the country, and the country always sends them back weaker than they went to it. These constant requests for dissolutions would not, I think, be made if the perquisites and sweets of office were to cease on the day of the dissolution of Parliament. And, even if that does not occur, what does occur is this: that always at the members of every Ministry is levelled the vulgar taunt that they are keeping office for the sake of its sweets and emoluments; if the Ministry were composed of angels the same taunt would be made, and if any delay took place it would be said that they were delaying the elections for the sweets of office. I think, in the interests of the colony, it would be of great advantage if a clause were put in saying that pay, house-allowance, and travelling-expenses of Ministers should cease.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who would carry on the business of the country?

Dr. NEWMAN.—My honourable friend asks, Who would carry on the business? Sir, it is their duty to resign, and not to make these constant appeals to the country. When the House has met the Government with a vote of want of confidence the country behind it is always more against the Government than the House is; and the whole experience of the Australian Colonies for years past has proved it. As Lord Salisbury said, "Whenever a Ministry goes to the country for its verdict, its answer is, 'You must go.'" I believe if the clause I suggest were inserted there would be no appeals to the Governor for a dissolution, and, at all events, that a great deal of ugly language that is now hurled against the Government would cease. Then, I should like to see the question of the travelling-allowances considered. This Bill says they shall have travelling-allowances of £1 10s. a day, but the whole amount shall not be greater than £1,000. To my mind that clause is insufficient. It says they shall not receive more than £1,000, but

there is no penalty attaching to it if they go to £1,400, £1,500, or £1,600. It would be like unauthorised expenditure. We pass Acts saying they shall not do it, but there seems to be no power to restrain them from incurring extra expenditure. I believe it would be a great deal better if a clause was put in defining more strictly what are "travelling-expenses," because we have seen such a thing in the past as the "Hinemoa" travelling about with one Minister, when the Union Company's steamers were running in all directions; we have seen Ministers taking special trains when they were unnecessary, as they are unnecessary with the regular trains running as frequently as they now do. And it would be a good thing to have a clause inserted preventing the running of trains for Ministers, excepting under cases of grave emergency. These trains, in the past, have cost the country a very unnecessary amount of money, and there can be no question there should be a more careful supervision over this expenditure, either through the Audit or by some other means. We have known of Ministers, when they might make a journey by the ordinary coach for £5, take special conveyances and cost the country £60 or £70. We have seen the travelling-allowance of a single Minister run to six or seven or eight hundred pounds. This Bill keeps down the travelling-allowances to £1,000 per annum; but, if the Ministers wished to be extravagant, there is nothing to prevent the travelling-expenses from being run up to more than £1,000; and I should like to see the Bill made more definite.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I entirely agree with the Bill before the House, and sincerely trust that no honourable members, for the mere sake of opposition to the Government, will place themselves in an attitude of hostility to the retrenchment which has been demanded by the country in this and other matters. I think the Government are to be congratulated upon having dealt with their own salaries in the radical and thorough manner in which they have done. Now, that is all I have to say on that subject; but, with your kindly permission, Sir, and in accordance with your ruling, I propose now to discuss the Governor's Salary and Allowances Bill. I regret that I missed my opportunity of saying a word or two upon that Bill, and will do so now.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I did not say that honourable members could go back and reopen a debate that has been closed, but that in discussing money Bills the power of the finances to bear the expenditure involved in them was within the latitude of debate.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Then, Sir, I shall not go back to that Bill; but, as we can go over the Financial Statement—I understand you have laid that down—I propose to allude to the matter as dealt with there. A proposal has been made to save some £2,500 upon the Governor's salary; and the objection has been raised, and it is a serious one, that it is liable to alter the calibre and standing of the colonial Governors who may be sent here for the future. My reason for saying a few words is that I

believe I have a valuable suggestion to throw out, if the Premier will kindly listen to what I have to say. I believe that neither the sum of £5,000, as it is proposed it should be, nor the sum of £7,500, as it has been, is altogether sufficient to attract here as Governor any person in England who has in political life a good prospect before him, and, consequently, that as between the two sums it matters little which is accepted; but I believe it is quite possible to get a first-class Governor for a smaller sum, and my suggestion is that the Government of this colony should place itself in communication with the Governments of the Australian Colonies in order to suggest to the English Government that, for the future, they should confine their patronage in the matter of Governors to colonists who have achieved a recognised position in political life, when such are entirely eligible. I know I am not in order in alluding to a previous debate, and I shall not do so, but I shall merely mention that a demand has arisen in some quarters—a very improper and highly -injurious demand, as I think—that the Governors should be elected.

Sir G. GREY.—Hear, hear.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—The honourable member for Auckland Central says, "Hear, hear;" but on this question, as on some others, I, with much respect, differ in opinion from the honourable gentleman, because what he advocates is a constitutional change of a very grave character. But I believe the same object could be attained if the Home Government would confine their patronage to those colonists who have achieved recognised positions, such, for instance, as Agents-General. I believe that no better Governors are to be got anywhere, not at all disparaging those gentlemen who have so ably filled the position in the past in Australia and here. I think colonists would make excellent Governors so long as they were not sent to colonies where their political life had been passed. There is another advantage to be gained from the adoption of this plan—namely, that politicians achieving positions, such as Premiers and leaders of Opposition, might be chosen Governors of neighbouring colonies; and I will candidly admit that I should like to see the present Premier and the leader of the Opposition both promoted to the positions of Governors, the one as Governor of New South Wales and the other as Governor of Victoria or some other place. I do not wish to suggest, in the language of Lord Halifax, that these honourable gentlemen should be "kicked upstairs;" but I believe it is a kind of promotion that would stimulate young men in this colony to labour hard in political life, seeing that such a fine prospect was before them; and by the adoption of this course, instead of the one advocated by the honourable member for Auckland North, we should run no risk of bringing about a disastrous constitutional change, or of severing our connection with the English Government. I hope the Premier has paid attention to what I have said, and will remember it

on some occasion, with a view to suggesting the change I have indicated.

Mr. ALLEN.—Sir, I am extremely astonished at the speech just delivered by the honourable member for Mount Ida. I do not know whether he intended me to follow his example, but I think I may say that, as the example is an extremely bad one, I am not going to follow it. The question of the Governor's salary was discussed and disposed of; yet he rises up and wastes the time of the House in discussing that measure.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I rise to a point of order. Is the honourable member in order in saying that I, in following your ruling, and discussing a serious question, am wasting the time of the House?

Mr. SPEAKER.—That is no point of order, and I do not think the language was meant to be in any way offensive.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—It is the expression "wasting the time of the House." That has been ruled out of order in the House of Commons.

Mr. SPEAKER.—There is no point of order raised, and no ground for the Speaker to interfere; but probably the honourable member would himself admit that the proper time for him to express his opinion on the Governor's salary was when the Bill relating to it was under discussion.

Mr. ALLEN.—If I have hurt the honourable gentleman's feelings I am exceedingly sorry, and beg to apologize; but I think it would be trespassing on your generosity, Sir, and on the generosity of the House if I followed the example of the honourable member. I am going to get at the point at issue instead, and that is, the Bill now before the House. The honourable member for Nelson has had the audacity to tell this House that he saw no argument in favour of this Bill. Surely he could not have listened to the Premier and several others who followed that honourable gentleman. There were two arguments that disclosed themselves to anybody of ordinary capabilities: one, the argument of economy; and the other, the argument of example. Now, the economy argument has not yet been fully put before the House, because it is so self-evident; but if the honourable gentleman had calculated for himself he would have found that, whereas under the old Act the Prime Minister got £1,750, and six Ministers £1,250 each, altogether £9,200, under the present Act they only get £5,800: that is to say, there is an actual saving of £3,400. I admit that there is an increase in the house-allowance from £150 to £200, but that does not materially affect the question at issue. And, then, there is the saving of travelling-allowance, which is reduced by a considerable amount—from two guineas a day to £1 10s.; and this is limited to £1,000 in the year. Under the old Act there was no limit to travelling-allowance; but in this Bill there is a limit, and I think the provision a very wise one. That is the argument of economy, and I hope the honourable member for Nelson will take it to heart. He preaches economy so much that

*Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie*

this measure ought to commend itself to the honourable gentleman's support. Then, there is the argument of example; and I must say that I was astonished at the remarks which fell from the honourable member for Parnell—a speech consisting of one mass of inconsistencies. In the first half of his speech he said that the mere fact that Ministers were reducing their salaries was of no use as an example; and then he went on to discuss the house-allowance, and said that if they had put the lot at £1,000 that would have been a good example, and that example was everything. If example was something, I think we may take it that the example set by the Government themselves in this matter is something. And I think it is one of the greatest points in the reductions that it tells the country that the Ministers are prepared for self-sacrifice, and that they expect the country also to make sacrifices in some way.

Mr. PERCEVAL.—It is too late now to commence any new questions, so I suppose I shall not be accused of wasting time. I think the Government are to be congratulated upon the motives that have actuated them in bringing down this measure; but I must confess that, in my opinion, they have gone to the opposite extreme. During the late elections no doubt this question was raised and discussed very freely, and I think the opinion of the country was very strong in its denunciation of the travelling-allowances. But I do not think the country objected to the salaries which Ministers drew before. What I wish particularly to draw attention to is this: that it would, I think, be a step in the right direction if we could sweep away travelling-allowances altogether. I cannot see why the salary should not be of sufficient amount to cover travelling-allowances. It seems to me that that would prevent what has occurred with every Ministry—a charge of spending extravagant sums in travelling; and I should like to see the clause relating to travelling-allowance done away with altogether. With reference to the house-allowance, I suppose that was inserted because the Government have not made up their mind whether they will sell the Ministerial residences or not. Of course, if they are to be sold, then it is much better to tack £200 on to the salary and make it £1,000 and £1,250 a year—what it is really meant to be. But, Sir, I do not think that £1,000 and £1,250 a year is a sufficient salary for Ministers of the Crown. I thought that the honourable member for Sydenham made some very pertinent remarks on this subject. It seems to me to be altogether derogatory to the dignity of a Minister of the Crown that he should not receive more than those who are under him. We pay Judges—and Railway Commissioners, if the Bill passes—considerably more than that, and it seems to me to be putting Ministers of the Crown in a false position altogether. I feel sure the country does not grudge a liberal salary to Ministers. What the country does grudge is an unknown quantity in the nature of travelling-allowance.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—In the few remarks I



wish to make I shall refer principally to the speech of the honourable member for Dunedin East. I cannot hope to rival that honourable gentleman's emphatic way of laying down the law in this House, because I am, like him, a young member, and I hardly apprehend that it would be good taste in me to refer to the "audacity" of previous speakers, or to denounce the speeches of experienced and able members of this House as consisting of "masses of inconsistencies." Nor do I sit so near the Premier as to get audible "tips" as to the information I am to give to this House. Therefore my speech will be a little empty as compared with that of the honourable member. Nor had I the honour to contest an election with a prominent Minister of the Crown; so that I have not come here ready armed with strings of platitudes on the imaginary sins and personal extravagances of Ministers. My views are therefore somewhat different from those of the honourable member for Dunedin East. It is my dispiriting duty to make a useless—I was going to say solitary, but I am glad to see that I am not solitary—protest against this theatrical and flashy retrenchment of the Government. This is not the real thing; it is a theatrical retrenchment waved in the eye of the country, to delude constituencies into the belief that the axe is being laid to the root of the tree. So far it is not being laid. We do not know what they are going to do. But of this I am certain: that this is not real retrenchment in the true sense of the word. If it is economy, it is economy run mad. The result will merely be that, after reducing salaries, now far too low, we shall put up the salaries to their original figure far too soon. I am not opposed to a just and moderate reduction of Ministerial salaries, but I am opposed to reducing the highest people in the country to a scale of pay given to a moderately-good manager. I agree with the honourable member for Christchurch South that the country should not decline to pay its highest officers a decent salary. If this country is to be governed by Ministers, we should pay them with no niggard hand; and, though I admit that the finances of the colony are not precisely in a flourishing condition, still I do not think we have fallen so low as that we need degrade ourselves by paying Ministers the salaries of second-rate managers. I have no doubt there are gentlemen in Wellington who are quite ready to hold forth on the subject of travelling-allowances; but I think that honourable members who come here from outlying districts will look with a jealous eye on any plan that proposes to cut down the travelling-allowances to such an extent as to reduce the travelling done by Ministers. It is most necessary to the distant parts of the colony that Ministers should habitually make tours of the country, in order to make themselves acquainted with local wants and to listen to local grievances. Unless this is done all our administration will simply be done by a huge bureaucracy here in Wellington; it will simply be government by heads of departments, who, having Ministers

always by them, will keep them under their thumbs. I look with considerable apprehension not only at this, but at other measures the Ministry is bringing down, all in the direction of centralising government. Land Boards are to be done away with; there is to be a Central Board of Railway Commissioners not amenable to political pressure; and there are various other measures tending in the same direction. I do not wish to detain the House longer, nor shall I move an amendment against this Bill; but I must raise my voice against this retrenchment run mad, and against this sliding into Centralism under the guise of economy.

Mr. WALKER.—Sir, I must say a few words on this measure, as I look on it as an example meaning that the Government intend to order our expenditure all in the same proportion. Hitherto our official salaries in this country have been very much on the same scale as official salaries in the greater Australian Colonies, and on a higher scale than salaries in other parts of the world. In the North American Colonies, for instance, salaries are very much lower proportionately than here. I will not pretend to say whether we have been right in the past or wrong; but, at all events, apparently, the voice of the country goes in this direction: that our present circumstances do not warrant the salaries now paid, and they must be retrenched. This being so, Ministers have no doubt put this Bill forward in the first group of their measures as an earnest of the reality of their intentions as to retrenchment. I do not blame them for that; I think it was probably the impulse of generous and honourable men to do it, and I will not go so far as to say they have made a mistake, because I believe the country demanded it of them and us. But all I say is that I hope, while thinking of their own salaries, they will also think of other high salaries in this country; and, if Ministers of the Crown are fairly paid at from £800 to £1,000 a year, it will be a monstrous incongruity if other dignitaries receive salaries nearly twice as large. The honourable member for Sydenham has referred to this subject in a question he has on the Order Paper, and I was surprised that he did not touch on it in his remarks just now.

Mr. TAYLOR.—It was entirely an oversight. I promised my constituents that I would do my utmost to get the Judges' salaries reduced, and I will do it.

Mr. WALKER.—I maintain that, if the Premier of the colony is fairly paid with £1,000 a year, the Chief Justice will be paid as well with £1,000, and if the other Ministers are sufficiently paid with £800 the Puisne Judges ought not to be paid more than that amount. I have taken out a few figures on this subject, and I find that in the North American Colonies they are, as a rule, much more economical than we in the Australasian Colonies in this respect. In the Dominion of Canada there is a population of five millions, and there the Premier is paid £1,643 a year, and the other Ministers £1,443; and the Judges are paid at the same rate, the Chief Justice getting the

same as the Premier. Coming to the provinces of Canada, there is Ontario, with a population of about two millions—nearly four times as large as that of this colony—and there the Ministers receive £800 to £1,000, as proposed here, and the Judges £1,200 to £1,400. I would not reduce the Judges to the same level as Ministers; but these figures show that in that large colony they pay less than we do here, and far less proportionately. In Quebec, with a population of about one and a half millions, Ministers are paid £800 to £1,000, and the Judges £1,000 to £1,200. In Nova Scotia, with a population of about half a million, the Ministers are paid £320 to £486, and the Judges £800 to £1,000. I think, at all events, at the present juncture Ministers should take this matter into consideration, and see that salaries of different high officers are not disproportionate one with another. Any reduction should be proportionate all round. Here are proposals to reduce the salary of the Governor, the salaries of Ministers, and the honoraria of members; and I think Ministers should also take the Judges' salaries and every high salary in the whole public service into account, and make proportionate decreases, whether those salaries are fixed by Act or not; and in this they would be supported by every sincere economist in the House, of whom I am happy to be one.

Mr. STUART-MENTEATH.—It seems strange to me that an honourable gentleman who has had so much experience in politics as the honourable member for Ashburton should take so sordid a view of the position of a politician. I would not for a moment impute a sordid motive in political life to the honourable gentleman, but I think he has lost sight of the true motives which animate, or, at all events, are supposed to animate, all public men. It would be a disgraceful thing for the country if gentlemen who took part in its public affairs should be actuated merely by motives of salary—if, when aspiring to the proud position of Premier, or to a seat on the Government benches, they thought only of the emoluments of the office. I do not think that is a consideration with those who aspire to positions in which they can largely mould the future of a new country and guide its political institutions. They do not consider whether the salary is £1,000, or £2,000, or £500 per annum. Now, the position of a Judge of the Supreme Court is an entirely different thing from that of a Minister of the Crown. It is simply a professional position taken by men who have qualified for it; men who have displayed qualities which are very rare, and qualities which require a great deal of training and special knowledge in order to fit the individual for the post. It is entirely on a different footing from that of an honourable gentleman who aspires to a seat on the Treasury benches. There is no analogy whatever between the position of a Judge and that of a Minister of the Crown. I repeat, I am surprised that the honourable member for Ashburton should have instituted such a comparison in this House, as I think it is calculated to lower the whole tone of our politics if we look

at the Ministerial position only from the point of view of the salary attached to it. I only rose to object to the remarks of the honourable gentleman; and, as to the question of salaries generally, I think it has been frequently ignorantly discussed, and that it has been misapprehended by the people of the colony.

Mr. MILLS.—I intend to support this Bill, although, I think, perhaps Ministers have rather overdone it in their evidently sincere desire to meet the wishes of the people of the colony by commencing the retrenchment with themselves. I think they might very well have made the salary of ordinary Ministers £1,000, even if they reduced the number of Responsible Ministers, or if they paid only four Ministers at that rate and had two other Ministers holding the less important portfolios at a lesser rate, so that the total did not come to more than it will under this Bill. However, I welcome the Bill as showing the earnestness of Ministers in their determination to effect retrenchment; and I hope they will show the same earnestness and determination in every other direction, and I hope it will be followed by equal earnestness in making a greater reduction by lessening the number of members, and that honourable members will equal Ministers in earnestness when the question of reducing the honorarium comes before us. Some honourable members have said that the salaries now proposed for Ministers are too little, and that the reduced honorarium will not be enough for the positions of members of this House; but I think that in applying the reduction first, and on so considerable a scale, to Ministers and members of the Legislature we shall be doing right, for the reason that they have done so much in bringing the country into its present pass. It is only right, therefore, that they should be the first to make the sacrifice that all members of the community have to make now. I do not agree with the honourable member for Ashburton that the salaries of the Judges and other high officers should necessarily share the same fate as the salaries of Ministers; because the Judges have had a lifelong training for their positions, and they, at all events, have had no share in bringing about the present state of affairs in the country, but rather the reverse perhaps.

Mr. WARD.—I also am going to support this Bill; but I should like briefly to express my views on the subject before voting. I recognise that the position of a Minister of the Crown is one of a very responsible nature, and I do not believe the salaries recently paid are too high for those positions. But, no doubt, in the present circumstances of the country a reduction is essential, though I should have preferred to see the salary of the Premier not brought below £1,250, and those of the other Ministers £1,000. But, as the honourable gentlemen think it desirable to go beyond that and reduce still further, I must give them my cordial support. I think, however, it would be better if the reduction were made of a temporary character, and not permanent; because I recognise that perhaps in years to come so low

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a rate may deter gentlemen eminently fitted from trying to attain the position of Ministers. No doubt there may be always gentlemen living here ready to take the positions for £300 a year or even less; but others having their business in distant parts of the colony might not be able to see their way to leave those businesses and to remain here doing public work except at a larger salary than is now proposed by this Bill. The House must be careful not to overdo those matters, lest it lead to that most undesirable thing, class legislation. However, I think that in the present state of the country's finances it is a step in the right direction, and I will support the Bill.

Mr. GOLDIE.—I shall support the Bill now before the House; but, like the honourable member for Caversham, I am sorry that the Government have not determined to make the number of the Ministry five instead of seven. I am pledged to that, and when the Bill goes into Committee I shall be prepared to move in that direction. A very great deal has been said to-night about the salaries being very low indeed; but honourable members seem to forget that at least three of the Australian Colonies are only paying Ministers £1,000 a year, and Tasmania pays only £900. I am sorry the Ministry have not decided to sell the whole of the Ministerial residences. They cost £8,600; and during the last eight years there has been expended in repairs and additions £2,756, making a total of £11,356. In addition to that, during the last two years £2,408 has been expended on furniture; and several public servants have been taken from their ordinary duties to attend at these residences. I understand that at one time the cost per annum of the services of a gardener at each residence was £69 9s. 2d.; but now three of these residences have a gardener each, and the fourth has two constantly employed; and, in addition to this, tradesmen from the Public Works Department are largely employed in making repairs and additions. I hope Ministers will see their way to sell the whole of these residences. I think it would be cheaper and better for the colony to pay a house-allowance. I shall certainly support the Bill as it now stands, with the hope that when it goes into Committee we shall be able to make a further reduction by reducing the number of Ministers from seven to five.

Bill read a second time.

The House rose at five minutes past one o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 29th November, 1887.

Government Loans to Local Bodies—Midland Railway Revised Contract.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

## GOVERNMENT LOANS TO LOCAL BODIES.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN, in moving the motion standing in his name, said honourable members would remember that in 1886 an Act was passed called the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act. By a return which was placed on the table of the Council in the first session of this year it was shown that transactions to the extent of more than a quarter of a million had taken place under the authority of that Act. The Council would not be indisposed, he hoped, to receive further information as to the operation of the Act, as they would probably be invited to consider whether the administration of that Act had been so satisfactory that some inquiry ought not to be made into it with a view of imposing some checks, which experience he thought had shown to be necessary. It was with that view he now moved the motion.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That a return be furnished (in continuation of that presented on the 10th May, in accordance with the provisions of section 50 of 'The Government Loans to Local Bodies Act, 1886'), brought up to 30th September ultimo, and showing: (1) What applications have been made under that Act by local authorities, and which of them have been granted or refused, and the case may be; (2) what sums have been granted or advanced by local authorities, and for what purposes, and the names of such authorities; (3) what sums have been borrowed or raised by the Colonial Treasurer, and what were the then outstanding liabilities and assets."—(Hon. Dr. Pollen.)

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE was glad to see his honourable friend taking a step in this direction. He wished the honourable gentleman would go still further in the matter. He would point out that unless the Act was worked very judiciously it might involve the colony in serious liabilities, and he therefore thought its operation ought to be very closely watched indeed. In looking into the *Gazette* from time to time he observed what was being done in connection with this Act, and some of the notices had struck him as being of a rather extraordinary character. The Hon. Mr. McLean, last session, had brought some of the peculiarities of this Act under the notice of honourable members. He referred to a case where a district was constituted with only one voter, and this voter, on his own property, got an advance from the Government of £50. There were others where the voters only numbered two, and others in which he (Mr. Waterhouse) maintained that there had been no care exercised to protect the interest of persons who had no possible interest in the works to be constructed, but whose properties were included in the rating-areas. To show how loosely, as he thought, the Act was worked, he would call attention to a notice appearing in the last *Gazette*, issued on the 24th November. There was a notice there of a public body in Pahiatua desiring to raise a loan of £1,500. The notices were published for three months, and the plans and estimates were published and

exhibited; but at the last moment the proposition was changed into one for borrowing £500. This was perfectly illegal, and yet it must have been regarded as a legal operation: being published in the *Gazette*, the Law Officers of the Crown must have thought so. He hoped the attention of the Government would be directed to this subject. He especially invited the attention of his honourable friend Mr. Stevens, because he could appreciate the importance of the subject. He trusted his honourable friend would not allow the matter to drop, but would cause a thorough investigation into the *modus operandi* of this Act to be made by the Government. If there was not time to do it this session, he hoped the honourable gentleman would himself take the matter up next session, and move for a Select Committee to inquire thoroughly into it.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said the Government would have this return prepared as soon as possible; but he thought it right to say that, in connection with any return in continuation of the return before the House in accordance with the Act, if the same details were to be used it would take a very considerable time to prepare, and he questioned whether it could be produced in that form within the time they were likely to be in session. In some form, no doubt, the return could be prepared so as to give his honourable friend the general results, which might suffice for his purpose. The Hon. Mr. Waterhouse had made special reference to the importance of the attention of the Government being kept directed to the administration of this Act. He might say he would undertake that the thing should not be lost sight of, and, as the honourable gentleman made a special reference to himself, he would endeavour to do his best to see that proper care was taken in all cases where public bodies were seeking loans under the Act of last year. The subject was one of very great importance. Honourable members who were present when the Act was passed were very much alive indeed, many of them, to the importance of the Act. Up to the present time, however, he had not had an opportunity of seeing how the Act had been administered, or rather used, by the local bodies.

Motion agreed to.

#### MIDLAND RAILWAY REVISED CONTRACT.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—Sir, I would first of all call the attention of honourable members to what passed in the year 1884. An Act was then passed for the purpose of enabling certain persons to form a company for the purpose of making this Midland line of railway, which was then called by another name—the East and West Coast Railway: however, it is the same railway as mentioned in the Act of 1884. The Act provided that there should be a contract made between the Crown and certain parties. In accordance with that, on the 17th January, 1885, a contract was made with a gentleman of the name of Chrystal, of Canterbury, and eight or nine

other gentlemen, to make this railway within ten years. The next step in this matter was to transfer their rights to the company, and their interests were transferred to a company in England, and there was a memorandum of association, in which it was agreed that the company should take over this railway. In pursuance of that, a deed was made between the contractors on the one part and the company on the other part, which was duly signed and executed on the 30th April, 1886. Then, the next step in the matter was this: In 1886 a Bill was passed by the General Assembly legalising this contract with Messrs. Chrystal and Co., and authorising the transfer to the Midland Railway Company, the company having at that time been formed; and the company undertook to carry out the arrangements that had been made by Messrs. Chrystal and Co. The clause in reference to it will be found in the papers laid on the table, in the contract of the 30th April, 1886; and in it there is a stipulation to that effect, in the third paragraph, which reads as follows:—

"1. The contractors shall and will with all convenient speed, and within the term of ten years computed from the date of these presents, or within such further time after the expiration of that period as may be allowed in that behalf under these presents, at their own expense in all things, construct and completely finish a line of railway between Springfield and Brunnerton aforesaid, and Brunnerton and Belgrove aforesaid, and will construct such line of railway along the line shown in red upon the map marked 'A,' hereunto annexed, and known as 'the Arthur's Pass route,' to Brunnerton, and thence by way of Reelfton to Belgrove, or as near thereto as practicable; such railway to be constructed and, when completed, to be maintained and worked in all respects under and subject to the provisions of the principal Act and the said Act and of any other Acts relating thereto, and also under and subject to the terms and conditions of this contract."

In 1886 an Act was passed by the General Assembly recognising these several transactions, so that at present what we have to consider is, What should be the purport of that contract which it was agreed should be made, with the consent of the Agent-General, between the company and the Crown; and also what that contract should be which is contemplated in the Act of 1886. Honourable gentlemen will find in the schedule there are some provisions for altering the arrangements which had been made between Messrs. Chrystal and Co. and the Government. Those alterations have not been made up to the present time, nor has the contract been altered in any way as provided in the contract of April with the Midland Railway Company. The position, therefore, is this: There has, I think, been some misunderstanding; and honourable gentlemen may come to the conclusion that what is now proposed is to do away with the contract made under the Act of 1884, and to make a new contract. To a certain extent it is not to be a new contract; but there is a stipulation in the

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assignment, which was made with the consent of the Agent-General, authorised by the Government, that an additional contract should be made; that the contract with Chrystal and Co. should be done away with, and that a new contract should be substituted with the railway company; and the Act of 1886 confirms this, and provides that there shall also be certain alterations made; so that up to the present we are not entering upon the question whether we can make a contract or not. The question is, what that contract is to be. It was stipulated between Messrs. Chrystal and Co. and the Midland Railway Company that there should be a new contract, making the company directly liable and responsible to the Crown. They were at the time of the original contract of 1885 merely assignees; but in the assignment there is a stipulation that there shall be a direct contract between the Crown and the Midland Railway Company; and in the draft contract of 1887 that is carried out. It appears that a draft contract was agreed to on the 14th December, 1886, when the matter was gone into by the then Government, and the agent of the Midland Railway Company in New Zealand, and Mr. Brodie Hoare, one of the English directors. After some trouble this draft was prepared in the terms authorised by the Act of 1886. That was agreed to by the Government, and it was understood that there would be legislation for the purpose of validating that contract. It appears that the directors in England were not satisfied with the new contract in some particulars, and they made certain alterations. Negotiations took place for some time between the Agent-General in England and the company, and the result of it was that no agreement was come to as to certain points which the company raised and which the Agent-General was not authorised to accede to. The matter got into the position that, the Agent-General not being in London, the company framed a contract, which they sent out, asking the Government's consent to it. The then Government considered the matter, but, just at that time being about to resign, did nothing in reference to this contract; consequently it devolved upon the present Government to deal with the question. On looking into the matter it appeared to the present Government that what the company required was, first, what they were already entitled to; secondly, there were other demands to which there could be no objection; but there was a third class to which there was considerable objection. The Government then altered the contract into the form in which they wished it, and it was submitted to the company's agent—Mr. Alan Scott. An arrangement was then come to by which both parties appeared to be satisfied. The papers relating to the matter were laid before the Council, and were also laid before the House of Representatives; and, in the House, action was taken by the Government by moving that the whole of the contracts should be referred to a Committee of the House. The contract has been referred to a Committee of the House, and honourable members will find

in the papers laid before this Council, or, rather, sent here by message, that the House of Representatives has passed a resolution asking the Council to concur in it. That was the purport of the message that came down here. It therefore has become necessary that the matter should be taken up by the Council; and my object in bringing the matter before the Council to-day is to move that the resolution passed by the House of Representatives adopting the report of their Select Committee should be concurred in by the Council. It would be quite useless for me to go through the whole of this matter, which honourable members have had before them for some time, and comment on the papers detailing the arrangements and alterations that have been made from time to time, as all the papers relating thereto have been laid on the table of the Council. I think it is only necessary that I should call the attention of the Council to the three important matters: first, to subsection (c) of clause 2, which is as follows:—

“(c.) All lands which from time to time, in the opinion of the Governor, are or may be required for *bonâ fide* mining for gold or silver, and the several purposes connected therewith or incidental or conducive thereto, and which land shall from time to time be set apart and defined by Proclamations to be issued on that behalf; but no more than 10,000 acres shall be so set apart or proclaimed in one block at any one time; and the land so set apart and proclaimed from time to time shall not in the aggregate exceed 750,000 acres.”

The Government insisted on an alteration of the draft contract as it stood, because it appears that under the Act of 1884 there was some difficulty as to what should be set apart for mining purposes. Under subsection (9) of clause 8 I apprehend that all that could have been taken for gold-mining would have been where there were actual workings. That would have been a very inadequate provision, and would have enabled the company to take a very large area of land which undoubtedly some day or other will become workable for gold-mines; and some portions, I believe, since that time have become so workable. It appeared absolutely essential that the Government should make some provision by which they could prevent this clause being used only for the purpose of particular places which were then being used for gold-mining purposes. There has been a very considerable amount of discussion on this clause, and between the Government, and the Committee, and Mr. Alan Scott—the representative of the company—it has been changed and altered from time to time, and it has resulted in this special clause which I have already read—that is, that the Crown may from time to time take such lands as they think fit out of a certain area on the West Coast, so long as in the whole they do not take more than 750,000 acres. It will be observed that the contract provides that there is to be a certain specified area within which the land under the contract is to be taken. That area has been defined on a plan for the purpose, and

consists of a large area, containing some nine million acres of land. The Government are placed in this position: Although the company have power to select land within this nine-million-acres area, certain lands are excluded, bringing down the probable amount to about six million acres from which the company can take their land, the Government having the power to make a deduction of 750,000 acres, as gold-mining appears to be available at particular spots. Provision is also made in another portion of the contract that, whenever the company is about to select land, they shall give two months' notice, so that the Government may make up their minds whether the land proposed to be taken is a portion of the land they have a right to reserve under the contract. That is one of the important clauses. Another important clause is clause 3. It is probably the most important clause in the contract. That is this: Supposing that, at the end of the time, after the railway has been made, it is found that this 2,304,000 acres is insufficient to realise £1,250,000, the company then have the right of selecting other lands for the purpose of making up £1,250,000. The company contend that there is an implied contract between the company and the Government, that they should have land to the value of £1,250,000. The company contended that if there was a deficiency when the land was sold that deficiency should be made up by giving them other land. In the draft contract the stipulation was general, so that land could have been taken in any part of New Zealand in point of fact. Of course that was objectionable. That was a matter the Government could not agree to. They therefore limited the area within which this land was to be selected to the area which had been set apart within which they were to make their original selections, so that, in point of fact, they could not go outside of that six million acres, which includes a great part of the land between Springfield and the West Coast. A good deal of discussion has taken place as to the form this should take, and especially as to whether or not it was perfectly clear that the company have no kind of claim on the Government for anything with the exception of a selection out of the specified area, and no claim for a money compensation. The provision now made is this:—

"3. Within three months after the expiration of one year from the completion of the said railway an account shall be taken of all moneys theretofore received by and then owing to the company as proceeds of the land granted to and sold by them, and as proceeds of their timber and coal, whether by way of purchase-money or royalty, and a valuation shall be made, either by agreement between the parties hereto or by arbitration as hereinafter provided, of all the land, timber, and coal of the company then unsold; and, if the aggregate of the moneys so received and owing, together with the sum of such valuation, shall not amount to £1,250,000, the company may, within six months thereafter, select further

land out of the land then remaining unselected and described as available for selection under section 2 hereof to the extent of such land then remaining so available; but all such further land shall be valued either by agreement or arbitration as aforesaid, and the company shall not select any such further land to a value greater than the difference (if any) between the aggregate of the moneys so received and owing, together with the sum of such valuation as aforesaid, and the said sum of £1,250,000."

So that at the end of the time the provision is, that the money they have received from the sales of the land from time to time allotted to them, from the sales of timber, and the money they have received on account of coal—if coal be discovered—the whole of that is to be added, and if it fall short of £1,250,000 they are to receive the difference between that sum and £1,250,000 in land. In point of fact, it may be called a guarantee that they shall receive £1,250,000 provided that the land within what is called the "authorised area" shall be sufficient to reach that sum. There are a great number of other stipulations in the contract, but I think most of them are details, and are not very essential. They are mostly matters for carrying out the arrangement between the parties. There is a provision that any land that is to be sold shall only be sold according to a certified valuation, which is to be made and signed by the parties, and no land which is so valued is to be sold at a less price than is stated in that valuation, unless it is with the consent of the Crown. I do not know what course the Council may take in reference to this question, but the papers have now been a long time before the Council, and I apprehend that honourable members are in possession of all that is necessary to enable them to come to a determination. At present we have got before us the Act of 1884; the agreement of 1885; the Act of 1886; and the draft contract agreed to by the Government, the agents of the company, and Mr. Brodie Hoare, one of the English directors, as it was altered by the company in August, 1887—we have got all these papers to refer to for the purpose of dealing with this question; and the object of the Government and the Committee is that the contents of all these documents should be reduced to one contract. The resolution which has been passed by the House of Representatives has been directed to that end, namely,—

"That, in the opinion of the Committee, a new contract should be prepared, embodying the several provisions of the Acts of 1884 and 1886, the contract of 1885 legalised by the Act of 1886, and the further contract amending the contract of 1885; and that an Act should be passed empowering the Governor to execute such new contract. Such new contract should, so far as practicable, contain provisions in the same words as are used in the said Acts and contracts, and, where any deviation is necessary in order to render the new contract consistent throughout, the alterations required should be to the same purport and effect as the draft contract hereunto annexed."

*Hon. Sir F. Whitaker*

If the contract should be prepared during the sitting of the Assembly, an Act might be passed for the purpose of giving effect to it before the Assembly breaks up. It is proposed that the draft contract which I hold in my hand, as agreed to by the House of Representatives, shall override all the others, and that the others, with all the stipulations not inconsistent with this, shall be put into one contract and signed after the session under the authority of an Act of the Assembly, if it cannot be done during the session. Whatever course the Council may desire to take I shall be very happy to accede to it, and to give any information which may be required. I think it will be found that the new draft contract which has been agreed to by the House of Representatives is a reasonable settlement of differences between the company and the Government. I beg to move, That the Council concurs in the resolutions passed by the House of Representatives.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—This is too important a question to be passed with a silent vote, and I am sure my honourable friend the Attorney-General would be disappointed if this subject were not entered into rather more fully than it would be if you, Sir, had proceeded forthwith to put the question. My honourable friend has given to the Council a statement of the reasons which, in the opinion of the Government, render it desirable that the proposed contract should be assented to. He has to a certain extent traced the history of that contract. But things pass very quickly, and things once passed are apt to be forgotten: I think it will then perhaps be as well if we trace the history of this contract back to the very commencement of the effort to construct a railway from the east to the west coasts of the South Island. As honourable members are aware, this matter was originated by the legislation of 1881—the Railways Construction Act, which, except so far as it has been amended by subsequent legislation, will be incorporated with this contract. The Act of 1881 was passed with the view of securing the construction of certain railways that were approved by the Government, but which the Government did not feel justified in undertaking; and it held out a very important concession. That concession was, that grants of land should be made to the extent of 30 per cent. of the cost of making any railways, such cost to be calculated at an average of £5,000 per mile, so that under that Act land valued at £1,500 was to be given for each mile of railway constructed. Certain parties in Canterbury were anxious, and not unnaturally anxious, that a railway should be made from Christchurch to the West Coast, and, not unnaturally, they looked to see how far it could be made under the provisions of the Act of 1881. They arrived at the conclusion that these provisions were not sufficiently liberal, and therefore pressure was brought to bear upon the Legislature and upon the Government to pass a more favourable Act. This was favourably considered by Parliament, and

in the year 1884 the East and West Coast Railway Act was passed. The Government at that time was the Government of Sir Robert Stout, and its representative in this Council was my honourable friend Mr. Buckley. The Hon. Mr. Buckley, in introducing that Act to the Council, said, "The object of the present Bill is to give power for the construction of a railway of this character without burdening the colony in any way." That was the basis upon which the Act of 1884 was passed—that it was not to burden the colony in any way. It made further concessions than were made in the Act of 1881, and the principal concession was with regard to the amount of land to be granted. It was agreed that a grant might be made to the extent of 50 per cent. of the estimated cost of the railway. The estimated average cost of this railway has been set down at £15,000 per mile, and the average grant therefore would be seven thousand five hundred pounds' worth of land per mile, being at the rate of 50 per cent. of the total cost, or five times as much as the maximum grant under the Act of 1881. Now, I think I am justified in saying there was no very sanguine feeling on the part of members of this Council, when passing the Act of 1884, that it would be effective in getting the railway made; but, nevertheless, in a short time persons were found who entered into a contract under that Act, a syndicate being formed to obtain the concessions offered. The Act was passed on the 6th November, 1884, and the agreement to carry out the railway in accordance with the Act was signed on the 17th January, 1885. The syndicate who signed it, finding their own means unequal to the work, not unnaturally went to England to obtain assistance, and, on the 30th April, 1886, this syndicate transferred their interest under the contract to a company formed in England with a view to carry out the work and obtain the concessions. The syndicate formed in the colony gave over their interest in the work, and also gave over their obligations under that contract to a company formed in England, who took over the contract, with the obligations founded on the Act of 1884. Some conversation appears to have passed at that time between the Agent-General in England and the company in London that was to take over the contract, and it is quite apparent that in the course of that conversation the railway-promoters in London suggested certain minor alterations which met with the concurrence of the Agent-General, and which he agreed to recommend to the Government of this colony. The concessions were of a very minor character indeed, but, nevertheless, as they were slightly in excess of those in the Act of 1884, an Act was passed in 1886 to enable a new contract to be entered into, based upon these small concessions. The London company took over the contract on the 30th April, 1886; and subsequently, after the passage of the Act of 1886, they entered into a fresh contract, as has been pointed out by the Attorney-General, with the Government, based upon the Act of 1886. This agreement was signed by the company's representative in the colony, Mr. Brodie

Hoare, on the 14th December last; so that, eight months after the London company had taken over the contract, they had obtained, with the concurrence of their representative in the colony, a further contract, embodying all the views they had entertained at the time they entered into the agreement for taking over the contract in April, 1886. This new contract of December, 1886, contained all the points that had been contended for by the company in England. For some reason or other, when Mr. Brodie Hoare arrived in England with the contract signed by himself and the Government, the London directors refused to confirm it. One cannot look through the correspondence upon this subject without arriving at the conclusion that by this time they had come to the decision that they were not strong enough financially to carry out the scheme upon their own strength, and that it was necessary that they should strengthen themselves, and they could not get strength unless they obtained some further concessions of such a nature as to satisfy London capitalists. The consequence was that this agreement, which had been made in accordance with their own expressed views, and which had been signed by their own representative, was not confirmed; but fresh proposals were made, and in August last they sent out a new contract, which had been drawn up without the concurrence, and apparently without the knowledge, of the Agent-General, but of which a copy was forwarded to him shortly after they forwarded a copy to the colony; and on this the Agent-General remarks,—

"It is obvious, therefore, that the whole character of the original contract of 1885, as well as the arrangement between the company and myself, is fundamentally altered; and, of course, such a contract as is now proposed by the company is impossible without an entirely new Act."

Sir, it is quite evident from this that all we had agreed to do, and more than we had agreed to do, had been done up to that time, and consequently there is not the slightest claim on the Government of the colony to go any further in the direction of concessions. At that time the company in England was undoubtedly bound to the colony to carry out that agreement; but, at the same time, the Government of the colony was only bound to carry out the agreement they had entered into. They were not bound—and up to May, 1886, they had not been asked—to make any further concession. Now, Sir, it is very singular that when this contract came out the late Ministry were in the agonies of their Ministerial death-throes, and could not deal with the matter, but the Premier and the Minister for Public Works both recorded that the fresh advances which were being made in the fresh contract sent out to the Government seemed to remove difficulties out of the way, and rendered the task of their successors a comparatively easy one. I scarcely know how they arrived at the conclusion that it removed the difficulties out of the way, when you look at the further concessions now

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sought by the company. The concessions now asked in this contract to be made to the company are as follow: First of all, the alternate block-system is to be given up. As honourable members understand, under the first agreement the Government and the company were to take alternately blocks along the railway. That is a mode of making railways frequently adopted in thinly-peopled countries. Where this system is adopted it is taken as a fact that the completion of the railway will double the value of the land, and that therefore the value of the land given to the company will be recouped by the additional value given to the land retained by the Government. But now it is proposed to do away with this plan altogether, so that, while we give the land to the company, there will be no means provided whereby we can recoup to the colony the value of the land granted. We are therefore asked to make a great and startling change in the original contract—to make a concession that was never contemplated in the Act of 1884, and which I am satisfied, if it had been brought before us at the time this subject was formerly dealt with by Parliament, would never have been sanctioned. Another important alteration is in regard to the area of selection. That was extended, and I think it was wisely extended. The Hon. the Attorney-General has pointed out a reason for this. A change of this sort is necessitated by the desirableness of making sufficient reserves for mining purposes, which amount to 750,000 acres. It is proposed that there shall be an additional area of selection to counterbalance this. This additional area of selection will exceed 750,000 acres in extent, and everybody who looks at the plan will see that it comprises land that, on the whole, must be of considerably more value than the average of the land contained in the original area. Then, another important alteration was that in regard to the repayment of the interest paid during the time that the undertaking is not in full working order. That will amount to £400,000. Another important alteration, and, to my mind, one indicating more than anything else the absolute weakness of the company, is the provision that, when contracts to the amount of £60,000 are entered into, land to the extent of £30,000 shall be forthwith set apart with a view to being sold; so that it was contemplated that, before the works are actually begun, land should be received in payment to the extent of £30,000 upon a contract of £60,000. That is an important new feature. Then, Sir, the additional alteration proposed was as regards the guarantee of the value of the land given. The company stipulated for a guarantee—they refuse to acknowledge the term "guarantee," but all their arguments show plainly that they mean guarantee—that the land should be worth the sum stated, namely, £1,250,000, and not that it should, as provided by the Act of 1884, be deemed to be of the value of 10s. per acre. This last point is a very material point indeed, to which I shall again refer before I



finish the few observations I have to make. I would only remark, in regard to the alterations proposed, that while the company propose these startling alterations they propose to give nothing in return for these concessions. The agreement does not provide for the completion of the railway, nor does it provide for any penalty in the case of the abandonment of the works; and it is just possible—I think I may say more than possible—that under the agreement as it now stands the colony may find itself in the position of having two incomplete ends of a railway without having any claim upon the contractors for a penalty for the non-fulfilment of their contract. I think, in giving concessions to the extent contemplated by this agreement, it would have been but right some counter-balancing advantage should have been offered to us in the shape, at any rate, of satisfactory security that, under the amended terms of the contract, these works should be carried out to a final completion. Now, Sir, I have gone through a statement of the history of this case because I think it very important to recall these circumstances to the minds of honourable members and to bring them under the notice of the colony generally. The statement I have given shows conclusively that in this matter the Government are not compromised at all; and if the Government chose to say, "There is your contract: we have passed the Act; we have fulfilled all the obligations of the contract," they would be quite justified in taking that stand, and the other parties could take no exception, either moral or legal, to the Government assuming such a stand. Now, Sir, I feel that the logical outcome of the statement of the case I have put is that I should vote against the Bill altogether. I cannot help feeling that that is the logical outcome of the whole affair; and, were I as logical in my acts as the Hon. the Attorney-General is in his speeches, that is the course I ought to take up. But I recognise there are circumstances connected with the case which render it desirable that the contract should be approved; and I am prepared to adhere to my former decision that it should pass if, in the words of the Hon. Mr. Buckley, it can do so without "burdening the colony in any way." If so, although disapproving of so many of the provisions of the contract, and thinking that we are scarcely justified in passing this measure on its merits, I will still give it my support. But, before I do so, there is one clause the effect of which must be thoroughly cleared up. The clause is that to which my honourable friend Sir Frederick Whitaker has referred—clause 8. He stated of this that, under that clause, at the completion of the works it was intended that we should give land to the value of £1,250,000, provided that there were lands in the area of selection available to that amount. Sir, as the honourable gentleman explained the intention of that clause, I could see nothing to take exception to; but my contention is that that is not the fair and proper reading of the clause; that

it does not carry out what my honourable friend says is its intention; but that, on the contrary, if this agreement is consented to, at the completion of the works we shall be asked to make good that amount of £1,250,000 if land to that value is not found within the area of selection; and that we shall be, if not legally, at least morally bound to make up the amount. Under this clause we stipulate that, in the event of the lands selected not being worth £1,250,000, we will give other lands in the prescribed area to make up the stipulated sum. At the conclusion of the work, to turn round upon the contractors and say that, as there are not sufficient lands left to make up a deficiency which has been established in the valuation, therefore we are free from all liability in reference thereto, would be simply dishonest. I cannot be a party to it. It would be like the action of the man who, having bought and paid for a thousand bushels of wheat from a farmer subject to its being of a certain quality, and to a proviso that, in case there were not a thousand bushels of wheat of the required quality, then a selection should be made out of the other wheat on the farm, should be told that, as there was not sufficient wheat in the farm to make up the required deficiency, therefore the farmer was free from all responsibility to pay back the valuation he had received. It is clear to my mind, without being a lawyer, that under the working of the clause there would be a legal liability, and I have not the slightest shadow of a doubt that if there were not a legal liability there would be a moral responsibility. The Hon. the Attorney-General explained in his speech the intention of the 3rd clause, and he quite satisfied my mind on the subject; but unfortunately the clause does not read as he expressed its intention. It does not put in the proviso, provided that there shall be land to that amount. As honourable members are aware, this subject was referred by the other branch of the Legislature to a Select Committee. The Select Committee not unnaturally desired to have some legal advice on that subject, and applied to the Law Officers of the Crown for their opinion on the matter. The Solicitor-General did not send a written opinion, but he sent back the clause with words attached which in his opinion—and in that opinion it was stated the Attorney-General concurred—would make the clause absolutely safe. These words were adopted by the Committee; but afterwards, for some reason unknown to me, their decision was reversed. It is clear then that, in the opinion of the Solicitor-General, which was stated to be supported by the opinion of the Attorney-General, the addition of other words was requisite to make the clause absolutely secure, and, if the object was to carry out the intention as expressed by the Attorney-General on this subject, it seems to me that there should have been no objection to adding those words. If those words be added my objections will certainly be removed; but if those words, or similar words, be not added, and the matter is left in uncertainty, my objection to the con-

tract will be so very strong, indeed, as to compel me to vote against it absolutely, for the simple reason that it would entail losses, and because I cannot help detecting something like dishonesty behind the whole thing. I cannot help feeling that, if this clause is passed in its present shape, there are those who will say, "If there is not the land to make the selection, the country is not bound to make up the deficiency;" while, on the other hand, the promoters of the Bill will say that the intention of the Act is that any deficiency in the valuation of the land should be made up. If the clause means what the Attorney-General contends is its intention, and if it carries that out, I am satisfied with it; but I think, with a view to ascertain that it really is so, the best thing would be to refer it to a Select Committee. And therefore I beg to move, That the proposed Midland Railway contract be referred to a Select Committee to inquire into and obtain legal opinions upon the effect of the 3rd clause, and more especially as to whether such clause sufficiently protects the colony from all claims for compensation: the Committee to consist of the Hon. Sir F. Whitaker, the Hon. Mr. Stevens, the Hon. Mr. Reeves, the Hon. Dr. Pollen, the Hon. Mr. Oliver, the Hon. Mr. Miller, and the honourable the mover. I can only say for myself that, if this matter is reported upon, and the opinion is given that the clause does sufficiently protect the colony from all claims for compensation, I shall give my vote in favour of the contract; but unless it is sufficiently established that the clause does protect the colony I shall consider it my duty to vote against it.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—Sir, I do not propose, after the exhaustive speech to which we have listened from the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, to discuss the whole question of the character of the contract which is now before us for our approval or disapproval. I think the speech fairly led up to the proposal of a Committee; but I am a little disappointed in the narrowness of the order of reference which is proposed. There are one or two very important points which were alluded to by my honourable friend, and which, I think, demand some examination from the Committee, or, if not from the Committee, then from this Council. There is one subject, which I think of very great importance indeed, to which he did not refer at all. It is within the knowledge of the members of this Council that the system of subsidising railway companies has had very extensive application in the railway system of the United States. Large corporations have there undertaken the construction of great lengths of railways. They have done so encouraged by the concession of huge tracts of land, some of which they have never earned, but which they still enjoy; and it is known that the whole question of the position of these railways is a public scandal in the United States at the present moment. One very important objection which is now taken to the action of these companies is the result of their charging differential rates to various

customers. In a book which has been recently added to the General Assembly Library, and which discusses the question of the dominance of these railway companies, one fact is referred to which alone proves the necessity of providing against the abuse which may arise from their action, and it is this: An allowance of rebates was made to a certain oil company, which in eighteen months amounted to no less a sum than ten million dollars. The differential charges are a very great scandal, and are not in the interests of commerce. Now, I have sought to find something in the Public Works Act, or in the Railways Construction and Land Act of 1881, or in the Acts which we are now considering, which provides in any way against this scandal arising, and I have not succeeded in finding anything. In England this is provided for by a Railway Commission, whose duty it is, among other things, to inquire into charges made against railways resorting to these discriminating rates. The functions of the Railway Commission have either recently been extended in order to meet some defects in its working, or they shortly will be extended. It seems to me that, while we are building up amongst us a railway company with such huge properties in land, such large powers, we cannot guard too carefully the rights of the citizens. It therefore seems to me that if my honourable friend would reconsider the terms of his amendment, and make it a little more extensive, he would be acting in the interests of the community. There is one other matter that might also be referred to the Committee, and that is, whether some conditions should not be inserted in the contract, obliging the company, under certain penalties or forfeitures, to proceed with the construction of the line from the beginning to the end. It seems to me that the danger which he slightly alluded to—namely, that of possessing, as the result of our concessions, the useless ends of railways not connected in the middle, and, at the same time, the company having the possession of big endowments—is a very great danger indeed. I think, therefore, that to narrow the purpose of the Committee is a mistake, and I appeal to the honourable member—it seems to me it is a logical necessity arising out of his own speech—that he should amend his motion.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—I entirely agree with the honourable gentleman who has just sat down that the duties of the Committee proposed by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse should be extended in the direction he has mentioned, for it was perfectly clear from the history given by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse that from beginning to end there has been a certain consistency in the legislation and negotiations that have taken place with regard to this railway, that consistency being the consistency of perpetual concessions; and, as it appears to me, some of the most important concessions are made by the contract now before us, especially as it seems to me that a concession is made in reference to the grant of a very large amount of land in excess of that originally proposed, and

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in granting that not as proposed in the contract made by Mr. Brodie Hoare—after the railway is completed—but granted before the railway is completed. I notice that in that contract, in clause 8, it states that, if the land selected by the company “does not realise the sum of £1,250,000, the Queen will, upon the completion of the said railway, grant such additional lands, within the authorised area, as may be necessary to bring the total selling-value of all the lands granted up to the said sum of £1,250,000.” That formed a guarantee that the railway would be actually completed before that enormous quantity of land was granted to the company under the present proposed contract. As has been remarked by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, there is now no such provision. The company is left entirely to its own option as to the construction of the whole or any part of the railway, starting at the two ends; and it is quite possible that we may find that we have the two ends of a railway going through comparatively valuable country, and leaving out a huge mass of mountains in the middle. It may, of course, be contended that the company will find it to their own interest to make the railway complete, because unless that is done the traffic on the railway will not return what it might if the whole line is constructed; but we can quite understand that the engineering difficulties may be such that it may pay the company better to construct only a portion of the line, and to take their chance of making their money out of the land which is granted to them, instead of making the whole line; that they will practically turn the whole company not into a railway company, but into a land company; and it is quite evident that the concessions of land made are of such an extent that there is great temptation to any company to adopt such a course as that. I see that, instead of 2,804,000 acres, estimated to be worth £1,250,000, they may very possibly take land to the extent of 5,450,000 acres. That would be an enormous concession to make, and, I think, if such a concession is made, we ought to have the most absolute guarantee that the company will construct the railway from beginning to end, and that the colony will derive a substantial benefit from the enormous concession of land which it is making. I am perfectly well aware that it is said that any such attempt to obtain all that the colony might fairly expect would be followed by the company refusing to go on with the railway, and that owing to its financial difficulties the whole thing might break down; but I think that it is quite possible the country might absolutely be more benefited by the breaking-down of a company which only pretends to make a railway than by letting the railway go on in this imperfect manner. I should certainly prefer to see the whole thing upset, rather than see an incomplete railway made in this country, and I can foresee endless difficulties which may arise from this—difficulties which it is very difficult to explain without a full knowledge of the country; but

as the country is opened up, and as portions of it may be found to contain minerals, we may find a large number of difficulties cropping up in all directions, and the ultimate result may be to force the colony to complete this railway, supposing it is made, in the imperfect manner I have indicated. For these reasons, and for others which I shall not trouble the Council with, but which have had considerable weight in forming my opinions upon the whole question, which I have studied carefully, I shall certainly strongly support the referring of this question as a whole to the Committee, instead of referring it on the one special point, as proposed by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse. I shall be prepared to move an amendment if necessary, but I should prefer the honourable gentleman himself to amend his motion.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I opposed this project of the Midland Railway in its inception on what I regarded then as a principle accepted by the colony generally: that was, that the railways of the colony should belong to the people of the colony, be constructed by the Government, and managed by the Government of the colony in the interests of the people. I opposed it also upon the ground that, as a commercial speculation, it was demonstrated, or easily demonstrable, that it could not be regarded as a reproductive work. I looked upon it that, even supposing it might be found to be a necessary work in time, the time had not yet come, and that it could not in any sense be then regarded as a work of colonial importance, or a work which the colony itself should go on with. Unhappily the consideration of the question was not carried on upon principles at all. It was raised, or, sunk into a political party question, and as a political party question it has been decided, and not upon its merits. I accept facts. Much as I dislike the project, I do not want now to interfere with it. Engagements have been entered into by the colony, expenditure has been incurred, expectations have been raised which perhaps it would not be politic to disappoint, although I am quite sure the logic of facts will disappoint very seriously all parties concerned. But I accept, as I say, facts. I am willing to accept the contract as it stands at present. I believe that it provides against the dangers which are supposed to underlie it. If I had any doubt in my own mind upon that question, not being a lawyer, I should be quite satisfied with the assurances of the Hon. the Attorney-General upon the point. But doubts have been expressed, and doubts do exist as to the finality of the liability of the colony under the contract as it is now before us, and it is because I think these doubts should be removed, even by measures which appear to be of over-abundant caution, that I shall vote for the amendment of my honourable friend for the reference of this contract to a Committee, in order that all these doubts, so far as is possible, may be set at rest.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—I hope it will be understood that, whatever may be the report of that Committee, it will not preclude any

honourable member from moving such an amendment as he may desire with the view of expressing the meaning of the 3rd clause. I think, as the Attorney-General has said, all we have to consider is, What should be the contract? We need not now go into the past history of this question. I am sorry to say it has excited a very great deal of feeling in the past, and some of us have done all that we possibly could to prevent its coming into operation. The colony, no doubt, is now committed to it, and it remains for us to consider what should be the contract. I have no hesitation in saying, from my point of view, we should state in black and white that the colony intend to give only land for the construction of this railway; and that we should say, in the plainest English we can possibly use, that we do not intend to render ourselves liable for any cash payment whatsoever. If land to the value of £1,250,000 is not to be got within the authorised area—which seems to be pretty extensive now—well, then, that is the company's look-out. I think we should say that, not only because that is in accordance with the understanding on which the colony first entered into the agreement, but also because, as the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse has said, we should not leave it in the power of any one to say hereafter, "Oh, you gave this land knowing that the money was not there, and you thought you were doing a very fine stroke of business." I think we should say, in so many words, that we will not be liable for any cash, and then we throw the whole responsibility on the company, and it is their duty to find out whether the land is worth the money or not. I certainly do wish that the terms of reference to the Committee were a little more extended, because I should like to know something more about this land. I am bound to say, knowing what I do about a portion of this work, that I think it will be a very courageous company if it does carry out the work. We know very well that one tunnel alone is 3 miles 16 chains long. That is a very formidable undertaking by itself. In one portion of the line there is over 5½ miles of tunnelling. It is an immense work. It is a very important consideration for the colony, as far the work itself is concerned, to have the line completed as a whole: that is to say, there should not be unfinished portions handed over. I think it would have been very much better if that part of the contract had been altogether left out compelling the company to begin at the two ends. I think it would have been very much better if we had said, "You shall begin at Springfield, and carry the work on to Teremakau," to carry the work on from one terminus to the other. What good would it be to the colony to have eight, ten, or fifteen miles of railway from Springfield? It would be of no earthly use at all. The land is of no value, and the line would practically lead nowhere. I think it is a great pity that provision was ever put in. I suppose it was one of those political necessities which seem to destroy the value of almost everything we undertake. I do not think there is any good in taking up the time of the Coun-

*Hon. Mr. Miller*

cil further. We all thoroughly understand what the nature of this contract is. I rose to say that I hope it will not be understood that any honourable member will be precluded by the appointment of this Committee from moving such an amendment as he may desire to move in the event of the Committee not reporting in accordance with his views. I say again that I think we ought to have it plainly in black and white what the colony really means, and then there can be no misunderstanding, and no reflections can be cast upon us hereafter.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I do not think any member of the Council would be debarred from exercising his natural rights simply because this matter was referred to a Committee; but, at the same time, I think it is convenient, if a measure of this sort is referred to a Committee, that we should to a large extent be guided by the opinion of that Committee. For my own part I am perfectly satisfied to accept the opinion of the highest legal authority we have in this Council, and when he assures us that this clause effects the objects sought by the Council I am perfectly satisfied to accept that.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I do not think he stated that.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I understood that he said that this clause gave effect to exactly the object we intended it should give effect to. I understood the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse to say that the Hon. the Attorney-General stated that.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I said, as the honourable gentleman stated, it gave effect to what I wish; but I called in question the clause itself being in accordance with the statement made.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I do not think the Hon. the Attorney-General would have made the statement if he thought the clause did not convey the exact meaning. I feel perfectly satisfied in regard to it. I do not see that we can put it in much clearer terms. I do not think we should go out of our way to say, "This shall not mean money," when there is no reference to that. It will only lead to further complications if we put in what may be thought to be additional safeguards. The limitation here is expressly made to land within the prescribed area. If we rest upon that there can be no misunderstanding of what is meant by Parliament. No company can misunderstand it, and I am afraid the putting in of other words will simply amount to a redundancy, and will perhaps lead to the very complications which are sought to be avoided now. The proposed contract limits the choice of land to the prescribed area. I, for one, have not the slightest shadow of a doubt that the land within the prescribed area will far more than satisfy the sum specified. There are something like six millions of acres from which the 750,000 which is to be set apart for mining purposes can be deducted, and the whole of the balance of that is available to satisfy the demands of the company, and in my opinion it will satisfy the most exorbitant demands which

could possibly be conceived. We have an extraordinary difference of opinion amongst honourable members. In the first place we find, from the nominal value placed on the land, that 2,300,000 acres would meet the demand of the company for £1,250,000. That was the estimate, as I understand it, of the original area, reckoning the land at not less than 10s. an acre. That was the valuation before the railway was constructed: 2,300,000 acres was supposed to meet that requirement. Now we have an area of something like six million acres from which the selection may be made, and the land is to be valued at the value of the land within one year after the railway is constructed. It may reasonably be expected that the expenditure of three millions of money will add much to the value of the land, and, on the completion of the railway, the value of the land will be materially increased. I think there can be no possible doubt about it. With the enormous quantity of land to select from, and from my own knowledge of very considerable portions of that land, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that there is more than ample to satisfy any conceivable demands that may be made by the company under the conditions of the contract. I can see no possibility of any demand being made on the colony in the shape of a money-grant. In the next place I say that under this contract it is utterly inconceivable that any company could have the slightest possible expectation of a claim for any money-payment. They are tied within the limits of the 3rd section of the contract so tightly that I can see no reason for this unnecessary alarm of some few members of the Council. I recognise that, in the circumstances of the colony, it is right that we should feel alarm at committing ourselves to cash liabilities in any shape or form. The time is such that we should put our house in order; and we must carefully guard against incurring money liabilities. At the same time, we may go to unreasonable extremes. I feel perfectly satisfied that there is nothing whatever within this contract to cause the least alarm. As has been said by other honourable members, the original question of the formation of the railway is a matter of the past. We have, of course, very different opinions upon the propriety, or otherwise, of the construction of this railway. I, for one, feel that the colony made a grievous mistake in that this railway was not started seventeen years ago, when it was projected in the original public-works scheme. Had that been done the colony would have been saved a great deal of the present depression; and, until that railway is completed, we shall not arrive at anything like an approximate value of the immense area of rich country on the West Coast. The surface of that country has only been barely touched. That part of the colony will maintain a very much larger population in ratio to its area than any other part of New Zealand, and will yet be a great source of wealth to this colony. I feel so satisfied upon that that I, at all events, have no doubt as to the propriety of

starting the railway or the faintest doubt that it will be a highly productive work. So long as we are in an isolated part of the colony—and isolated we have been ever since the settlement of the West Coast, for we are shut out from the rest of the colony and the rest of the world—we shall be unable to get sufficient capital or labour to develop our resources, we shall continue to suffer from the want of this very railway which promises to afford us so much relief; and I trust that no man in this Council will throw any unnecessary difficulties in the way of having it properly completed. I did not intend to say so much on this phase of the subject, because the matter is really a question of the contract, and the only essential question connected with the contract is the one which has been raised in connection with clause 3; and I have no doubt, if the matter is referred to a Select Committee, that it will be thoroughly cleared up. But I do not think there are any other points in the contract which require to be, or should be, altered. I would only say one thing: There appears to be a fear that under this contract the company would start certain sections of the railway and get their land and then be done with it. I do not think this is a reasonable thing to fear. I would point out that this company has been established, not for public purposes, but for the purpose of making a legitimate profit out of the undertaking; and it would never pay any company to let contracts at the Springfield end and the Nelson end, and then abandon the work on the strength of getting payment in the land. If the land is of such tremendous value there can be no reason to fear that there will be any deficiency in the area; and if the work is commenced at the Nelson and Springfield ends the company is bound, for their own protection and success, to carry it throughout the length of the line from one end to the other. The traffic will not be anything at all until the full line is completed. I think the best guarantee we can have, after all, is that it is to the company's interest to finish the line. The Hon. Mr. Miller says he would like to know something about the value of this land, as if he wished to protect the company. I say that during the whole time these negotiations have been going on the company have been making themselves thoroughly acquainted with the property which they are about to take over. They have had their representatives in the colony, brought out from Home, who have been scouring the whole country backwards and forwards, and examining the nature of the country; and they have had one of their leading directors, Mr. Brodie Hoare, who saw for himself the whole property, as far as time would permit, and who said he was thoroughly satisfied with the nature of the bargain into which he had entered—in fact, more satisfied than before he came out. And he is a man who speaks his mind, and does not hesitate to say what he means. And if this company fail to make themselves acquainted with the nature of the contract they are entering into, why should we have this extreme care for their interests?

Are they not better able to take care of themselves than we are to take care of them? And they may be relied upon to have perceived the difficulties under which they will have to construct the railway. The colony says that for constructing the railway we will give them this land within the block; and if they are satisfied with it, seeing that we are satisfied with the bargain, what business is it of ours? They do not care about our anxiety for them, and they will carry out the work in spite of it. With regard to differential rates, I suppose, if we give the matter into the hands of a private company, they must be allowed to regulate their own rates.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—Not by discriminating rates.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I think, if I am not mistaken, there is a regulation by which these rates are subject to certain restrictions and the approval of the Government.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—The rates have to be approved by the Government; but there is no provision, so far as I can find, which makes it a penal offence on the part of the railway to charge one customer one rate and another customer another.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I should say, if the rates are fixed by the Government, the company could not make differential rates. If the Government found that the rates were being departed from, that is a matter which could be very soon rectified. As I said before, I am perfectly satisfied with the contract in its present form, and I think the whole of the best interests of the colony are well served, and we shall be able to carry out a work which will be not only for the benefit of the district, but also for the benefit of the colony as a whole.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—I have listened very attentively to the remarks of the last speaker, but I think the result of the negotiations connected with this matter utterly disproves what the honourable member who has just sat down has been saying. I wish to refer, in the first instance, to one or two things that have struck me, and which have not been referred to by other honourable members. In reference to this contract we are told that Mr. Brodie Hoare, one of the directors of the company, went over the whole of the land and satisfied himself as to its quality. Then, when the draft contract reached London, it was found not to answer the purpose at all, and demands were made which would double or treble the value of the contract to the company. One or two of these have been referred to by several honourable members; but there are one or two others which have not been referred to, and to which I wish to draw the attention of the Council. One is this: In the original contract with Mr. Brodie Hoare the surveys were to be made at the expense of the Queen and the syndicate. The company now wishes to throw the whole expense of the surveys upon the Queen.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—The contract assented to by the House of Representatives does not contain that provision.

*Hon. Mr. Bonar*

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—That has not been agreed to by the syndicate in London. The next point to which I wish to refer is a most important point—that the Queen shall give to the company, and the company to the Queen, the running-power over their respective lines, and shall pay 50 per cent. of the receipts from it—that is to say, that half of the receipts for traffic shall be given to the Government, or the company shall have the power to run over the Government lines, paying them half of what they receive for traffic. When we consider that on one of our lines the working-expenses are 72 or 82 per cent., we should be losing by this transaction 28 or 30 per cent. as compared with what we should gain on our own railways—we should be allowing the company to use our lines at a positive disadvantage to ourselves. Then, again, with reference to the value of the land. It appears that the syndicate at Home heard of the speech delivered by Sir Robert Stout, the then Premier, in which speech he gave a very bad character of the land, and a very poor idea of its value; and immediately an alteration took place, and they made these demands. Now, it has been said by the Hon. Mr. Bonar that the original contractors resided in Canterbury, and knew all about the value of this land. Mr. Brodie Hoare went over the land, and made himself acquainted with its quality, and was well satisfied. And, besides, there is a regular literature in connection with the quality of this land, from various surveys made by Mr. Rochfort, Mr. Blair, Mr. O'Connor, Mr. Foy, and three Commissioners, who were appointed for the express purpose of examining the land in question. The syndicate had all that in black and white in the Blue Books, and were perfectly cognisant of it; and yet they entered into this agreement, and are not prepared to carry it out. In order that honourable members may have the information in the words of those appointed to inspect the land, and be able to judge as to whether there was any attempt at misrepresentation or exaggeration in describing the quality of the land, I will read an extract or two from the papers I have referred to. Mr. Foy says,—

“I cannot explain why this line should be made, except that it connects Nelson with Greymouth.

“From Foxhill to Hampden, sixty miles, the average traffic does not exceed one to two drays per week. There is a good coach-road all the way, with the exception of four miles, which has doubtless been finished since.

“The line is estimated to cost £10,000 to £12,000 per mile.”

Mr. Blair says,—

“In company with Mr. O'Connor, C.E., I spent six weeks in making a personal examination of the East and West Coast Railway lines proposed.

“Nearly all the country on the western side of the range is covered with dense timber, and the good flat land of any kind is comparatively limited. I can confirm Mr. Calcutt's report on the subject, as regards the indifferent character of the land and its limited area.

"The coal-deposits occur in a narrow belt along the West Coast, which entails the maximum length of carriage. The coal must be brought from the extreme end of the line. The comparatively good harbour of Westport, and the facilities which exist for shipping coal, are sufficient to turn the scale in favour of water-carriage, even to Nelson.

"With reference to the question of making the railway, and a harbour at Westport, I am clearly of opinion that both are not required.

"The cost will be something like £1,750,000, the interest on which comes to 10s. per ton on all the coal imported into the colony.

"From any standpoint whatever I can see nothing to warrant such an expenditure for many years to come."

Mr. Calcutt, land-valuator for the Colonial Government, says,—

"The soil of the forest-lands is light and poor. Where the finest birch-trees are found there is literally no soil, but a carpet of moss and leaves, underneath which are boulders, shingle, and clay, utterly useless for any agricultural purposes whatever.

"Clearing fit for plough would cost £10 to £15 per acre; cutting, burning off, and sowing with grass-seed, £6 10s. to £8 10s. per acre. Such an undertaking would not commend itself to capitalists or farmers, and to the man of small means it becomes practically impossible.

"The open land is on the whole very poor also: some small patches here and there have good soil; but the proportion of good land to the whole is very small.

"Taking the piece of country as a whole, and viewing it from an agricultural and pastoral point of view, it is not, in my opinion, adapted for the permanent settlement and support of a large number of people."

Mr. Hursthouse, M.H.R., said, "The land is of little value for settlement, or anything else;" and one of the best judges of land in the colony has been over it all, and says,—

"A railway from Springfield to Brunerton would be of service, but at a cost that would never recoup interest on the capital.

"From Reefton to Belgrove the cost of construction would be very great, through a purely mountainous country with very little cultivable land, and could by no possibility pay working-expenses, to say nothing of capital sunk.

"The land from Springfield to Arthur's Pass is purely open pastoral, about 400,000 acres in extent; thence to the West Coast is hilly, mountainous bush country [the New Zealand Alps]."

A Commission was appointed by Government to visit the land, and report to His Excellency the Governor. They say,—

"(1.) That there is little land suitable for agriculture. (2.) That the climate appears quite unsuitable for raising grain. (3.) That the most important factor in considering the West Coast as a farming district is the dense forest with which the whole country is covered: the cost of felling and clearing is out of all proportion to the value of the land when cleared, and, owing to the humidity of the

climate, underscrub and rushes soon appear unless the land is ploughed frequently. After considering the whole of the foregoing conclusions we must respectfully report to your Excellency that we recommend the Arthur's Pass as the most suitable; but the most sanguine view the Commission can take is, that there is no prospect of the traffic paying more than working-expenses on the completion of any of the alternative lines."

Sir Robert Stout, when speaking of the land referred to on the West Coast, said,—

"All gold-working land is excepted, and all known goldfields. Land near the Welcome Reef would not feed a goat on ten acres—not a rabbit. Any person selecting land about Reefton for agricultural purposes would only be fit for a lunatic asylum. It will never be raised in value for agricultural purposes."

These are the opinions of men of ability who had examined the country, and were given to guide the Government before any company or syndicate of contractors was ever thought of. Mr. Brodie Hoare, with his engineers and assistants, was over the country, and expressed his approval of it. His taking exception to it now, merely because of the speech of Sir Robert Stout, is only a flimsy pretext to justify exacting further concessions from Government. Had he considered the fact that a considerable portion of the land set apart as an endowment is from 2,500ft. to 6,500ft. above the level of the sea, and in the latitude of the Middle Island, he would have known that for about half the year it would be covered with snow, and of no use either for agriculture or for grazing. The open land on both sides of the Hurunui will doubtless sell to the runholders now in occupation; but what will be said of our radical politicians, who denounce selling land except in small farms, now assisting to pass an Act to give away to an absentee company millions of acres in a block? The company relies for a revenue on coal and timber; but how can it hope to compete with water-carriage, where there is a well-appointed fleet of steamers now in the trade, and charging 9s. per ton to any port in the colony? Mr. Mills, the agent, told me that, when Westport and Greymouth harbours are improved and deepened to allow large ships to take in their cargo from the staiths, 6s. per ton will be the rate. Now, I would ask, how is it possible to carry minerals 120 to 140 miles over such high mountains to compete with any of these rates? As regards timber, most of it is birch, and there is some pine; but in Southland good red-pine can be purchased at the saw-mills for 4s. 6d. to 5s. per 100ft., cut into boards and scantling, with a level line to a good harbour at the Bluff. For goods and passengers there will be the competition of steamers constantly plying to the ports on the West Coast.

The hour of five o'clock having arrived, the debate was adjourned, and the Council rose.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 29th November, 1887.

First Readings—Second Reading—Third Reading—  
 Bills discharged—Otago Central Railway—Hoera  
 te Mimiha and Hone Koraneho—Otago Dock  
 Trust—Naval and Military Settlers and Volun-  
 teers—Village Settlers—Rangitikei River—Tara-  
 naki Central Railway Route—Forest-tree-plant-  
 ing—Waimea Plains Railway Surface-men—  
 Kaihu Valley Railway—Vaccine Lymph—Per-  
 manent Volunteer Force—Defence—Judges'  
 Salaries—Railway-freight on Earthenware—  
 Owhaoko Land—Wellington-Pitone Railway—  
 Wellington—Pitone Telegraph—poles—Rabbit-  
 pest—Survey Department Draughtsmen—Manu-  
 kau Harbour—Business of the House—Civil  
 Service Pensioners—Tax on Foreign Bondholders  
 —Fiji—"Stark's Purchase"—Notown-Grey-  
 mouth Telephone—Sandon and Carnarvon  
 Small-Farm Association—St. Mary's Industrial  
 School Telephone—Clyde Post-office—Ophir-  
 Matakanui Telephone—Marsden, Dunganville,  
 and Greenstone Telephone—Telegram Receipts  
 —Remington-Lee Rifles—Auckland Unemployed  
 —Property-tax Officials' Bonuses—Pitone Rail-  
 way-station—Sounds County Railway-sleepers—  
 Land-transfer—Subsidy for Wire-netting Fences  
 —Egress from Public Buildings—Wire-netting—  
 Public Works not let by Public Competition—  
 Land Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two  
 o'clock.

## PRAYERS.

## FIRST READINGS.

Coroners Bill, Public Proclamations Valida-  
 tion Bill, Schools and Colleges Rating Exemp-  
 tion Bill.

## SECOND READING.

Public Proclamations Validation Bill.

## THIRD READING.

Public Proclamations Validation Bill.

## BILLS DISCHARGED.

Wellington Girls' High School Bill, Welling-  
 ton College Bill.

## OTAGO CENTRAL RAILWAY.

The Public Petitions Committee brought up  
 a report on the petition of Mathison Brothers,  
 of Dunedin, stating that they had no recom-  
 mendation to make.

On the motion, That the report lie on the  
 table,

Mr. FISH said he did not know how the  
 Committee had arrived at the conclusion they  
 had come to upon the case, if the facts were  
 as he had been informed. The petitioners were  
 contractors on the Otago Central Railway, and,  
 according to schedule prices attached to their  
 contract, they were entitled to a certain rate  
 per yard for the removal of earthwork from  
 slopes. It appeared that the Government Sur-  
 veyor disputed the amount claimed by the  
 contractors under this provision, and the con-  
 tractors had to appoint two engineers to mea-  
 sure up the quantity; and the quantity arrived  
 at by these surveyors was not paid for by the  
 Government at schedule rates, as provided for.  
 The matter was then referred for arbitration to  
 the Chief Engineer of the colony, who, accord-

ing to the terms of the contract, had power to  
 act as final arbitrator in the case. That gentle-  
 man made an award which these men urged  
 did not meet their claim, but was several  
 hundreds of pounds less than they were en-  
 titled to according to the measurement of  
 their own surveyors—Messrs. Robert Hay and  
 L. O. Beal, jun.—who were two of the best  
 engineers in Dunedin. The contractors, he  
 might say, could obtain no information, as far  
 as he could understand, from the Government  
 Engineer as to how he arrived at the amount  
 which the Government had paid; and they  
 contended that they were entitled to a certain  
 sum per yard, as scheduled in the contract.  
 As he had said, they had had the work mea-  
 sured, and it came to many hundred yards  
 more than they had been paid for. They now  
 prayed for relief; and they were in the unfor-  
 tunate position that one man had power to say  
 the Government should pay so much, but did  
 not say how he made up his award. There was  
 another thing respecting which the petitioners  
 had a grievance and prayed for relief; and it  
 was amazing to him, if the evidence had been  
 put before the Committee as he had heard it,  
 that they should have come to the conclusion  
 announced in their report. It was stated that  
 these men had been singled out, apparently,  
 from all other contractors on the line for the  
 purpose of being fined. There were other con-  
 tractors who had exceeded the limits of their  
 contract-time by a considerable period, but no  
 fines had been inflicted except upon these par-  
 ticular contractors, who had been fined £100.  
 Surely it must appear very unfair to the minds  
 of honourable gentlemen if one contractor did  
 not get fined for exceeding his contract-time  
 and another one did. He believed that, in  
 connection with these works on the Otago  
 Central Railway, there was one individual, an  
 Inspector on the line, who acted very unfairly  
 with regard to contractors. It was freely al-  
 leged by nine out of ten contractors who had  
 the misfortune to do work on that line that  
 unless they stood in favour with this particular  
 individual they would get very little chance of  
 having justice done. He might state, as a fact  
 in connection with this matter, that the peti-  
 tioners had lost a considerable sum of money  
 over their contract—no less a sum than £2,000.  
 He believed the arbitrator of the Government  
 had awarded them less than he should have  
 done because the work happened to be of an  
 easy character. Well, he would point out to  
 the House that that was most unfair, because  
 it might have happened that the extra work  
 would have been of a very difficult character,  
 and in that case the Engineer would not have  
 allowed anything extra; and the fact that the  
 work had happened to be of an easy charac-  
 ter was no justification for doing an injustice  
 to the contractors. The report was exceedingly  
 bald; and he would like to hear some explana-  
 tion from the Chairman of the Committee as  
 to why they had arrived at the conclusion they  
 had. In the meantime he would move, That  
 the report be referred back to the Committee  
 for reconsideration; as he felt sure, from his



knowledge of the case, that an injustice had been done to these men.

Mr. T. THOMPSON might say in connection with the petition that the Committee had gone very fully into the matter, and had had Mr. Blair, the Engineer of the department, and all the documentary evidence affecting the matter, before them. The evidence showed this, that after the contractors were dissatisfied with the decision of the District Engineer, the engineer in charge of the work, the matter was referred to Mr. Blair for arbitration, and he awarded the contractors the sum of £425 in excess of the amount previously arrived at. After that decision was made known to the contractors a letter was written to Mr. Blair expressing satisfaction with his decision, and a receipt in full of all demands in connection with the contract was given. It had also come out that in more than one instance the petitioners had been fairly and liberally dealt with, inasmuch as, after the Engineer had allowed the penalty to be remitted for a sufficient time to cover all alterations in connection with the contract, there were still some twenty-three weeks left upon which penalties could have been inflicted, and they were let off all except to the extent of £100, which represented only five weeks. At the time Mr. Blair's award was made no complaint was made by the contractors; but, as he had already said, in a letter that was before the Committee they expressed entire satisfaction with the decision, and made no complaint whatever. The Committee went very fully into the matter, and he could not see that any purpose would be served by referring it back to the Committee. If any further evidence could be produced he himself, and, he had no doubt, the Committee, would be very glad to reconsider the matter; but unless further evidence could be produced nothing could be gained by referring the report back.

Mr. BRUCE said that, without going into the whole of the case, he might say that it would be very difficult to add anything to the remarks made by the Chairman. He might just repeat what the Chairman had stated in reference to this petition, that if any additional evidence was forthcoming he, for one, would be very much pleased indeed to see the report referred back, because there was a considerable amount of sympathy with the contractors who had presented the petition. But he must say that, after going fully into the matter, the Committee did not see that they could possibly reopen the case. If the honourable member for Dunedin South could find any additional evidence he, as a member of the Committee, would be very glad indeed to reopen the case.

Mr. FISH did not know whether any additional evidence could be produced, and the fact of the contractors having written a letter expressing satisfaction with the award came upon him with surprise. With regard to the statement about the receipt being given in full, these contractors were like most other contractors, overdrawn at their banker's for a considerable amount, and they had given a general order to the banker to receive all moneys

coming from the Government in respect of this contract, and when the award became known the banker took the money and gave a receipt.

Mr. T. THOMPSON said it appeared that the contractors gave the receipt. They owned that they had an overdraft at the bank, and the receipt was given on their authority.

Mr. LEVESTAM did not know anything about the merits of the case, but it appeared from this report that the petitioners petitioned against an alleged wrongful act of the Government. The Committee reported that they had no recommendation to make. He had frequently drawn the attention of the House to the fact that this was a most unsatisfactory way of dealing with petitions. When any one presented a petition to the House he expected to get an answer, and the Committee ought to report that he was either entitled to something or he was not, instead of reporting that they had no recommendation to make. He thought the House had a right to expect that the Committee should report one way or the other upon petitions that were presented to them.

Mr. BRUCE might point out that if the Committee went fully into the matter, as there was a conflict of engineering evidence directly involved, they would have to bring all the witnesses up from Otago. The Committee did not consider themselves justified in doing so.

Mr. LEVESTAM said that in that case the Committee ought to say that they had had no opportunity of going fully into the case. The Committee told honourable members that they had brought in this report without hearing all the evidence. They led the House to believe that they had gone fully into the case, and now it turned out that they had not done so.

Mr. T. THOMPSON said the honourable member for Nelson had quite misunderstood the remarks of the honourable member for Rangitikei. The Committee did not wish to exclude any evidence, but had brought up the report in accordance with the evidence before it.

Mr. ROSS said the Chairman had stated that Mr. Mathison had written a letter expressing his entire satisfaction with the award. Here the Chairman was a little in error. He did not express his satisfaction with the award. Moreover, the letter was written before he had been informed that any penalty was imposed. He thought that Mr. Mathison had a perfect right to suppose that the whole circumstances respecting his case had been thoroughly investigated and considered, and he was surprised when, instead of getting £425, he received only £325, the penalty of £100 being deducted from the amount.

Mr. RHODES said that the petitioners expressed satisfaction with regard to the arbitration, and signed a receipt in full. He thought that was sufficient evidence to justify the Committee in bringing up the report they did.

Mr. FISH said he had that moment seen the petitioner, and was assured by him that he did not sign the receipt himself, that it was signed by the banker, and that he never wrote

a letter expressing satisfaction with the award. It appeared to him (Mr. Fish) that there was a most extraordinary conflict of evidence somewhere or other. He thought, under the circumstances, the petition might be referred back to the Committee; and he would take an opportunity himself of looking over the documents.

Amendment agreed to, and report referred back to the Committee.

#### HOERA TE MIMIHA AND HONE KORANEHO.

Mr. T. THOMPSON brought up the report of the Public Petitions Committee on the petition of J. C. Macky and others and the petition of E. McDonell and others, praying that Hoera te Mimiha and Hone Koraneho, convicted of perjury, might be allowed an opportunity of proving their innocence. He begged to move, That the report do lie on the table, and be referred to the Government for consideration.

Sir G. GREY simply wished to state, in reference to this petition, that, having perused the documents connected with the case several times, he was satisfied that very probably a gross injustice had taken place; and, if such an injustice had taken place, it was of the most extraordinary kind, because people who had suffered a very great injury and wrong were now in prison on a charge of perjury, said to have been committed in an attempt they made to redress that wrong. He believed it was a case worthy of the full consideration of the Government, and he had no doubt whatever it would receive that careful attention which it really demanded. To a certain extent he regretted that the petition came up for presentation to the House in the first instance. He believed, if the case had gone to the Government at once, the probability was that it would have been inquired into before this time, and probably justice would have been done. He trusted the Government would give this case, which was one of the most extraordinary he had ever known, that careful consideration it required. He could not help thinking that the result would be that the two prisoners now confined in gaol would be adjudged to be there wrongfully, and would have their liberty restored, and would have some compensation for the wrong they had suffered.

Mr. PEACOCK desired in some degree to emphasize the report, and ask the Government to consider the matter. Ordinarily, it was not a proper thing to call in question a judgment of the Supreme Court. In this case, however, the circumstances were somewhat peculiar, and such as to warrant very careful consideration on the part of the Government, with a view to seeing whether a further trial should not take place, and that those now in gaol might have an opportunity of clearing themselves.

Mr. FERGUS.—I only desire to assure the honourable members for Auckland Central and Ponsonby that when the report of this Petitions Committee comes before the Government they

*Mr. Fish*

will give it their very careful attention, and, if any wrong has been done, will endeavour, as far as possible, to rectify that wrong.

Motion agreed to.

#### OTAGO DOCK TRUST.

Mr. T. THOMPSON brought up the report of the Public Petitions Committee on the petition of the Dunedin Chamber of Commerce, praying for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the management of the Otago Trust, and moved, That the report do lie on the table.

Mr. ALLEN said that this matter was a very important one, and one that should not be longer delayed. He was going to give notice of motion on the subject, but perhaps his best plan was to ask the Premier whether he would, between this and next day, consider the matter of giving him facilities for the appointment of a Select Committee. The appointment of such a Committee had been recommended in the report of the Public Petitions Committee, just now presented.

Major ATKINSON said the Government knew nothing about the facts of the case, which appeared to be a matter of some importance. He would look into it before next day, and would then state what course he thought should be pursued. He hoped that would satisfy the honourable member for Dunedin East.

Mr. FISH thought the Government would find it a waste of time to go further in this matter. The Dock Trust was created by an Act of the House, and they had done certain things in regard to floating a loan, and his opinion was—however much he differed from the Trust as to the propriety of the action they had taken with regard to the raising of the loan for the purpose for which it was obtained—that the Premier would find it very little good troubling himself about the matter. He did not think the honourable gentleman would find it worth while to take any action. If any wrong had been done it was past recalling, and he thought the thing should be allowed to remain exactly where it was.

Mr. MILLS did not think any good could be done by opening up this matter. He did not think there was any objection to offer to the appointment of a Select Committee, but it appeared to him that it would lead to useless expense, and it would be sufficient for the purpose if the Government would take in hand an inquiry such as was asked for by the petitioners, as that could be done at very much less cost. Having a full knowledge of all the facts of this matter, his idea was that the proceedings of the Dock Trust had been strictly within the four corners of the Act, and that nothing could be gained by inquiry. However, he should not object to the appointment of a Committee if it was the desire of the House.

Mr. ROSS took leave to differ from both the last speakers. He was a member of the Dock Trust, and, from his knowledge of its actions, he believed that a most searching inquiry was necessary. According to the opinions of the

late Colonial Treasurer, the proceedings of the Trust had been "frightfully irregular." He had no doubt that if a Select Committee were appointed there would be such facts brought out as to cause the Government to consider whether it would not be desirable to dissolve the Trust.

Motion agreed to.

#### NAVAL AND MILITARY SETTLERS AND VOLUNTEERS.

Colonel FRASER asked the Premier, Whether it is the intention of the Government to bring in the Naval and Military Settlers and Volunteer Land Bill this session?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said, as he had already stated, it was the intention of the Government to bring in such a Bill this session.

#### VILLAGE SETTLERS.

Mr. HOBBS asked the Government, Whether their attention has been drawn to the regulations that are now in force for passing work done by village settlers on their sections; and whether the Survey Department cannot, through their District Surveyor, be authorised to certify for payment as soon as the work is completed, without the settlers having to wait for months for the advent of the Village Steward? He had presented a petition on the same subject that day, and he had also received letters from different settlers; and he might add that when he was taking a trip in the North lately he found this matter to be one of the chief causes of complaint. Further, he might also read a short extract from the *Auckland Star* of the 18th November, in which the matter was also referred to. He was not going to read the whole of the article, because a good deal of it was outside the particular matter to which he wished to draw attention; nor did he wish to dwell on the wrongs of the settlers for fear that he should be accused of interested motives. He simply brought the matter forward in the interests of the settlers. The extract he referred to was as follows:—

"But the irregular communication with the place had been aggravated by the want of a better system for making the payments to settlers. The visits of the Village Steward are necessarily few and far-between, while the need for food by the settlers and their families is ever present. It would be all right, says this unfortunate settler, who is struggling under hardships that would break the strongest man down, if there was some person on the spot authorised to pay the settlers the amounts guaranteed by the Government as they are earned. Why should not such a person be appointed? The Government, having induced these settlers to go upon land which is difficult of access from Auckland, ought to have made provision in the settlement for paying the men what is due to them. They ought to do so now, and not leave these industrious men who have gone out into the wilderness to make independent homes for themselves and their children to starve, or force them to abandon their cultivations, which have cost so much physical and mental suffering, to drift back

into the cities, penniless and destitute, broken and crushed men. A fate such as this for men who went forth lion-hearted to win from Mother Earth a livelihood would be lamentable indeed."

He might add that it took the Steward of the settlements about two months to go round, so that the settlers had to wait a considerable time for him to come to a particular settlement to pass work done. He thought Government might make some arrangement under which some person in each settlement could pass work when done, so that the settler might get his money at the end of the month. He could assure the Government that it was a hard case, and that it ought to have their immediate attention, as he hoped it would.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON thought that the matter had been exaggerated, for no complaint had yet reached the department with reference to this matter. It would be a great waste of time if the District Surveyor had to leave his work and go to one of these settlements each time that a settler wanted an advance. There was a Ranger appointed for the purpose of passing the work done, and further than that the Government did not at present see their way to go.

Mr. HOBBS, to prevent any possibility of misunderstanding, might say that he had no fault to find with the Steward, who, he believed, was a man in every way fitted for his position.

#### RANGITIKEI RIVER.

Mr. BRUCE asked the Government, Whether they will, in view of the serious destruction to the banks of the Rangitikei River by floods and the consequent injury to settlers, instruct one of their Engineers, skilled in protective works, to visit and report upon the best methods of conservation as applicable in this instance? This was a matter of very great importance, and had application to other districts as well as Rangitikei; though, in this particular instance, the injury done was of a very serious character. When the country was first settled the banks were well protected by trees, shrubs, and other herbage, that had since been destroyed by fire, cattle, and other agencies, with the result that thousands of acres of rich alluvial land had been swept away by the river. It was in view of this that he asked the Government to allow one of their Engineers to visit the locality, and furnish a report which might guide settlers as to the best protective methods to employ, if any existed, whereby they might, individually or collectively, arrest the destruction that was going on.

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that this opened up a very wide question indeed, and he did not know that it was a matter in which the Government could very well take action, as it appeared to him that it was more a matter for private engineers. If the Government were to undertake such works it might be considered to be an interference with private professional practice. However, if the honourable gentleman would point to any particular place where much damage had been done, he (Mr. Mitchelson)

would instruct one of the officers of the department to visit it and make a report.

Mr. BRUCE said that was all he wanted. He thought it a question of national importance.

#### TARANAKI CENTRAL RAILWAY ROUTE.

Mr. MARCHANT asked the Government, Whether they will, at an early date, give instructions for a survey of the best route to connect Taranaki with the Central Railway?

Mr. MITCHELSON said that the intentions of the Government with respect to the North Island Trunk Railway would be fully explained in the Public Works Statement.

#### FOREST-TREE-PLANTING.

Mr. BUXTON asked the Government, If any claims have been made under the Forest-tree-planting Encouragement Act; if so, how many, and when will the Government settle such claims?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said there were 124 claims, representing an area of 5,247 acres planted, now before the department. Many of these claims would not come within either of the Acts or regulations, as nearly every one who planted trees seemed to have sent in claims in response to an advertisement calling for claims to be sent in before the end of 1885. The money-value of the above claims was £20,908. In addition there were fifty-four land orders extant, representing a money-value of £5,798, for 1,449 acres planted. The time within which scrip was exercisable was limited by Act to two years, but, as there had been no land available in Canterbury, in which district most of the orders were issued, the scrip has not been exercised. It was hoped, however, that on the passing of the Land Bill opportunities would be afforded for exercising the greater portion of the scrip which had been issued.

#### WAIMEA PLAINS RAILWAY SURFACE-MEN.

Mr. COWAN asked the Minister for Public Works, If it is his intention to assimilate the wages paid to surface-men on the Waimea Plains Railway to those paid to the same class of workmen on the other Government railways? The surface-men employed by the Waimea Plains Railway Company when their railway was transferred to the Government were paid for their services 6s. a day; while men who had been since transferred to that section from other lines were being paid 6s. 6d. a day, that being the standard wages paid by Government for this class of work. The result was that in the same gang were men in receipt of different rates of pay, which naturally led to dissatisfaction among those employed. He hoped the Minister would see his way to remove the existing anomaly by paying all the surface-men on the Waimea section 6s. 6d. a day.

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that when the Government took over the Waimea Plains Railway, in November, 1886, the men who were then in the employment of the company

*Mr. Mitchelson*

were receiving 6s. per diem, and they were continued in the service of the Government at the same rate. All who had been engaged by the Government since had been given 6s. 6d. a day, and if there were any of the old workmen who were still receiving only 6s. a day he would give instructions to have their wages raised to the ordinary rate paid throughout the service.

#### KAIHU VALLEY RAILWAY.

Mr. TAIWHANGA asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether any money has been paid by the promoters of the Kaihu Valley Railway to the late chief Parore te Awha as compensation for damage done by the railway to Native land at Hauhangā, near Dargaville; and, if so, to what amount? Parore te Awha had put up a notice on his land stating that £3,000 compensation would have to be paid to him for taking the railway through his land; but the surveyors of the company had smashed the notice up. The company had since given Parore te Awha some money, but not enough, and he would like to know what that money was paid for.

Mr. MITCHELSON said that the Kaihu Valley Railway was being constructed by a private company, and the Government had therefore nothing to do with the matter; but since the honourable gentleman had placed the question on the Order Paper he had communicated with the secretary of the company and asked him whether or not Parore te Awha had received any compensation from the company. The reply was that no compensation had been paid for land taken, but he had received a sum of £15 for fencing, for which he gave a receipt in full for all claims for fencing. The reason why Parore te Awha received no compensation for land taken was that it was thought that, owing to the fact of his land being greatly enhanced in value by the construction of the railway, he had no intention of making any claim for money for the land taken.

#### VACCINE LYMPH.

Mr. RHODES asked the Colonial Secretary, Whether the Government will have vaccine lymph taken direct from a calf sent to all Public Vaccinators, accompanied by a statement of the desirability of using such lymph? The reason he put this question on the Order Paper was that it had been proved by German experimentalists that vaccine matter loses its protective power unless occasionally fortified by using cow-pox—that is, lymph direct from the animal.

Mr. HISLOP said there seemed to be a difference of opinion among medical men on this question, as on many others. The practice pursued by the Government was to secure a supply of calf-lymph, and send it to those vaccinators who asked for it. With regard to vaccinators who were not duly-qualified medical men, the intention of the Government was to write to them somewhat on the lines suggested by the honourable gentleman's question.

Mr. HOBBS moved the adjournment of the House. He had brought this matter under the notice of the House on a former occasion, when he had moved for a return with reference to the supply of lymph to persons in various parts of the colony, with the object of showing that a much better system than the present one was wanted for the distribution of lymph throughout the country; but the House in its wisdom thought fit not to allow him to carry his motion. His object had also been to show that the department in Wellington appeared to ignore the medical men in different parts of the colony who were corresponding with it; and it was time the department attended to the wishes of those gentlemen. At the time that he brought the matter forward there was small-pox in the colony, and also in New South Wales, and sailors were constantly landing in his district, with a danger of spreading the disease, and he thought it only right to bring it under the notice of the House and see whether the medical men should be snubbed as they had been.

Motion for adjournment not seconded.

#### PERMANENT VOLUNTEER FORCE.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Government, If, in their retrenchment proposals, it is intended (1) to reduce either the pay or the strength of the Permanent Artillery, or (2) to reduce the strength of the Volunteer Force, or the capitation allowance usually granted to efficient Volunteers?

Major ATKINSON said the honourable gentleman would receive full information on the matter when the estimates for this department were brought before the House; and he hoped the honourable gentleman would be kind enough to wait till then.

#### DEFENCE.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Government, If they have received a report from General Schaw upon the defences of the colony generally, which he was recently requested to make; if so, when will the report be presented to this House?

Mr. FERGUS replied that the report had not been received from General Schaw yet. He believed a preliminary report had been printed, and was now in the hands of General Schaw for revision; and when that was received, if it was of such a nature that it could be made public, it would be laid on the table.

#### JUDGES' SALARIES.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Premier, Whether he intends to amend the Civil List Acts, 1868 and 1873, providing for the reduction of salaries of Judges after the present gentlemen in office cease to hold their appointments? There was a very important principle involved in this question, and he trusted the Government would take it into their serious consideration, because when they were dealing with reductions all round he hoped they would mete out the same justice to these gentlemen as to others. He hoped also that they would deal

with all salaries fixed by statute, so that they might all start afresh.

Major ATKINSON said, without committing the Government in any way to the views expressed by the honourable gentleman, the Government would consider this matter during the recess, in connection with other questions of reduction.

#### RAILWAY-FREIGHT ON EARTHENWARE.

Dr. FITCHETT asked the Government, Whether they will consider the advisability of reducing from 30cwt. to 5cwt. the minimum weight entitling locally-manufactured earthenware to railway-carriage at half-rates, under Class B? He asked the question as the result of a letter which he had received from a local pottery-factory—the Milton Pottery Company's—and he thought one or two extracts from that letter would induce the Government to give an answer in the affirmative. The letter referred to the excessive rates of freight on the railways generally, and then went on to say,—

“The present concession, in favour of local earthenware, of a reduction to half B rates on amounts of not less than 30cwt., is almost useless, as but few customers buy that weight of our ware in one lot. . . . A reduction to 5cwt. would not in any way interfere with the profits of the railways. It would result in our being able to supply customers at a distance. . . . The increase of our turnover which would thus be caused by extending our market would enable us to still further reduce our prices, and that, again, would operate in the direction of still further increasing the turnover. We should accordingly be able to employ more hands, . . . and the amount of our goods on the railways would treble itself in twelve months.”

Mr. MITCHELSON said this matter had already been brought under his notice in a letter from the honourable member for Dunedin South, and he had considered it very carefully. He found that the rate was reduced some time ago to the very lowest possible rate, which was the rate at which grain was carried. However, in order to encourage the manufacture of earthenware the Government considered that, though they could not reduce the rate under Class B, they might reduce it under Class C to Class D for lots under 30cwt. That was the greatest concession that could at present be made, and it would only apply to locally-manufactured earthenware.

#### OWHAOKO LAND.

Mr. CARROLL asked the Native Minister, On whose instructions, or by whom, were the extracts of evidence in the Owhaoko case selected which have recently been furnished to members? The printed extracts to which he referred involved charges of a very serious nature against persons outside who could not defend themselves. Considering the evidence which had been submitted to the Legislature, he doubted very much whether the Legislature was justified in ordering it to be printed. As these

extracts contained imputations against persons outside the House, he asked the question in order to find out at whose instigation those extracts were obtained and for what purpose they were printed; for they could serve no public good; and, if they were only obtained to show personal hostility to persons outside the House, then he regretted very much that such a course should have been pursued.

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that the extracts of evidence in connection with the Owhaoko case had been ordered to be printed by the late Government. A motion having been moved in the Legislative Council that they should be laid upon the table of the Council, the present Government considered whether or not such extracts should be so produced, and they also made inquiries as to whether the whole of the evidence taken at the Court respecting the rehearing of the Owhaoko case was included in the paper referred to, and, having been informed that it was so, they agreed to lay the paper on the table; but they had nothing to do with the printing of the paper, as that had been ordered by the late Government.

Mr. CARROLL moved the adjournment of the House, and said that all the evidence bearing on this subject had not been printed, and the portions omitted were those in favour of the persons accused. In the interests of justice those persons should have an opportunity of being heard.

Dr. NEWMAN seconded the motion for adjournment, and said that Dr. Buller had written to him on several occasions with reference to this matter. That gentleman felt very greatly aggrieved at these papers, and it would be only right that the Native Minister, now that the matter had been brought under his consideration, should print the whole of the evidence. He understood that Dr. Buller felt so aggrieved at what had taken place that if he could possibly leave England he would come out and take steps against those who had so grossly libelled his character.

Mr. HOBBS said it would be satisfactory to honourable members if they clearly understood from the Native Minister whether it was the present or the late Government who determined as to the evidence which should be supplied in answer to the return asked for. He might say that when he saw this return, and read it, he was perfectly horrified that such gross charges should have been made against an absent person. Such charges should not be made against any man without giving him an opportunity of defending himself. He hoped the matter would be cleared up, and that the whole of the evidence would be printed.

Mr. MITCHELSON might say that, when the late Premier made a request to the Native Department that this evidence should be sent to him, Judge Mackay was then at Waipawa. He was communicated with, and requested to supply the whole of the evidence bearing upon the question of the application for the rehearing of the Owhaoko case. He (Mr. Mitchelson) understood that the evidence which had been printed only referred to the

rehearing; and, consistently with the request to Judge Mackay, he was led to understand that the whole of that evidence had been printed. However, he would make further inquiries, and if any of the evidence had been omitted he would have it supplied.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

#### WELLINGTON-PITONE RAILWAY.

Mr. FITZHERBERT asked the Minister for Public Works, If the Government will, this session, place a sufficient sum of money on the estimates for the purpose of straightening the railway-line between Wellington and Pitone? No person who travelled along this line could fail to see the number of unnecessary curves there were on it. He understood that at a very small cost the line could be straightened; and if so the trains could run out in twenty minutes or a quarter of an hour, instead of taking thirty-five minutes as they did now; and if that were done they would have a considerable increase in the population of the district, which would add to the traffic on the railway. Further than that, if the line were straightened, the wear and tear, which was now something terrific, would be reduced to a minimum, so that there would be a large annual saving in the expense to the Government. He hoped the Minister for Public Works would see his way to place a sum on the estimates for this purpose.

Mr. MITCHELSON said that the question was rather an indefinite one. If it meant that the Government should undertake to straighten the line from Wellington to Pitone an enormous expenditure would be required, but if it only meant the straightening of the worst curves the expenditure would be from £20,000 to £25,000. Seeing that the amount required even for the latter was so large, the Government could not see its way to undertake the work at present.

#### WELLINGTON-PITONE TELEGRAPH-POLES.

Mr. FITZHERBERT asked the Commissioner of Telegraphs, If he will have the telegraph-poles which have been left standing on the road between Wellington and Pitone, in consequence of the recent deviation of the railway-fence, immediately removed, so as to prevent accidents?

Major ATKINSON replied that the Superintendent would visit this line, and see what was necessary to be done and cause it to be done.

#### RABBIT-PEST.

Mr. ANDERSON asked the Minister of Mines, If he intends getting a report from Professor Watson, of Australia, relative to the destruction of rabbits by the lately-discovered method of introducing a contagious disease among them? This question might not seem of any great importance to the House, but those who had any knowledge of the matter would see that it involved something of very great importance to the country. If the Government could find means of suppressing the

*Mr. Carroll*

rabbit-pest, and thus increasing the sheep-carrying capacity of the country by two or three millions, they would confer a great boon on the country, and the work would be of more importance than any other that was going on.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON might inform the honourable gentleman that, at the instance of the Rabbit Committee, the Government had telegraphed to Adelaide on this matter. Experiments were now being carried on by Professor Pearson, and the Government hoped soon to receive a report from him respecting them.

#### SURVEY DEPARTMENT DRAUGHTSMEN.

Mr. TANNER asked the Government, if draughtsmen in the Survey Department are still allowed to undertake private work in mapping; and, if so, whether the Government will put a stop to the practice?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON replied that it was customary in survey offices for draughtsmen, after office-hours, for the convenience of the public, to make tracings. Within office-hours this was not done. No request had been made to the Government to stop this practice, and it would cause public inconvenience to do so.

#### MANUKAU HARBOUR.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Minister of Marine, What is the reason for removing the buoys in Manukau Harbour, especially those in the South Channel marking the course to Awhitu, Pollok, and Waiuku, and also some of those in the Main Channel? He wished to draw the attention of the Minister of Marine to this matter. By a letter dated the 22nd of November he was credibly informed that, on the occasion of the last visit of the "Stella," Captain Fairchild moved all the buoys in the channel used by all the small coasting craft, which buoys had been found an immense boon to persons navigating the harbour. It appeared, also, that Captain Fairchild's hands were not confined to the South Channel, but that he had even removed buoys from the Main Channel, which was used by the large boats; and, to show that he thought that some of the buoys were necessary, he provided smaller ones (oil-cans), and placed them as substitutes for those he had taken away. He (Mr. Hamlin) brought the matter under the notice of the Government in the hope that, if his information was correct and the buoys had been removed, instructions would be given to Captain Fairchild to replace them as soon as possible, as this was a matter of great importance, affecting the navigation of the harbour.

Mr. FISHER was informed that no buoys had been removed from the Main Channel. Those in the South Channel had been removed because there was only one small steamer trading in that portion of the harbour, and the trade was not sufficient to justify the keeping of these buoys in repair. The buoys were wooden, and wanted painting occasionally. The master of the vessel which traded there declined to keep them in repair for his own use, and they were therefore removed. If the master

of the vessel which required to make use of the channel would have undertaken to keep them in good order, there would have been no reason for removing the buoys; but the question had been put to him, and he had declined.

Mr. HAMLIN wished to say that a number of vessels trading to Taranaki and Hokianga constantly used this South Channel, and the buoys were of very great use to them. So far as the small steamer trading to Waiuku was concerned, the master of that vessel could run without them at any time; but there were other vessels trading on the coast that required them.

Mr. FISHER could assure the honourable gentleman that the information of the department was that the buoys were only used by one small steamer.

Mr. HAMLIN said the department must be very deficient in information.

Mr. FISHER said, of course, if there was any considerable traffic the buoys should be put there and kept there.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Government, If they will, during the recess, consider the whole procedure of business in this House, with the object of altering it so as to make it more businesslike, quicker, and more useful? The debates of the last two days, and the manner in which Parliament had been conducting its business, supplied sufficient reason for asking this question.

Major ATKINSON would be very glad indeed to consider it, and only hoped that honourable gentlemen would consider it at once, and neither ask needless questions nor make long speeches when they asked questions.

#### CIVIL SERVICE PENSIONERS.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Government, If it is contemplated by the Financial Statement to require officers who are entitled to pensions to retire from the public service? He desired to ask the question, because there were in his district several who would be affected by it; and it seemed to him desirable, in the interests of the public, that the question should be asked.

Major ATKINSON said it was not the intention of the Government to require any officers that they wanted in the Service to leave the Service; and the rights of all officers who were now entitled to pensions would be properly conserved if they remained at smaller salaries.

#### TAX ON FOREIGN BONDHOLDERS.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Colonial Treasurer, Whether he will, when revising the incidence of taxation during the recess, consider the advisability of taxing all foreign holders of New Zealand Government securities, say, to the extent of one penny in the pound? He desired to ask the question because he conceived that these gentlemen should contribute to the necessities of the State equally with those who lived in the colony. A great deal had been said

about repudiation, but he could not at all see that such taxation would be repudiation. If the securities were held in the colony taxes had to be paid upon them. It was contended that we had guaranteed a certain amount of interest. That did not affect the question. When stocks went up £10 or £12 the rate of interest was reduced to those who purchased at those prices; and he could not see on what principle his suggestion should not be adopted. He trusted the Colonial Treasurer would see his way to do something in the matter during the recess.

Major ATKINSON said if there was, in his opinion, any possibility of taxing these bondholders he should be very glad to do it: but, to his mind, the thing was impossible. He did not believe that any law passed by the House would do it, because he had no doubt at all that there was a distinct engagement, which would be enforced by the English law-courts, to make certain payments in London on a certain day, and, if the colony failed to do that, then it would be in default. The difference between bonds held in the colony and at Home was, that here the Legislature had power to determine what taxes should be imposed on property within its own jurisdiction; but it could not tax property that had got to England. We had agreed to pay in London a particular sum, and, if we failed to pay that sum, then we were defaulters.

#### FIJI.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Government, If they will enter into negotiations with the Colony of Fiji, with the object of obtaining a political union with New Zealand? The question was one of very great importance. If such negotiations were entered into, and were successful, a great deal would be done towards reviving the island trade, which was at present languishing.

Major ATKINSON could not hold out any hope that during the present recess, at any rate, anything of the sort could be done. The honourable gentleman was perhaps aware that negotiations were carried on some time ago, and that they were not very successful. He saw that Fiji was now approaching one of the other colonies on the subject; but he feared that the difficulties, so far as New Zealand was concerned, were insuperable; and if a political union were obtained he was afraid it would not be of so profitable a nature as the honourable gentleman seemed to anticipate.

#### "STARK'S PURCHASE."

Mr. MONK asked the Minister of Lands, If the Government will give as an endowment to the Borough of Devonport that portion of the land known as "*Stark's purchase*" not required for defence purposes? This question referred to a piece of property, on the North Shore from Auckland, known as "*Stark's purchase*." There was a considerable portion of land, more than could possibly be required for defence purposes; and the people of the Borough of Devonport were desirous that the Government

should arrange to give them this as an endowment. He might also mention, in support of this, that by the abolition of the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act the borough would lose rates to the extent of £50 a year on this land, and they would feel very much the diminishment of revenue. He might also say that there was very little chance of the Government being able to sell this land at anything like the money they paid for it; whereas, if they gave it to Devonport as an endowment, in two or three generations hence it might reach the value paid for it, and in the meantime it would benefit the present and intermediate generations of Devonport. If the Government could see their way to comply with this request they would receive very hearty thanks.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON regretted to state that it was out of the power of the Government to accede to the request conveyed in this question. The land was acquired under the provisions of "*The Public Works Act, 1885*," which provided that, when land was acquired for such purposes, and there was any land over and above that actually required for the purpose for which it was acquired, it must be disposed of as provided for by "*The Public Works Act, 1882*."

Mr. MONK said perhaps the Government would bring in a short Act with the desired object.

Mr. BRUCE suggested that a way out of the difficulty would be for the Government to sell it to the borough at cost price.

#### NOTOWN-GREYMOUTH TELEPHONE.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Commissioner of Telegraphs, Whether he will have telephonic communication established between Notown and Greymouth?

Major ATKINSON was afraid the Government could not see their way to agree to this. The estimate was that the work would cost £450, and that the probable receipts, judging by the circulation of letters, would be £10.

#### SANDON AND CARNARVON SMALL-FARM ASSOCIATION.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will assist the Sandon and Carnarvon Small-farm Association by giving a pound-for-pound subsidy towards the erection of a punt on the Rangitikei River opposite their selection in the Otamakapua Block? Perhaps he ought to ask the Minister of Lands this question, as it related to the Otamakapua Block, a very large portion of which was Crown land. The special settlement that was spoken of was on the river-side, and behind it there were Crown lands which must be opened up by access being afforded across the river. The Small-farm Association was prepared to assist in this matter if it could get a punt put across the river. A friend of his had written to him to say that there was a party wishing to get on this land,

*Mr. Taylor*



and they had been camped on the river for three weeks for want of a punt.

Mr. MITCHELSON said this was really a question for the Minister of Lands, as the honourable gentleman had stated, and it had nothing to do with the Public Works Department; but he would answer it. Although grants of a like nature had on rare occasions been made to local bodies, the Government would not see their way to comply with the request in this instance.

#### ST. MARY'S INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL TELEPHONE.

Mr. LEVESTAM asked the Commissioner of Telegraphs, Whether he will have telephonic communication established between the St. Mary's Industrial School and the City of Nelson? He might say that this was a semi-public institution; and, as there was a large number of children there, for whom medical aid might be required at any time, he hoped the honourable gentleman would give a favourable reply to the question.

Major ATKINSON said that since he got the information on this matter he had not had time to consider it. He found that it would cost about £120. If it were a private establishment the institution would have to pay £26 the first year and £20 a year afterwards. He was afraid the institution would not be able to pay that amount; but he would be very happy to consider the matter further and see if any reduction could be made.

#### CLYDE POST-OFFICE.

Mr. PYKE asked the Government, When the Clyde Post-office will be rebuilt? In asking this question, he should like to explain that Clyde, though small in itself, was the starting-point of two lines of traffic, two lines of mail-coaches, and two lines of telegraphs. All the letters and telegrams going to the country from Dunedin must necessarily pass through Clyde to reach Cromwell and the country above it—Arrowtown or Queenstown. In addition to that, Clyde was the seat of the county government, and also the head-quarters for police and three counties; and in many other respects it was necessary that the post-office should be there. The post-office was tumbling down. It was an old wooden and iron building; it had been in existence for about twenty years, and could not possibly stand much longer. It was not safe at the present time, and had not been safe for years. This was not a new vote, it had been on the estimates for three or more years, and, unless effect were given to the vote very shortly, the Government would have to find other accommodation for the postal business, as it could not possibly be carried on much longer where it was.

Major ATKINSON was at present advised that the department did not consider it would be advisable to erect the building which was proposed to be erected, the business not now justifying it. The sum of £675 had appeared on the estimates.

Mr. PYKE.—A great deal less than that would do.

Major ATKINSON said the department thought that £250 would erect the building required. He would make further inquiries, and do what was necessary for the improvement of the place.

#### OPHIR-MATAKANUI TELEPHONE.

Mr. PYKE asked the Government, When the promise to extend the telephone from Ophir to Matakaniui will be given effect to? He forgot how many years this work had been on the estimates. The peculiar circumstances were these: There was a large mining population at the place, formerly known by the name of Tinkers', and the only means they had of communication with the outer world was by riding over to Black's, or Ophir. When accidents happened there, life might possibly be lost before a doctor could reach the place. In one case, he believed, life might have been saved if the doctor had been communicated with earlier; but that was impossible. He was certain that the telephone would pay, and was convinced that, if the inhabitants were at all disinclined to pay, the County Council would guarantee the cost of the telephone-office: that was to say, they would guarantee to pay any deficit in the cost of maintenance by fees.

Major ATKINSON said that this work, under the circumstances, would be gone on with.

#### MARSDEN, DUNGANVILLE, AND GREENSTONE TELEPHONE.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Commissioner of Telegraphs, If he will have telegraphic communication established at the following places—namely, Marsden, Dunganville, and Greenstone?

Major ATKINSON was sorry to say the Government did not see their way to construct this line as proposed.

#### TELEGRAM RECEIPTS.

Mr. MILLS asked the Postmaster-General, If he can see his way to allow clerks in telegraph offices to initial receipts for money for telegrams without the extra charge of 2d. as at present? In asking this question, he would explain that, in large business establishments, where the telegraph was used very freely, it had been customary to enter telegrams in a book, which the boy carrying the telegram was required to get initialled at the telegraph office. This was done not so much for the purpose of getting an acknowledgment of the value of a receipt as for the purpose of removing temptation out of the way of the boys, as it had been very often found, not only in his own experience but in the experience of many business people throughout the colony, that boys taking telegrams charged an ordinary telegram as an urgent telegram or a delayed telegram as an ordinary telegram, and put the difference in their pockets. It was only occasionally that the fault was found out. Quite recently the

Government had made a charge of 2d. on each telegram despatched in this way. Twopence was a small amount, but that on every shilling telegram formed a very large extra charge, and he thought it was a charge that might very well be done away with.

Major ATKINSON was sorry he did not see his way to grant the concession the honourable gentleman wanted. He found that it was the custom in Great Britain to make this charge; but, if the charge were not made, the facility offered would be availed of to a much larger extent than now, and that would entail a still further expense on the office. It would be necessary to keep more officers. The office did not wish to encourage this sort of work, and thought it necessary to make a charge to those who wished to check their own officers.

#### REMINGTON-LEE RIFLES.

Major JACKSON asked the Government, What was the total number of Remington-Lee rifles purchased by the Government, and at the time of such purchase had the Imperial Government decided on the future arm of its service? Had the Government decided to adopt the Remington-Lee rifle as the future arm of the colony before incurring the expense of purchasing the same; and was the Officer Commanding the Forces consulted before these rifles were procured? What was the cost per arm, complete, landed in the colony; and what quantity of ammunition for these rifles was purchased, and at what price? Were these rifles and ammunition a gift to the Rifle Association or any other body, or will their cost be recovered? To what vote is the cost of these arms and ammunition charged? Has a further supply of ammunition been ordered from America? Is there any truth in the rumour that this arm is quite unfit for the Volunteer or any other service? How many of these rifles have been returned to store disabled?

Mr. FERGUS replied that 500 rifles were purchased. At the time, the Imperial Government had not decided on the future arm; nor had it done so officially yet, though by last mail the Government heard privately that an arm was selected. The Government had not finally decided to adopt the Remington-Lee rifle when these were ordered. The order was mentioned in the report of the Commander of the Forces laid before Parliament, dated the 25th April, 1887. The cost per arm was £3 9s. 8d. without bayonet, £3 14s. 6d. with bayonet. There were in the colony 200,000 rounds for the Remington-Lee rifle, which cost 7s. 3d. per 100 rounds. One hundred of the rifles were sold to the Honorary Reserve Corps; 850 were lent for twelve months, with option of purchase, and an undertaking to return them in good order, if not bought by the Rifle Association; fifty were on hand, some twelve or fifteen of which were sold. Arms and ammunition were charged to the vote, "Arms and ammunition, Volunteers, Defence Department." A further supply, on the application of Captain Somerville, for the Rifle Association, of 100,000

Mr. Mills

rounds had been sent for, to be paid for by the association. There was no truth in the rumour that this arm is quite unfit for any service, as it was adopted in several countries besides America; and there was no reason to believe it to be quite unfit for the Volunteers. One rifle had been returned to the store to have its extractor repaired; and another was reported to be similarly injured, and likely to be sent for repair.

Mr. FITZHERBERT asked the Minister of Defence if he was quite sure there were only 200,000 rounds in the colony, as that gave only twenty-five rounds to each Volunteer in New Zealand.

Mr. FERGUS said that was the quantity of ammunition at present in the colony for the Remington rifle only. The question referred to that rifle only.

#### AUCKLAND UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. R. THOMPSON asked the Minister for Public Works, If it is true that he has ordered the formation of carriage-drives through the Domain in Auckland, for the purpose of finding work for the unemployed? His reason for putting this question on the Order Paper was, that he had seen it stated in a newspaper that the Minister had authorised the formation of carriage-drives through the Auckland Domain, in order to give employment to the unemployed. He did not wish it to be understood that he objected to work being found for the unemployed if it was necessary it should be found; but, if so, necessary and useful work should be provided for them. He trusted that those people who required employment would be sent to the country districts to make roads for settlers, and he did not suppose there was any other district in the colony where it was so easy to find necessary work of that class for the unemployed as the Auckland District; and he hoped the honourable gentleman would not allow any fancy works of the kind he had referred to to be done in and about Auckland, but would see that the unemployed were sent to useful works in the country, where they could be easily and profitably engaged.

Mr. MITCHELSON said he had ordered no such work, nor did he intend to do so. A Labour Bureau was about to be established in Auckland, some gentlemen whom it was desirable to have as members having consented to act; but Mr. Percy Smith, the Assistant Surveyor-General, whom the Government were most anxious to have on the Board owing to his local knowledge, could not act, being largely overworked. On the previous day he (Mr. Mitchelson) had received a communication from one of them, asking that the unemployed might be given work at constructing a reservoir at the Western Springs; to which he had sent the following reply:—

"28th November, 1887. — In reply re unemployed. Government has found system of establishing relief-works in neighbourhood of large cities very objectionable, as tendency is to draw temporarily - unemployed persons from the country into the towns, instead of taking those already in the towns into the

country. Besides this, too, if the work you suggest—which is really a local and not a General Government one—was undertaken, we should immediately be asked to undertake similar local works for the benefit of other boroughs and cities, and if we did not do so—and certainly we could not—considerable dissatisfaction would result.

"Furthermore, provision has been made on estimates for putting in hand works that are *bonâ fide* Government undertakings, and no provision has been made—nor could Parliament well be asked to make any—for the waterworks at Western Springs.

"Under all the circumstances of the case, I would advise that definite action in the matter be deferred until a meeting of the Labour Bureau now being constituted can be held, which will be within the next two or three days, probably; but I would, in the meantime, suggest for your consideration that the Rotorua Railway-works would probably be suitable work to employ the men upon.

"E. MITCHELSON.

"Charles Atkin, Esq., Auckland."

He might, however, state that a list of works that were proposed to be undertaken in the Auckland Provincial District would be forwarded to the Bureau, with a recommendation that the Bureau should decide as to which of the works mentioned would be the most suitable for giving relief to the unemployed. But, at the same time, the Government felt that they must to a certain extent accept the advice tendered by the Bureau, as the Government fully believed that no work would be recommended that would not be of some public benefit.

Mr. R. THOMPSON would suggest the advisability of issuing instructions to the Labour Bureau to distribute the unemployed among the local bodies in the country. It would save a great deal of trouble, and he was sure the local bodies would be glad to get the services of these men, and it would be better for them than to keep them hanging about the town. It was not at all likely that a Labour Bureau of Auckland City men would, of their own motion, send men away into the country districts if work could by any means be found for them about the town, and therefore the intervention of the Government was desirable.

#### PROPERTY-TAX OFFICIALS' BONUSES.

Mr. R. THOMPSON asked the Government, Under what authority has a bonus of £100 been paid to the Property-tax Commissioner, and also a bonus of £75 to the Deputy Property-tax Commissioner?

Major ATKINSON said the bonuses were paid, under the authority of the late Colonial Treasurer, for extra work during the compilation of the rating-rolls and the triennial assessment. This was the first bonus or any extra payment that either of these officers had received since their department was established.

#### PITONE RAILWAY-STATION.

Mr. FITZHERBERT asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will carry out the promise

made last session by the late Government, to have the Pitone Railway-station enlarged without delay? Last session the Minister for Public Works promised that this work should be carried out at once—not only that the station should be enlarged, but that it should be removed to a more convenient place. The honourable gentleman fully recognized the fact that it was absolutely necessary to have greatly-improved station-accommodation there. Since then, a piece of land had been purchased from the Natives for this purpose; but he could not see that the work had been commenced in any way. Although this station might have been big enough some seven years ago when there were only about a hundred and fifty people in the district, yet now, with a population of nearly two thousand, it was entirely inadequate. On wet days, women with children, and other people, were to be seen standing outside exposed to the rain, without any shelter whatever; and he thought it absolutely scandalous that such a thing should exist in any district; and that there should be such a miserable "box" for a railway-station where the traffic was so large. He hoped the honourable gentleman would see his way clear to have the work begun at once, because the necessary land had been purchased, and was lying absolutely idle at the present time.

Mr. MITCHELSON said it was true his predecessor had stated that increased accommodation was necessary and should be provided, but he had not given any pledge as to when the work would be undertaken. The necessary land was now being acquired, and as soon as the title was complete the Government would consider whether or not they could authorise the necessary expenditure—namely £1,000—which would be sufficient to give all the accommodation that was needed.

#### SOUNDS COUNTY RAILWAY-SLEEPERS.

Mr. SEYMOUR asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether there is any truth in the rumour current in the Sounds County that the Government intend to abandon or greatly curtail the purchase of railway-sleepers in that county?

Mr. MITCHELSON said, on the 31st March next a contract for 20,000 sleepers would expire. Of that number, 12,500 had already been supplied, and the rest would shortly be delivered. As a consequence, the Government would have more sleepers than would be required for some time, and would not want further supplies; and the settlers in the Sounds had been informed accordingly.

#### LAND-TRANSFER.

Mr. VALENTINE asked the Minister of Lands, If he will take steps to effect a reduction in the fees relating to the cost of transferring land? He had received several communications upon this subject from various people, particularly small landholders, and they found the tax on them very onerous indeed. If a section valued at only £5 was transferred, the Government got out of them £1 10s. 6d.

—being search-fee, 2s.; form, 1s.; title, 10s.; and registration, 10s. Then there was the solicitor's fee of a guinea, making the total cost £2 11s. 6d., or rather over 50 per cent. of the capital-value of the section transferred. He hoped the Government would see their way to make an alteration in the way of a reduction in these charges, for it seemed to him they were extremely large, especially in the case of such small transactions as he had referred to. He hoped serious attention would be given to the matter.

Major ATKINSON said no doubt the matter wanted looking into; but the requirements of the Exchequer were so very great that he could not make any absolute promise of reduction. He would, however, during the recess, look into the matter, and see whether any relief could be properly granted in cases such as the honourable gentleman had mentioned.

Mr. VALENTINE would suggest that the fee for title should be only 5s., and for registration 5s.

Major ATKINSON said he would look into every point of the question.

#### SUBSIDY FOR WIRE-NETTING FENCES.

Mr. COWAN asked the Government, To what Rabbit Boards a subsidy of pound for pound has been promised for the erection of wire-netting fences, and what amounts will be required to pay such subsidy? This question was one of immense importance, the whole country being deeply interested in it. His object was to elicit information as to the obligations the Government had incurred in respect of the subsidies to which he referred.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said subsidies to Rabbit Boards were not promised; but pound for pound was claimed by the Board upon the rates they collected, under section 25 of "The Rabbit Nuisance Act 1882 Amendment Act, 1886." £7,500 was placed upon last session's estimates under "Permanent charges under special Acts of the Legislature," and up to date £5,287 9s. 6d. had been paid as subsidy to three Rabbit Boards—to the Awatere Rabbit Board, £2,156 13s. 1d.; to the Hawke's Bay Rabbit Board, £2,031 9s. 1d.; to the North Amuri Rabbit Board, £1,099 7s. 4d.: total, £5,287 9s. 6d.

#### EGRESS FROM PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Mr. BEETHAM asked the Government, If they will consider the necessity that exists for a strict supervision over all buildings used for public meetings, such as churches, theatres, &c., so that sufficient means of egress may be assured in cases of sudden panic? He was induced to put this question from reading the accounts in European publications of the great loss of life at Paris and Exeter recently through want of sufficient means of egress from public buildings. He thought the Government should take some action to prevent the possibility of such deplorable catastrophes happening in our midst; and he believed action taken in time might prevent a deplorable loss of life that

*Mr. Valentine*

might otherwise occur. He knew this was a matter as to which Municipal Corporations had control; but he was afraid those bodies did not always do their duty in that respect, and he hoped the Government would keep a watch over them by appointing an Inspector, who should see that proper provision was made to prevent accidents in all cases.

Mr. HISLOP said this was a matter that was and ought to be under municipal management; but the Government would be very glad to issue instructions to the police to exercise supervision to some extent.

#### WIRE-NETTING.

On the motion of Mr. COWAN, it was ordered, That there be laid on the table a return showing (1) the quantity of wire-netting ordered by Government; (2) the date on which such order was made; (3) the private properties through or along which such wire-netting is proposed to be erected.

#### PUBLIC WORKS NOT LET BY PUBLIC COMPETITION.

On the motion of Mr. GOLDIE, it was ordered, That there be laid upon the table a return giving a detailed list of the works executed in the various provincial districts for the three years ending the 30th September, 1887, under the supervision and control of the Public Works Department, which have not been let by public competition; such return to include (1) the character of such work and (2) the cost of the same.

#### LAND BILL.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—Sir, in moving the second reading of this Bill, I wish to point out to the House that in the Governor's Speech, and also in the Financial Statement, the Government laid stress upon this question of land-settlement and land-administration as one of the essential points of their policy; and this Bill is now brought before the House for consideration in fulfilment of their promises on the subject. The desire on the part of the Government is to make land-settlement in the colony less complicated, and to give facilities for the acquirement of land upon such a tenure as the selectors may choose. I would, before going into the points of the Bill, say a few words with reference to the past policy of the colony in dealing with our Crown lands. Honourable members are aware that some years ago our lands were only disposed of on the terms of cash purchase. Presently the deferred-payment system was introduced, and a very valuable system it proved to be; but we further developed the perpetual-lease system, and other systems of tenure, I might almost say, too numerous to mention. We got into the experimental stage, and tried nationalisation of the land, with a result which I do not think has been entirely satisfactory. I might point out, as a result of the change in our methods of dealing with land, that in the year 1879–80 there were one hundred thousand acres more sold for cash than were disposed of under other systems; whereas in the year 1883–84 the

amount disposed of on systems other than the cash system equalled in area that sold for cash, and in the year 1886-87 we disposed of one hundred and fifty thousand acres more under other systems than we sold for cash. The actual receipts from all sources in 1881 amounted to £460,000, whereas in 1886-87 the receipts from all sources amounted to only £305,000. Honourable members are aware that a considerable proportion of the land revenue is treated as territorial revenue, and is paid into the Consolidated Fund. Taking, in 1881, the territorial revenue at £190,000—the nearest round numbers—and the cost of land-administration, surveys, &c., at a similar amount, there was an available surplus of £200,000; whereas last year, taking the territorial revenue at £190,000, and the departmental expenses, surveys, &c., at £100,000—the cost of administration and surveys having been reduced by £30,000—the available surplus was only £15,000. The land disposed of and sold in 1884 was 294,000 acres, and in 1886-87 215,000 acres. As to our present position, I may say that, outside the area set apart for the Midland Railway, and not taking into account Native lands, we have for disposal fourteen millions acres of open land and six million acres of bush land. That is all the estate we have left available for settlement. The balance consists of mountain-tops, lakes, *et cetera*. Now, I think that the mistakes of the past which we should endeavour to correct in the present are these: For the past two or three years—in fact, for more than that—the Land Act has been administered mainly in one direction. There is nothing in the Act to lead any one to suppose that it was the intention of the Legislature to give undue preference to any one of the systems therein enacted; yet such has been the case. I know that in a large district with which I am acquainted all the best of the land has been set aside wholesale for settlement under the perpetual-leasehold tenure only. Our secondary lands, which are much less in extent, have been set apart for deferred payment; and all left for cash purchase are a few scraps of bad land, which people are not likely to take up on any terms. One of the great evils of this course, I think, has been that cash purchasers have been discouraged; and cash purchasers, or men with money, are employers of labour. I have myself known, within the last three years, three or four instances of men coming to this colony with substantial sums of money, from £2,000 or £3,000 to £10,000, experienced farmers, desirous of taking up Crown lands from the Government, and, unable to get land by cash purchase, leaving this colony, taking the money away with them to Australia. I consider that the way in which the land has been administered has had a great deal to do with the “unemployed” cry, through this: that would-be employers of labour have been choked off our lands; and the attempt that the late Minister of Lands has made to place on the land men without money is, I think, an equally grave mistake. The means necessary to make successful settlers have been

passed over. The experience of most honourable members who are acquainted with settlement and with the country will, I think, make them agree with me that our most successful settlers have come from the class of men who started in the first instance, probably, as farm-labourers, who have been careful and saving, who have perhaps taken a team of horses on terms from their employers, and “worked them out” on contract ploughing; and when they have acquired the horses and ploughs, and a little money, they have made a start on their own account, and have made good settlers, and have become successful men. Men without such an apprenticeship, and without these habits of thrift, going on the land, without any money at all and without experience, can never succeed. There is another fault which, I think, has obtained too much in the past, and that is, there has been too much thought of the first price paid for the land, which has frequently been so high as to render successful settlement impossible. Now, Sir, to come to the Bill itself. The main principle of the Bill—and I think honourable members will admit that it is a liberal principle, and which makes a difference between this measure and any that have preceded it—is that the choice of tenure is left to the selector. This is a matter which heretofore has been at the will of the Minister of the day, or at the recommendation of irresponsible bodies; and I think an alteration in this respect will tend very much to popularise the system. I know that many settlers who have of late years taken up land have taken it up under systems of which they did not approve, because they could not take it up as they wished. The next important point in the Bill is the power to classify our lands, and to give extended areas, at lower prices, of our second-class land. In the Provincial District of Wellington, for instance, the lowest upset price of land is £1 an acre, whereas we have a very large area in it that cannot possibly be taken up at that price. I might cite also the Canterbury Provincial District, where the price of land stands at £2; and I think I am safe in saying that nearly all the land in that provincial district worth £2 has already been disposed of. The third important point is the abolition of the Waste Lands Boards, and the affording relief to existing settlers. If honourable members will refer to the Bill they will see that the sections dealing with the choice of tenure are sections 2 to 8, and they will also see that in giving this choice of tenure there is no special preference given to any one system. From the accountant's point of view—that is, from simply the pounds-shillings-and-pence point of view—the perpetual-leasing system is the best and easiest system under which a man can take up land; but against that we have the sentiment in favour of freehold, and I think the smaller advantage in the way of interest which holds in favour of perpetual-leasing will be completely overridden by the almost universal desire to own a freehold. The provisions giving power to classify are to be found in section 9; and section 10 provides for enlarging hold-

ings of second-class land. With regard to cash purchase, I would call the attention of the House to the fact that a restriction is placed in the Bill to the limit to be obtained—640 acres of ordinary land and 2,000 acres of second-class land in one survey district. Each survey district in the colony approximates one hundred thousand acres; so that it will be impossible, under this condition, to acquire any extensive estate such as would warrant the use of the term "land-monopoly." I now come to the provision for the abolition of the Waste Lands Boards, which will be found in the 27th section of the Bill. The cost of the Waste Lands Boards is only one of the causes for proposing to abolish them, and not, perhaps, the most important. I find that the cost of the Land Boards last year was £905 for fees and £1,305 for travelling allowances, making a total cost to the colony of £2,210. The duty of the Boards has, of late, dwindled down to this: at each sitting to be informed by the Commissioner of the business transacted since the previous sitting, to fix the rents and upset prices for the land, to recommend the tenure under which the land shall be held, and to hear complaints and forward recommendations on the same to the Minister. Except with regard to the last point, this Bill takes the business away from the Boards. It settles the tenure and provides for fixing the price; and nobody can say that it would benefit the country that the Boards should be informed of the routine business transacted in the office. The only important point that the Boards would have to perform would be to hear complaints and forward their decisions on them to the Minister. Under this Bill there will be the same public hearing and the same power of appeal; but the hearing will be before the Commissioner instead of being before the Board. The difference is very much akin to having a case heard by an experienced Resident Magistrate rather than by Justices of the Peace. Whenever, in the past, any serious matter came before the Board it has always been referred to the Minister, and hindrances and delays have existed in many cases owing to the way in which the business was conducted. If a man applied to have a deferred-payment section opened for selection on perpetual lease, his application had to wait till the next sitting of the Board, who considered it, and if it was recommended it was then sent up to the Land Department here, where it was minuted and sent on to the Minister, who likely enough was out of Wellington, and it had to wait. When his signature was obtained the papers had next to go on to the Governor, whose signature was required, and perhaps he too was out of Wellington. So that the time occupied in all these proceedings was probably so long that before the formalities were complete the man who had applied for the land had become disgusted and had gone away. This Bill proposes to do all this in a much more direct way, and throws the whole responsibility on the Minister for the time being. If honourable members will look at subsection (a) of the section bearing on this

*Mr. G. F. Richardson*

matter they will see that the Commissioner, with the approval and confirmation of the Minister, is to perform all the powers, duties, and functions which were vested in the Board previous to its dissolution with regard to all matters relating to forfeitures or affecting the status of holders, and so on, which hitherto have been subject to the Minister. Other minor matters which the Board had power to determine in the past the Commissioner will now have power to hear and decide. Among the sections dealing with giving relief to existing settlers is, notably, section 15. The side-note gives the idea: "Freehold of deferred-payment or perpetual-lease lands may be acquired as soon as prescribed improvements have been effected." That, Sir, I have reason to believe, will afford considerable relief; and, to show what the settlers themselves think of it, I will read an extract from one of many letters I have received on this matter:—

"I beg most sincerely to thank you for the information that your Act will allow us to get our freeholds. This will be an inestimable boon to me and many round me who are situated as I am. . . . I have now some hope of escaping that total failure which must have happened except for this relief." . . .

This letter is not any stronger in language than, and it is of much the same tenor as, many I have received since I have held the position of Minister of Lands; and I may also say that, though a number of honourable members seem to think that one of the greatest difficulties with regard to settlers is their paying excessive rents, and though there are such cases, I am rather disposed to think that there are a far larger number of cases to be relieved by the method I am now speaking of than by the reduction of rents, for, as yet, I have not received a line, either directly or indirectly, from agricultural Crown tenants requesting reduction of rents. I have received several communications with regard to the reduction of rents of agricultural holdings, but they are all from tenants of endowment-reserve lands—lands not under the control of the Government. That question of the reduction of rents affects, as I have stated, more largely endowment lands than Crown lands; and it is being dealt with by the Government in another Bill, of which I gave notice this afternoon. The measures of relief in this Bill are confined to the one I have mentioned, and section 21, which permits holders of pastoral deferred-payment licenses to exchange for leases of small grazing-runs. If honourable members are aware of the conditions of these two systems of holdings, they will see what an immense advantage this offers to holders of pastoral deferred-payment lands. The payments made in the past count as rent for the grazing-run, which is calculated at the low rate of 2½ per cent. on the capital value; so that in almost every case not only is rent paid to date, but the balance of the payments under the deferred-payment system stand to credit as against future rent coming due. There are other matters of some importance in the various

parts of the Bill, but not of such importance as those I have referred to. The debatable points are the definition of "simultaneous application" in section 7, and the dealing with simultaneous applications under section 14. On these, honourable members will hold a diversity of opinion, I have no doubt. Section 14 provides that, in the event of simultaneous application for lands under different tenures, the land shall be put up by auction between the applicants. Putting it up to auction will, in my opinion, tend against the advantage of the cash purchasers; but if, in the opinion of honourable members, ballot would be preferable to auction, I should be willing to see this provision amended in that direction. Clause 16 is also a very important section of the Bill, as it deals with the purchase of freehold land in mining districts; and, subject to the restrictions contained in the section, I have no fear that difficulty will result. Honourable members will also note, coming to clause 17, that provision is made for the sale of unsurveyed land. This is a very important matter, especially affecting the bush-lands of the colony. The custom which has hitherto obtained has been the carrying-out of detailed sectional surveys in the bush at considerable expense, sometimes at a cost as high as 4s. 6d. per acre. Money has been spent in "roading," and, after due publicity, these lands, when offered, are occasionally only partially taken up; so that a very large cash outlay has taken place with no adequate results. It appears to me that, by having a network of roads through our bush, by carefully surveying and grading the best lines for our main and district roads, and, on this mathematical network, allowing free selection, not only would the country be thrown open for selection at a much more rapid rate, but the expense of block-and-section surveys where not immediately required for settlement would be avoided. The cost to the selector will be *nil*, for it is provided that an applicant for an unsurveyed section will have, on his completing his purchase, the cost of the survey refunded to him as part of the purchase-money. The provisions in section 17 are to cover, principally, technical difficulties existing in the present Act, and the last paragraph of the clause further provides for the payment to existing special settlements of thirds of moneys received from deferred-payment lands. The regulations issued by the late Minister of Lands provided that a third should be so returned; but these regulations, in this respect, were *ultra vires*. A payment of thirds was made to one of these associations, and then further payments were stopped by the Audit Department; so this paragraph is inserted to legalise the payment of thirds in the case of special settlements taken up under the regulations to which I have referred. Section 22 provides for the extension of the area of small grazing-runs from five thousand acres, as at present, to twenty thousand acres. A number of small runs are now thrown upon the hands of the Government by its late tenants, it hav-

ing been found impossible to work them in the limited areas in which they were leased. For the suggestion to insert this clause I have to thank the late Minister of Lands. I hope that, when next the question of the land-laws is touched, the principle which is applied to the terms on which the small grazing-runs are dealt with will be applied to all pastoral lands. Under the small grazing-runs system the tenant has a secure tenure for twenty-one years, whereas under the ordinary pastoral leases the Crown may resume possession on giving twelve months' notice. Further technical corrections are to be found in the 23rd and 24th sections. Section 25 is in the nature of retrospective legislation, put in to cover illegal expenditure on the part of the Clutha River Board. But this expenditure on the part of the Board was made in good faith and under the belief that they were acting within their powers at the time. The Kermadec Islands are dealt with in the 26th clause. In that clause provision is made for giving a grant to Mr. Bell of 100 acres, and a pastoral lease over a specific area. There is an important provision that I have not yet alluded to, and which, but for my pointing it out, might, until the Bill is carefully examined, escape attention. It is in the repeals. Sections 237 and 240 of the Act provide that endowment reserves may be dealt with by the Government and disposed of by it. The provisoes to these sections are that these reserves can only be so dealt with on the recommendation of the parties in whom they are vested. The repeal of these provisoes gives to the Government the power, without the recommendation and without the consent of the parties interested, to take the control and disposal of those lands for settlement; and I may say that I think this very necessary. In the past endowments have been held and dealt with in a way injurious to settlement, and my idea is that this power being given to the Government—should it be so given—will prevent the necessity of the Government interfering. I think it will be a somewhat similar case to what we are all well acquainted with—that of a horse which will scarcely move without a whip, but if you have one in your hand it goes well without any application of the whip. I think the Government having the power to interfere—if endowment reserves are required for the settlement of the country—will prevent any necessity for such interference on the part of the Government. I have now run over the principal points of the Bill; and, as it is a matter on which a good deal of discussion is sure to take place, and there will be many points for me to answer, I shall not make any further remarks at the present time, but will simply move the second reading.

Dr. HODGKINSON.—Sir, speaking of this Bill generally, I think it may be said of it that it is a very good Bill; but there is one exception that I must take to it, and I think a good many other honourable members will take the same exception to clause 27. It is not my intention to speak much about the Bill until it goes into Committee. I think, except with

regard to that clause 27, all other objections might be made in Committee. I would ask the honourable gentleman to withdraw the clause entirely, for I cannot see what good object is secured by it. All this Bill proposes to do for the benefit of the colony we could do quite as well without that clause. I would urge that the question of Land Boards should be deferred until the Government, next session, have brought up their scheme to reform local government and of decentralisation. I think that such a scheme as that will be expected, and I hope the abolition of the Land Boards will be deferred until that scheme comes before us. If we reform local government in the right direction, these Land Boards, Charitable Aid Boards, Education Boards, &c., can be dealt with then. I feel quite sure that the settlers would not be willing to adopt this centralistic system, which puts so much power in the hands of a Government official. It is quite contrary to the genius of British legislation. I consider such a system vicious. When the Bill is in Committee I may have something to say on other portions of it, but there is only one clause to which I will refer just now. That is clause 10, which provides that no one shall be allowed to purchase for cash in any survey district more than 640 acres of land. I have my doubts whether this is a wise provision. If we are to attract settlers of considerable capital, as the honourable the mover of the Bill has mentioned, it seems to me that a man with £10,000 would require more than a square mile of land, and it would be injurious to prevent him from settling amongst us by passing such a restriction. At the same time I should like to see small settlers on the land; but we should make way for all classes. I question very much whether you are not fixing the amount too low. I will express my sentiments freely when the Bill goes into Committee.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Sir, I am sorry that I shall have to criticize this maiden effort of the Minister of Lands rather adversely; and I am very much astonished that the honourable member at the head of the Government should allow his colleague to introduce this Bill to the House, because it upsets the whole of the old legislation which his late colleague, Mr. Rolleston, so ably advocated in this House, and so earnestly pushed forward through the House.—(No.)—I say it does. The present Bill completely upsets and alters the whole of our land system; and I caution every member of the House to carefully look into this Bill and compare it clause by clause with the Act that is to be done away with. Members will then find the true effects of this Bill. If it is the wish of the honourable gentleman to get more revenue from the waste lands of the Crown, I say that, in the present state of the country, he cannot possibly do it except at a sacrifice of the future of this country. He told us this evening, when addressing the House on this Bill, that he had known of people coming here with money and leaving the colony because they could not get land to purchase. The argu-

ment is a great fallacy; because any person coming to this country at this moment can purchase land second-hand privately from individuals at a less cost than the original cost-price of such land from the Crown; and, besides, he will have fencing and other improvements given in. At this moment there are plenty of large estates in the market for sale, with all improvements, at less money than they originally cost. If people wished to come here and settle down, they have every opportunity of doing so. It is a well-known fact that at the present moment, owing to the low price of every sort of produce coming from the land, there is no real *bonâ fide* demand for land to any extent for actual settlement or occupation; and if the Minister of Lands expects to get a large increase of revenue by this Bill he can only do it by offering land at such a price as will induce speculators to purchase for the future benefit of themselves. And I ask this House if it is a proper thing to do to sacrifice at the present time our landed estate for an immediate benefit, with a great sacrifice in the future. I think it would be wrong to do it. If the Minister of Lands expects to find people with cash to purchase land, no doubt he will find them; but, as I said before, it can only be done by offering land at such a low price as will show them some chance of being able to do well for themselves when things come to a better state than they are now in. We have had, during the last year, 49,475 acres selected on perpetual lease in the colony, and this land has been selected by 249 selectors. Supposing the 249 selectors took up the land for cash, at an upset price of £1 per acre, it would mean that the honourable gentleman would get, in round numbers, £50,000. I want him to point out to me and to this House how it is possible for these settlers to be in a better position than they are in at the present time if £49,000 or £50,000 was taken out of their pockets in cash, even if they had it? But they had not got it, and they could not possibly pay for the land in cash. Consequently, the return would not be there. So far as I can see in the Minister of Lands' arguments, it all goes to this: The whole sum and substance of his argument was that we should have no perpetual leases, no deferred payment; that all land should be sold for cash.—(No.)—Well, it is true it is stated that a man can select land as it suits him; but I say that the arguments of the honourable gentleman meant that this colony should have more money out of the land than we have got, that the land should have yielded more to the State, that the State should have sold more land for cash, and that the money should go into the Treasury out of the pockets of the settlers. That is the whole sum and substance of his argument and the reasons he gave for this alteration in the law, so far as I can see. So far as offering more land for cash throughout the colony is concerned, it is quite possible for the honourable gentleman to do that under the existing Act. He complained, so far as I could understand, of the

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late Administration having endeavoured to have more land taken up for settlement by perpetual and agricultural leases and deferred payments than they had offered for cash. Now, Sir, he knows perfectly well, I have no doubt, after carefully reading the present Act, as he must have done, that it was quite possible for him, as Minister of Lands, to have larger areas of land offered for cash, if that was his object. So that object could be gained without this amendment of the Act at all. The honourable gentleman said this Bill would give relief to settlers on the land; but I fail entirely to see that the clause empowering people to purchase their holdings will give relief. If people are not able to pay their 5 per cent. rent to the Government, how would it be easier for them to pay a higher rate as interest on money borrowed to pay for the freehold of their land? In place of being in arrears to the Crown, as now, they would very soon be in still greater arrears to the money-lender. I cannot possibly see where the relief comes in, and I have no doubt whatever that the honourable gentleman will see that his measure, in that respect, is anything but a measure of relief—rather it will be just the reverse. Then, the Minister said the Bill fixes the price to be paid for any land; but, as far as I can read it, it does nothing of the sort. It simply gives power to the Minister of the day to fix the price; the Bill does not fix it at all. So elastic is the Bill in that direction that the price can be either raised or lowered at the discretion of the Minister. I think that is not a proper position to put any Minister in, and I must object to it. The honourable gentleman said the best settlers we have in the country have sprung from the working-class—men who have worked on the land themselves, and have been able to gather sufficient money themselves to take up land and become settlers. I admit that at once; but I ask the honourable gentleman, and I ask all who are prepared to support the Bill, if it is not a fact that the deferred-payment system and the perpetual-lease system have enabled hundreds of such men to go on the land who but for those systems could not possibly have done so,—who could not have taken up land if they had been compelled to pay the full price for the land before they could get possession of it. I say it would be absurd to suppose that a very large number of those settlers would have been able to go on the land but for the liberal land-law now in force. Again, the honourable gentleman says the small grazing-run system should be extended to the whole of the pastoral lands of the country. Now, I admit that the small grazing-run system is a good one, and I believe it might be extended still further in the direction the honourable gentleman points out; but to say that the whole of the pastoral lands of the country should be leased in that way is absurd, because the moment you have disposed of all your lands in that way you will have none whatever left for any other class of settlement: and a large area of land which now, owing to its distance from a market, is only looked upon as pastoral

land, is really fit for agricultural purposes. It would be taking land fit for agricultural purposes for small grazing-runs. On the Otago Land Board, of which I am a member, the system pursued is this: Where there is very good land fit for agricultural settlement the Board does not lease it for small grazing-runs, but retains it for the purpose of disposing of it for agricultural settlement; and if it is not wanted immediately for settlement it is relet as an ordinary run until it is required. I will go over the different sections of the Bill as the Minister did in introducing it, and deal briefly with each. Section 2 gives the Minister power to declare the whole of the Crown lands open for selection before survey, with two classes of exceptions, those being lands which have been previously gazetted as suitable for special settlements, and small grazing-runs. With these two exceptions, all the lands in the hands of the Crown can be declared at any time to be lands open for sale as unsurveyed lands, and he is enabled to classify it as first- and second-class land. I do not think it is proper that we should put any Minister in the position of being able to deal with the whole estate of the country in that way. Clause 3 deals with the price of land, and enables the Minister to reduce the price of second-class land to 10s. per acre. Clause 5 enables any one wanting to go on land to take up land under any system he likes, either on deferred payment, or perpetual lease, or for cash. This, as far as I can see, would simply mean giving the preference as to any land to those who can find the cash to buy it. Clause 7, in my opinion, gives a very mischievous power: it provides for priority of application for unsurveyed land. I wish to draw the attention of the honourable gentleman to this, as I hope he will see the necessity of amending that clause. Priority of application for unsurveyed land would simply mean this: that, when a block of land was declared to be open for application on a certain day, when the Land Offices opened on that day there might be a dozen people waiting to give in applications for a particular part of the block, and the one who was successful in first catching the eye or the ear or the hand of the clerk would be the one who would get the land. Now, I think that that should be altered, and that the plan should be the same as with surveyed land, and all applications lodged on the same day should be in the same position. Clause 8 provides that all lands now open for settlement on deferred payment or for perpetual lease shall be open for sale for cash. That, I think, is a mistake, because in many cases persons who have taken land on deferred payment or perpetual lease in certain blocks will find the rest of the blocks taken up for for cash, and that will be unjust to the first settlers, who, when they took up their sections, did so on the understanding that the remaining sections would be held by the Crown until they were taken up on the same system that they took up theirs. Clause 9 is a very mischievous one. It gives the Minister power, if he chooses, to open any run in the country as second-class

land, and to sell it immediately after for cash, at 10s. an acre;—there is nothing in this section to prevent the honourable gentleman doing so. I think that this clause, like some others I have referred to, gives a great power, which certainly should not be intrusted to any one individual. Then, section 10 defines how much land any one individual may purchase in any survey district; but, so far as I can see, there is no definition of what a survey district means, though perhaps the honourable gentleman may tell me what it means; but I fear that different interpretations will be put upon that phrase. I suppose that this means that no person can purchase more than 2,640 acres for cash—640 acres of agricultural land and 2,000 acres of second-class land; but there is nothing in this Act to prevent any person from purchasing as much as he likes for cash, and it re-establishes the power to create large estates. Then, it is made compulsory upon a person purchasing land under this section for cash to make a declaration before the Commissioner in terms to be prepared by the Commissioner; but why is the declaration not put into the Act, as it is in the case of the declaration required to be made by those who take up land under the perpetual-lease, small-run, and deferred-payment systems? I see no reason why the declaration should not be put in the Act. Then, clause 11 says, "In the event of any of the statements in such declaration being false, the purchaser shall forfeit all right to the land;" and so forth. But who is to prove that statements in the declaration are false? There is no provision in this Bill for inquiry in any shape or form. Then, there is another flaw in the clause, because, if the purchaser once gets his Crown grant, he can sell the land, and the second-hand buyer is in no way responsible. There is nothing in the Bill to prevent people from buying as large tracts of land as they like, building up what have been called in this House "great estates." No doubt the honourable gentleman means to provide that no person may be able to purchase more than 2,640 acres of land; but he must make better provision than is to be found here if he wishes to carry that out. He must define what a survey district means, and he must provide means for inquiry into the truth of declarations made. So far, I think the Bill fails to carry out what the honourable gentleman wishes to do, if that is his object. Then I come to section 13; and that sweeps away every safeguard that has been provided in this House for years past in the way of getting settlers upon the land. The repeal of subsections (5) and (8) of section 114 of the Land Act, and also of subsections (1) to (3) of section 149, sweeps away all the safeguards which have been provided for securing *bona fide* settlement. Then, section 14 reintroduces the auction system into our land-laws. As honourable members are no doubt aware, this auction system has been discussed in this House for years past, and, after a great deal of consideration, the House condemned both the auction system and the ballot system, and the present tender sys-

tem was arrived at as a fair compromise. I think we might let matters rest at that; at any rate, I hope the House will not revert to the auction system again. I have no hesitation in saying that the auction system has been one of the greatest evils that we have had to contend with in connection with our land-laws; and, as a member of a Land Board, and having pretty considerable experience, I express my conviction that, in nine cases out of ten, those people who got their land without competition at auction have been able to carry out their engagements, whereas those who purchased by auction have very seldom been able to carry out their engagements. So that I hope that, whatever may be the consequence, honourable members will throw out this clause so far as it restores the auction system. Section 15 the honourable gentleman has described as one which will enable small settlers to acquire their freeholds; but I say it certainly means this: that it will enable all those who are not complying and have not complied with the conditions as to residence to get their freehold, so long as they can comply with the conditions as to improvements. The honourable member for the Wairarapa says, "Hear, hear." That clause may suit him and several other of his kidney in this House; but I may tell the honourable gentleman that I know several instances where a number of "dummies" have been planted, and where it is desired that this sort of thing may be allowed so that "dummies" may be bought out. I do not know whether the honourable gentleman has any knowledge of this sort of thing, but I have no hesitation in saying that this will enable that sort of thing to be done; and I have no doubt that some people very much desire it. Then, section 16 does the same as regards the goldfields. I do not pretend to know much about the goldfields, and I look to the goldfields members for guidance on this matter; but I do know this: that there is a good deal of difficulty in resuming the possession of land for mining purposes when it becomes freehold; and I think it is desirable to be very careful how we pass a clause of this kind. Then, section 17 will allow the purchaser of unsurveyed land to have it so surveyed as to suit his own requirements and tastes. I think that also is a very mischievous clause, for it may enable a man to have his land surveyed in a manner which, though according to his own taste, may not be at all suited to fit in with the general surveys of the country; and I think there should be some restrictions on the surveying, so that the interests of the country may be conserved. Then, section 18 deals with public reserves, and will enable them also to be made freehold. It seems to me that the whole tendency of the Bill is to wipe out of existence all that has been done by this House during the past few years. The idea seems to be that all the land shall be held in freehold, and none in leasehold. The whole tendency of the Bill seems to go in that direction. Section 19 gives the Minister power to say where money is to be

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spent—the money which belongs to the local bodies. Under the Land Act now, one-third of the money accruing from the deferred-payment sales and from the leasehold rents goes to the local bodies; and up to the present time the Land Boards in the various districts have had the power of saying where the money is to be spent. I have known of cases of conflict between the selectors and the local bodies as to where the money derived from this source should be spent, and when these have occurred there has been the Land Board to inquire into the matter and decide. Now it seems that the whole of this power is to be vested in the Minister of the day, and the people concerned are not to have a voice in the matter. Section 21 is one which, I am glad to say, I can agree with, but the honourable gentleman need not take any credit for it. It is a clause which has passed this House on several occasions, but it has been rejected by the other Chamber. Then I come to section 22. I also agree with this section, but I think it requires carefully guarding. I think that a considerable portion of the country might be leased in blocks of twenty thousand acres for grazing purposes. Seeing the great evil that we have to contend with in the shape of the rabbits, I have no hesitation in saying that we must be prepared to give a better tenure to our leaseholders if we expect them to cope with the rabbit-pest. I therefore think that this portion of the Act might be applied in certain places; and I should not object to give a permanent tenure in respect of land that would not be required for settlement purposes. So far, I think the section is not out of place. I now come to section 23. That simply means that we are to take away from School Commissioners and Trustees of Education Reserves the power of dealing with their own land. I do not know how these bodies will like that, but I know that, in the past, they have not liked Ministers of the Crown interfering with them in their functions. They, as local people residing in the district, know the land, and its qualifications, and suitability for settlement, and I think they are the best judges as to the most suitable use to put the land to. I therefore think that that clause ought not to be passed. I now come to clause 27, which transfers a very large number of powers now exercised by the various Land Boards to the Commissioner. I do not know whether I understand the Minister aright when he introduced the Bill, that the Commissioner should still hold the meetings of the Land Board.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—No; he would sit himself.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Then I should like to know how he is to decide all the cases that come before him. The honourable gentleman's Bill fails in that matter, for if he turns to sections 43 to 49 of the Act he will find that there is no provision in his Bill for transferring to the Commissioner the work done by the Boards under those sections.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—Will the honour-

able gentleman read the first line of subsection (b)?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—That provides that the functions of the Board are to be performed by the Commissioner; but why does he say, under the previous subsection, that the Commissioner is to have the power of the Board under section 49 and a number of other sections of the Act, and not include sections 43 to 49? Why not put it in a general way, that the Commissioner shall still sit in open Court and conduct all the business now conducted by the Waste Lands Boards? I think that portion of the Bill will require considerable amendment before it is acceptable to the people. I ask honourable members to look for themselves at the various sections of this Bill in which it is proposed to hand over the whole of the control to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, which, of course, will mean the Minister, and to see the immense power they are asked to place in the hands of the Minister of Lands for the time being and his Commissioners, who can do nothing without his consent. They will find that the whole control of the pastoral leases of the country is to pass into the hands of the Minister. Whether any portions of those runs shall be reserved for sale or settlement is left at his disposal; whether he will let them again will be at his disposal; the upset price will be at his disposal; all classification of land of every description will be at his disposal; and the manner in which the land is to be disposed of is to be at his disposal. All these things are to be handed over to the Minister of the day and his Commissioners. Of course, the Commissioners are merely a name, for they can do nothing without the sanction and approval of the Minister. I am glad to hear that the Minister of Lands is still determined that business of every description that comes before the Commissioner is to be dealt with in open court, and that the public and the Press will be allowed to be present. Do I rightly understand that that is what the honourable gentleman means?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—Certainly.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Then he will have to amend his Bill to enable that to be done. Then, I come to the proviso dealing with sections 237 to 240 of the Act, to which the Minister referred. His proviso simply means this: that it takes the power from the School Commissioners and trustees of education and other reserves to deal with their own land. There is another portion of the Act for which I do not know that the honourable gentleman has made provision. There is a portion of the Act called the Land Boards Inquiry Act. That was first passed by this House as a special Act, and was afterwards embodied in the Act of 1885. Section 71 of the Act of 1885 provides,—

“Whenever a Land Board has reason to believe that any lessee or licensee whose lease or license was granted at any time subsequent to the last day of the month of June, in the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty-three, is not fulfilling the conditions of his lease or

license in a *bonâ fide* manner according to their true intent and purport, the Board may hold an inquiry into the case, and may declare all the rights of the lessee or licensee under his lease or license to be forfeited, and shall cancel such lease or license in every case where, upon inquiry, and after hearing witnesses, or without such hearing, the Board shall be satisfied that the lessee or licensee is evading the requirements of this Act in their true intent and spirit."

There is a provision to the same effect in section 78. But his amending Bill fails to provide that the Commissioner can do this work. I wish to know whether the Minister of Lands means that the Commissioner shall do this also. As the honourable gentleman does not answer, I presume that he has not made up his mind. I want to know whether these clauses of the Land Act are to remain a dead-letter, or are they to be enforced in future? and, if so, by whom—by what Court or by what person or persons is this to be done? It must be remembered that these inquiries were held by the Land Boards in the various districts, and, so far as I can see, there is no provision in the Bill for the same system being carried on. If it simply means that, if there are any evasions of the Act there will be no remedy. Now, Sir, the Minister of Lands told us, in introducing his Bill, that the work of the Land Boards throughout the colony had dwindled down till they had nothing to do. That may be the case in some parts of the colony, but I can assure the honourable gentleman that in that part of the colony from which I come such is not the case. The Otago Waste Lands Board during the year ending on the 31st March last had 1,538 cases brought before it within the twelvemonth, or at the rate of thirty odd cases a day for each day on which the Board sat; and, although those cases, in many instances grievances of settlers or selectors, may seem very light in the mind of the Minister of Lands, I can assure him that many cases came before the Board which were of vital importance to the persons interested, and that they were very much interested as to how their cases were decided. I have no hesitation in saying that if the Minister of Lands abolishes the Land Boards he will bring upon himself something of which he is not aware. I certainly should not like to be in his shoes if I had the administration of the whole lands of the colony without the assistance of the Land Boards. He will find that he will bring about his head a hornets' nest that he has no idea of. I know perfectly well that in many cases the actions of the Land Boards have perhaps not been to the best advantage, and in some cases they have become unpopular; but that is simply because they are nominated by Ministers. I quite agree that the Land Boards should not be nominated by Ministers, and I would suggest to the honourable gentleman that he should bring in a Bill to make them elective. He might reduce the number of members of a Board and have three instead of six, and let them be elected by the people. I see no diffi-

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culty in the way of their being elected on the same day as members of this House are elected. The elector might go to the polling-booth and vote for both representative in this House and member of the Land Board on the same day, merely putting the ballot-papers into different boxes. I do not hesitate to say that greater interest would be taken in the election of members of the Land Boards by people in most parts of the colony than in the election of members of this House, for the interest of the people is so much centred in the proper administration of the land that they would be very careful to make the best selection. If the Bill goes into Committee I shall, to the best of my ability, endeavour to have a clause inserted for the purpose of making the Land Boards elective under some system, and I hope I shall be assisted by every true Liberal in the House in doing so. I quite agree with the honourable member for Wallace that if we had a proper system of local self-government we might do away with a very large proportion of the present expenditure by placing in the hands of the local Governments the control of the various matters which we have now to pay nominated Boards for managing. The work could be much better performed if we had a better system of local government than we have at present; but, pending anything in that direction, I think the Waste Lands Boards should be elected, until at some future time we can do away with them in favour of a better system of local administration. Now, Sir, the Minister of Lands, in introducing the Bill, gave us some figures with regard to the returns from land. He told us that the expenditure placed against the Land Fund was more than the proceeds.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—No. If the honourable gentleman will allow me to explain, I will tell him I pointed out that, last year, after deducting the territorial revenue and the expenses of the administration of the Land and Survey Department, we had a surplus of only £15,000.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I am glad to have got that explanation, and I am sorry he did not tell the head of the Government that before he prepared the Financial Statement, because we have it in the Financial Statement that it is to the bad something like £33,879.

Mr. FERGUS.—So it is.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Very well; I am going to give an idea how that is brought about. In the first place, we have £305,208 8s. 10d. revenue from all sources in the colony, and from this money arising from the Land Fund we take £201,265 2s. 10d. and place it to territorial or consolidated revenue, and then we take £103,943 6s. and place it to the Land Fund. The whole of the rents received from lands of every description throughout the colony is not accounted land revenue at all, notwithstanding the fact that the Land Department has to do the whole of the work from which that revenue is received. We have, during last year, leased 475 acres to fourteen

selectors under the agricultural-lease system on the goldfields. Every one of those sections required to be surveyed and placed upon the market, and it is a well-known fact, and the honourable gentleman knows it himself as well as I do, that it takes just as much to survey a section of land for the purpose of leasing as to survey it for sale; but that cost of survey is charged against the Land Fund, although the rents from the land go to territorial revenue, or are added to the consolidated revenue of the colony. Then, we have 49,475 acres leased to 249 selectors. Then, we have small grazing-runs, 105,857 acres to sixty-eight selectors, and so on. I might go through the whole of the Crown Lands Report and show where an enormous amount of work has been done by the Land Department and by the Survey Department for which they get no credit at all in the shape of revenue. The rents from all sources are placed to the consolidated revenue, and the Land Fund Account only gets credit for what is actually sold for cash. So that it is no wonder that the Land Fund should appear small. I do not think it necessary for me to say much more on this subject, but I would just say this: that I will not take upon myself the responsibility of moving that this Bill be read a second time this day six months, because I know that the Bill has to go before the Waste Lands Committee, but I tell the honourable gentleman that, unless it is amended very materially, in such a manner that he would hardly know it himself, I shall consider it my duty, in the interests of the colony, and in the interests of the people who sent me here, to oppose it. So far as the Land Board question is concerned, the question was raised during my election. My opponent distinctly declared that, if elected, he would support the abolition of the Waste Lands Boards, and I distinctly stated that I should do nothing of the sort, and gave my reasons for it; and I was the chosen of the people, so that I can speak as one who has been tested on that question. If this Bill become law as it is put before us, I predict for it a complete failure so far as settlement is concerned. The honourable gentleman will not get the revenue from it which he expects, unless he is prepared, as I said, to sacrifice the Crown lands for an immediate revenue; and, if he does that, I think he will be acting a wrong part, and not in the best interests of the colony. What have we heard on the floor of this House from time to time? We have had it said that it did not matter so much to the colony how much revenue we got out of the land, if we only got settlement; and I say this: that the Bill will not provide for settlement, but that it will provide for the creating of large estates to a greater extent than any measure I have ever known introduced into this House. The honourable member shakes his head; but I say Yes,—that is what it will create; and I predict for the honourable gentleman that, if he passes this measure into law, he will be one of the most unpopular Ministers of Land that have ever sat in this House.

MR. VALENTINE.—I do not propose to keep

the House long with my remarks on this Bill, because I am so satisfied with it a whole. I think that the measure displays as great amount of intelligence on the part of the honourable gentleman who has framed it and has brought it down to this House. It has been, in our part of the country, a crying question for some time as to what we are to do to promote settlement, and there is a feeling that, unless something is done to discontinue the wild freaks that were being played by the late Government in the matter of land-settlement, some fearful disaster will befall the country. And, Sir, I might say that I know of no gentleman better qualified to take this matter in hand than the present Minister of Lands, who has had a large experience in this subject, and has gained considerable knowledge by travelling through the country and listening to the wants of the settlers in the various parts down south, at any rate. The policy adopted by the late Government for the settlement of the land, instead of promoting settlement, has driven away those who had the intention of becoming *bonâ fide* settlers upon the soil, and I have not the slightest doubt that the desire of the present Government is to provide for genuine and *bonâ fide* settlement upon a sound basis. I believe that the Act has within it provisions for the genuine settlement of the land, and not for settlement based upon quack nostrums such as were placed before the country by the late Government. The Minister of Lands stated that there were fourteen million acres of open lands and six millions of bush lands for disposal; but I apprehend we have more land than that at the present time open for settlement, but composed mostly of hill-tops. I presume the Minister of Lands does not include that in the twenty millions of land at his disposal. However, if he can get anything like £1 per acre for rural land and 10s. an acre for second-rate land, I should think he had made a very good sale indeed, because the best lands of the colony have been already disposed of. Now, with regard to the condition of the deferred-payment settlers, I, at one time, thought that this Bill would bring down measures of relief for them and also for the leaseholders. But, although there are no provisions in this Bill for the relief of those settlers, the Minister has assured me that it is his intention to bring down a Bill later on dealing with this matter. For that reason I will not say much upon the point here, because I am satisfied that, if he says he is going to bring down a measure, we shall get it very soon; and I hope it will be in such a state that we shall be able to accept it without demur. With regard to the Land Boards, I dare say that the abolition of the Boards will be to some extent unpopular; but I think it is very necessary. I am of opinion, from the little knowledge I have of these Boards, that, instead of helping the settlement of the country, they have been the enemies of settlement, and have put such prices on the land as have prevented people who were anxious to take it up from doing

so, and that they have thus been the means of delaying settlement, at any rate, if of nothing worse. Then, as to the School Reserves Commissioners, my only regret is that the Minister did not with the same stroke of the pen abolish the School Commissioners.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They will go next.

Mr. VALENTINE.—I hope so, because if there is one set of tenants in a worse condition than another I believe they are the tenants on the education reserves. I am thoroughly convinced that they are now in a worse condition than the deferred-payment settlers. I am sorry the School Reserve Commissioners have not been abolished, and I hope he will soon take an opportunity of disposing of them, as he has now done with the Land Boards. Sir, the Minister of Lands said that the only proper way of settling on the land was to do it after having served an apprenticeship to the farming industry. I am quite at one with him in this, and I regret to say there have been too many instances in this country of tradesmen—such as tailors, shoemakers, and so forth—having taken up land, expecting to make successful farmers, without having served any apprenticeship to the industry in question. This, no doubt, has to do, to a considerable extent, with the failure, in many instances, of the farmers of this country. Then, we come to the question as to how lands are to be disposed of. The Bill, I am sorry to see, contains, in clause 14, a provision to continue the old mode of disposing of land: that is to say, it is to be put up for competition when it is applied for by more than one person. This I regret very much, and I gave notice this afternoon that when the Bill gets into Committee I shall move, in substitution of that clause, one to provide for the land being disposed of by lot or ballot. Whilst recently going round during the election campaign invariably one of the questions asked of me was, Are you in favour of the continuation of the present system of disposing of the land? My invariable answer was that I was not; that I believed in disposal of the land by ballot. I am sure that any one who had been, as I have been, in the habit of going round the country and intermixing with these farmers and labourers would have seen the misery they have been brought to through the unhealthy competition they indulged in at the time these farms or sections were put up for sale. No doubt a reasonable upset price was put upon the land; but, in their eagerness to become the possessors of a certain farm, they would run it up from £1 to £5 and £6 an acre; and perhaps at that time they thought there were good times in store for them, and that they would be able to make, at all events, a moderate living out of their investment. But what has been the result? From the time that they purchased their farms to the present time—I am speaking now of a few years back—there has been a continuous decrease in the value of produce. In every sense of the word, the pressure of adverse circumstances has been around them ever since. These settlers have fallen into arrear in their rents and payments. The Minister

*Mr. Valentine*

of Lands informed us the other day that they were £40,000 in arrear at the end of September last. They are unable to recover their lost ground, and all this in consequence of the competition for the lands which were put up by the Government. And I say that, if the Bill passes in the form it is in now, the Government will not have mitigated this trouble in the slightest degree. The present settlers will have to abandon their farms, and when the lands are again put up for sale the same unhealthy competition takes place, and the same disaster will follow the investment which the settlers have made. Now, the honourable member for Waihemo said that the effect of this Act would be that there would be no leasehold; that the whole country is becoming a vast freehold. I only wish that were realised, because I do not believe that this leasehold system is likely to do any good whatever for the country. I believe that it is impossible to get a man to work with earnestness and expend his best energies upon the soil unless he feels that it is his own property. If it were only his leasehold the chances are that he would take the substance out of the soil, and then throw it back into the hands of the Government; and that is what has been, and is being, done every day, as I dare say the Minister of Lands will admit. Then they have to put that land up for sale again; and do you suppose that any intelligent farmer is going to pay the same price as that at which the original occupier took it up, after he has exhausted it? Not likely! The land remains in this miserable state until some unfortunate comes and takes it up without the knowledge which those in the vicinity have of the farm. And then his time for failure comes in due course. The honourable member for Waihemo also said that, if the Minister of Lands allowed this Bill to pass, he would be one of the most unpopular Ministers of Lands that had ever been in the country, and that the measure would be a complete failure. Sir, I predict the very opposite. I say this, Sir: that if this measure passes the present Minister of Lands will be held up as the saviour of the small farmers of this country. Honourable members may laugh; but I have not the slightest doubt but that he will, and that this is a sound, honest measure such as we shall very seldom find brought down in connection with the land affairs of this colony. There is nothing hidden under it; it is a straightforward statement: and, Sir, I say that the Minister of Lands is to be complimented on the manner in which he has brought forward this measure. And, then, the honourable member says the effect of this will be the creation of large estates. Now, how can that be? The Bill provides that a man shall only take 640 acres of one class of land and 2,000 acres of another class in any one land district. Allowing that this is the case, I say 2,000 acres of one class of land and 640 acres of another is not a large estate as understood in these colonies. If a man has two thousand acres here and two thousand a hundred or fifty miles away, you

cannot call that the accumulation of a large estate. I cannot see that the honourable member was at all justified in saying that under the provisions of this Bill it was possible to accumulate a large estate. Now, I would just say this: that, if this measure becomes law, so far at least as the settlers in the South are concerned, they will be satisfied that they have at last obtained measures whereby they may acquire land on reasonable and at the same time equitable terms from the Crown. And, then with regard to subsection (5) of section 23—"The renewal of education reserves leases to be submitted to the approval of the Minister:" now, I think that is a very just and at the same time a very judicious stipulation to make on the part of the Minister. I think that when these renewals come to be considered he ought to have a voice in saying whether they shall be renewed or not, or whether he requires them for the purpose of the settlement of the country. Altogether, in this measure I find means whereby, as I said before, *bonâ fide* settlement may be brought about, and that we shall not have to go back upon the recent legislation which took place with regard to the land-settlement of this country. When I look back to the time when the Government wasted the money of the country on these village-settlement "fads,"—(No.)—I believe it is perfectly true. My impression is that these were nothing but "fads," and that the money of the country was simply wasted in carrying out these experiments. And I believe that you will find this to be more and more the case, and proved to be the case, as the Minister of Lands investigates the position of affairs with regard to these village-settlements. These village-settlements will never be a success so long as they are situated as they are, at a distance from commercial centres. If these settlements had all been planted in close proximity to places where men could get work outside the necessary work devolving upon them in carrying on their little farming operations, then they might be a success; but as they are now situated I believe they will be an utter failure. I do hope, Sir, the House will pass this Bill, with the amendments I have suggested with regard to the disposal of the land by ballot instead of by auction.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I do not propose, in making a few remarks on this measure, to take up very much of the time of the House; but, representing a country district, as I do, I feel that I should not be doing my duty were I not to congratulate the Minister of Lands upon the measure which he has brought down. I cordially agree with the last speaker that this is a measure which will meet with large acceptance throughout the country. Speaking for the district I represent, I can state most emphatically that, in reference to the changes in the land-laws shadowed forth in this Bill, they were welcomed at every one of my meetings during the elections; and, if there is any other proof wanted that this measure will find acceptance both in this House and throughout the country, I think

the failure which the honourable member for Waihemo made in the attempt to pick holes in its clauses supplies that proof. I am sure the honourable gentleman did his best to condemn the measure; and what was the result? The burden of his song, as far as I could gather it, was that it would tend towards the creation of large estates, and that its tendency throughout was to reverse the policy which had been pursued by this House under the two last Ministers of Lands, Mr. Rolleston and Mr. Ballance. But the interjection of some honourable member drew his attention to the fact that under this Bill the would-be settler had the option of choosing the tenure on which he took up his land; that there is nothing whatever to make it compulsory upon the settler to pay cash; that all the most liberal provisions of the present Act will be just as available to him under this Bill as they were previously. Now, I would draw the attention of members of this House to the important difference this Bill will bring about. It will make it impossible for the future Minister of Lands to carry out his own particular ideas in the matter of land-administration. It was well remarked by the Minister of Lands that the late Minister, the honourable member for Wanganui, bent all his energies upon administering the Land Act from his own particular point of view. I know for a fact that many settlers were driven from the country because they could get no land for settlement except under perpetual lease or deferred payment. I could multiply cases in which this occurred, and I thoroughly believe and indorse the statement made by the Minister of Lands when he said that this administration of the Act tended largely towards increasing the number of unemployed throughout the country. It must be evident that, if we discourage the settlement of men amongst us who have money with which to improve the land, we are cutting off a large source of work to the unemployed; and no one can question for a moment that the settlement of the people upon the land is one of our most important industries, and that we should endeavour to encourage it in every way possible. The Minister told us that the main principle of the Bill is that the choice of tenure rests with the intending settler. I agree thoroughly with that principle; and I hope it will be preserved by the House in passing this Bill. I also highly approve of the proposals to classify the land. In this District of Wellington, since the passing of the present Act in 1885, it has been impossible to purchase land under 20s. an acre, with the result that many would-be settlers have been prevented from taking up land. Not only has this been the case, but the Government have been put to large expense in dealing with the rabbits on the land, and have succeeded very imperfectly in doing so, I regret to say. This has meant that the Crown lands, instead of adding to the income of the colony, instead of being a means of furnishing rates to the local bodies to enable them to make roads to open up the country, have really been a great injury to the localities by furnishing fresh

supplies of rabbits from time to time to infest the land that is in occupation.

Mr. DUNCAN.—But the local bodies have got rates on the Crown lands.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I am sorry to say that in my district the total of rates from Crown lands has not been very large; and now the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act is to be repealed, for which I cannot say that I am at all sorry. As to abolishing the Land Boards, there is a good deal to be said on both sides. I am not a member of a Land Board, but I can imagine cases in which country settlers who might be on a Board would be of very great assistance to the Crown Lands Commissioners. Some of the Crown Lands Commissioners, I know, are in every way competent to do all that is now required to be done by the Boards. But I fear that is not the case in all instances. I have not yet quite made up my mind as to whether the proposal to abolish the Boards is one that I can support or not, and I shall be glad to hear the arguments on both sides of the question, because we must all admit that there is a great deal to be said on both sides. There is one objection made by the honourable member for Waihemo,—that this Bill would enormously increase the power of the Minister of Lands,—to which I must refer. I think he must admit that the Land Boards now have very little power.

Mr. KERR.—They have all the power.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—The honourable gentleman will presently have the opportunity of showing us where the power comes in. I would ask him to realise the fact that the late Minister of Lands, in administering the Land Act, only very partially gave effect to the wishes of this House; and I think his administration well showed how little power the Land Boards really have. I certainly cannot see that if the Bill is passed as it is it will add at all materially to the power now possessed by the Minister: so that objection, at all events, falls to the ground. I very much approve of the provision giving power to take unsurveyed lands. The honourable member for Waitaki shakes his head. I have always respected the honourable gentleman's well-known sound judgment as to settlement of the land. He has had large experience in that direction, and I am sure we should pay attention to any arguments he might use. But I ask him to remember this: that the land throughout the colony is not all the same in character as that of the district with which he is best acquainted. We have great difficulties in the bush-country as to the roading of the land, and under the present system of survey an enormous expenditure is cast upon the Road Boards and County Councils, because many of the surveyors have had very little knowledge of road-surveying and engineering. As I understand the Minister's proposals, the first man to go on a block to open it is to be the road-engineer, to lay off the main lines of road first; and then the ordinary survey follows. Such a plan commends itself to my mind, because, from my experience as a member of County Councils and Road

Boards, I know that the imperfect road-surveys of the Government surveyors have cast a very large amount of unnecessary expenditure on the local bodies. As to the limitation of the right to purchase freehold of not more than 640 acres of first-class land or 2,000 acres of second-class land, I would remark that some honourable gentlemen seem to have a perfect horror of anything like an area of any size falling into the hands of any one individual. I am sure no one in this House can point to an argument ever used by me or any action of mine in favour of large holdings, or tending to prevent the utmost facilities from being given to all classes of settlers. I have always, in my place in this House, done all I possibly could to open up the land to every man who wished to settle on it. However, I would point out this: that the New Zealand settler, in selling his produce, has to meet the competition of the world, and unless he can produce under favourable conditions he must fail in his business. I therefore ask honourable gentlemen, looking at the conditions under which farming is carried on in other parts of the world, especially in India and America, which are the principal countries we have to compete with, can this House afford to lay down arbitrary rules as to whether a man should occupy fifty or a hundred acres, more or less, or whether the farmer should be restricted to the smaller limits in this Bill? It seems to me that, if the farmer is to succeed in his business, he must have an area having some relation to the nature of his land and the nature of the produce he can grow upon it. I would be the last to advocate any policy which would tend to throw large areas of land into the hands of a few persons, and I hope that members of this House who have such a horror of anything but the smallest class of holdings will give the same attention to the arguments I have just used as I shall be glad to give to theirs. I ask them to regard the conditions under which the farmer has to work if he is to make his business a success, and then, I think, they will recognise that this House will be making a very great mistake if it fixes too small an area. The honourable member for Waihemo said this Bill proposes an exact reversal of the land policy pursued by this House for the last two or three sessions: but I certainly cannot agree with him. If this Bill is passed the settler will not be debarred from taking up land under any system in force under the present Land Act—the settler will have a free choice of tenure; and therefore the deferred-payment system, the perpetual-lease system, and the sale-for-cash system will all have as free play if this Bill is passed as they have now. Another remark by the honourable member to which I must take objection is this: He said that the price of produce was now at a low ebb, and therefore there is no great demand for land in the colony. In reply to that, I would point to the result of the last two or three sales of land by the Manawatu Railway Company. Honourable gentlemen belonging to this part of the colony will bear me out in saying that no land-sales

*Mr. Buchanan*



could possibly have gone off with greater success, some of the sections realising as much as £4 per acre. That is so strong a fact that I am sure I need not dwell on it to effectually meet the statement of the honourable gentleman. I am sure that if this Bill passes we shall manage to attract and secure a large amount of capital from the other colonies, which will come and be invested amongst us; and I am also sure it will prevent the leakage of a great deal of money made in the colony itself. Sir, I have no further remarks to make on the Bill. I had made a few further notes to reply to the honourable member for Wai-hemo; but, on consideration, I do not think his objections generally need answering, or, if they do, they will probably be answered by others who may take part in this debate. I will simply conclude by congratulating the Minister of Lands on the measure he has brought before the House, and express my hope that it will be passed with very few amendments indeed.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I have only a very few remarks to make. I, too, must congratulate the Minister on this attempt to remedy some of the evils of the Land Act; but I hope that when he settles down and we have passed this Bill, if it is to be passed, he will not go to the other extreme in a direction opposite to what the last Minister of Lands went. If he goes to the extreme in the other direction for the purpose of selling the land as fast as he can for cash, he will find that the remedy is worse than the disease, as at this depressed time it would be very wrong to offer our best land for cash, for it would sell at a very low price indeed. And there are some alterations in this Bill which, I think, if they are not amended in Committee or by the Waste Lands Committee, will not work very well. But, before I refer to them, I should like to say a few words on what has fallen from several of the speakers who have preceded me. I do not agree with what the honourable member for the Wairarapa said about the Minister having an easier position if this Bill is passed and the Land Boards are done away with. I think the Minister will find that his position will not be much easier if this Bill is passed in this direction. It is well known that at the present time there is a great deal of friction between people who occupy land, or want to occupy land, and the Government, notwithstanding that there are Land Boards which are composed of gentleman who are generally very well acquainted with the land in their particular districts, and who have, on the whole, administered the law very well. No doubt a change is necessary to improve the machinery connected with the administration of the land. We know that there is now a great deal of difficulty in getting land for settlement purposes on almost any terms. I know, speaking from my experience, that I have applied alternately to the Board, to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and to the Minister to get land opened for settlement, and that my efforts have been unsuccessful. There has been a petition sent up from my district to have land opened.

It was agreed by the late Minister of Lands, at a previous session, that land should be opened up in the district, and yet we now have an answer from the present Minister of Lands that it cannot be done as required. I do not think that that is a state of things that should exist. Then, the honourable member for the Wairarapa said that the Land Boards have no power. I think, on the contrary, that they have great power. They have the classification of the lands, and the recommendation to the Minister of what the land should be valued at. They have the power of recommending where blocks should be opened, and for what purposes they should be opened; they have the fixing of the upset price, and of the size of the sections. I think that that is a great power. And what I want to know is this: Who is to do this work in the future? Is the Minister to be expected to know the value of the whole of the land in the colony, what the various blocks would be best fitted for, and the price that should be put upon them, or are the Commissioners to settle this?

An Hon. MEMBER.—It is done by the Commissioners now.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I think not. There must be a very bad Land Board in the district from which the honourable gentleman comes. Members of the Land Board in our part of the country travel for days and weeks over the land, and then bring their local knowledge to bear at the Land Board. I think there should be some provision in this Bill to secure local knowledge; and the Minister might very well have given the County Councils power to classify the land, to fix a price as upset, and to state what the land is suitable for, and to hear applications and objections, and afford the Minister guidance. I think that something of that sort should be done, and I will help the Minister or any honourable member who will bring up a proposal of that kind, as that would secure local knowledge, because the more local knowledge is made use of the more satisfactory will the administration be. I am in favour of doing away with Land Boards, but I should like to see something take their place which would be better than they are. I am quite sure that, unless something is done to insure the advantage of local knowledge, this change will be a failure if carried out as now proposed. As to the honourable member for the Wairarapa, I know he is one of those gentlemen who have acquired a very large quantity of land, and I believe that he has done very well with it. I only hope that every one else who has as much land as he has has done as well. At the same time, I say that, if he thinks that it is a beneficial way to occupy land in very large holdings, I think the very opposite; and if he were to go to the district from which I come he would see the evils that result from large property-owners, because in that district there are eight gentlemen who hold three-fifths of the whole county. And it is not second-class land that they hold, not third-class land, but the very best. And what are they doing with it? They are only running sheep upon it.

Sometimes some of it is broken up by some outsider to take a crop and run all the risk of bad harvest and poor crop through the bad weather, and many other causes. The owners run no risk themselves of cropping, but only have it put down in grass again; and that is the way the land is farmed. Instead of employing a number of people, it only employs a few shepherds. I think it is quite necessary that there should be some rule laid down with regard to the area to be held, and in that respect I do not find fault with this Bill, for I do not think that the area laid down here is too large, provided the provision be worked as stated here in a *bonâ fide* manner. But there are some things that require to be made a little more clear in connection with this clause. It is simply laid down that a man may take up two thousand acres before survey, but there is nothing laid down as to how this land is to be taken up. I think it would not require a very great stretch of imagination to suppose that cunning men may take advantage of this clause—there have been such men before—and may select their two thousand acres in such a manner as to make all the country lying behind that two thousand acres useless. A man could select two thousand acres in such a way as to take off all water-frontage, and make it useless for any one to go behind him, so that he would get control of, perhaps, four or five thousand acres. That is a matter which requires consideration. The honourable member for Wakaia thinks the Bill good throughout, and tells us that people have been driven from the colony because they could not get land for settlement. Now, I am one of those who have been a good deal about the country, and I have never found that people who wanted land very badly could not get it. I should like to see the Minister of Lands produce some of those applications from persons who could not get land. There must be plenty in the offices, if such applications have been made. I have myself seen people who have said that they had plenty of money and wanted land; but I think that the fact was that there was something else that they were looking for, and not land—some of them at any rate. But I am very glad to see the proposal in the Bill that people should just choose where they wish to take up land under reasonable restrictions, and under what conditions they like; because I am of opinion, with the honourable member for Wakaia, that freehold is the best tenure for land. But the people are not in a position to pay down cash in order to secure these freeholds, but want to get the land in a suitable way at first; the ultimate object with them being that they should secure the freehold. But it should not be given on the very easy terms which this Bill proposes, for fear of the land being taken up in too large quantities. I should like to see the land occupied at once. I know that there is a land-hunger among the people in every part of the colony, and that the land is taken up as soon as it can be got. I know of a gentleman in the district from which I come who had 14,000 acres in one block, and yet

*Mr. Duncan*

he went to the Land Board of Dunedin and got them to cut up a small five-acre patch, which had two emigrants' cottages on it. The Land Board foolishly enough acceded to his request, and put the land up in Dunedin without anybody in the district knowing anything about it, and this gentleman got the land and the two cottages on it, which cost about £50 apiece, for £25. There were two families occupying the cottages at the time, and the result was that he took the cottage of one of them and moved it away close to his woolshed. The other cottage was partly on his land and partly on Government land. There are many men of that class in the colony who are as anxious to accumulate large estates now as they were in the past. I think therefore that some time should intervene before this freehold is acquired, if it were for no other purpose than to keep this monopoly down. Now, we have heard a great deal of talk of there having been no settlement under the previous Government; but honourable gentlemen who say that certainly do not know much of what has been done in the past, because during the twelvemonths which preceded the last session there was more settlement successfully carried out than there had been during any two years of the previous five. I did not agree then with all the settlement going in one direction, and I hope it will not all go in the other direction now. I know the honourable member for Wakaia is a gentleman connected with a large estate, having the management of one, and, as such, the area provided here looks very small to him; but I would just tell him that the good land in this colony is very limited at the present time—that is, the unsold land—and it is quite time that some limit was put to the purchase of such land. As this Bill now stands I do not think that such a limit as is required can be put on the purchase. Supposing two blocks adjoined each other, one being in one survey district and the other in the adjoining one, there would be no difficulty in a person purchasing four thousand acres instead of only two thousand. That is not what is supposed to be done by the Bill; but that is what would be the effect. However, that is only a Committee objection, and can be remedied when we get to that stage of the Bill. It has been said that it is useless to put men without money on the land. I agree with that; but I have seen many men go on the land with very little money, who have succeeded; and I have seen men go on the land with a great deal of money, and they have failed: so that the fact is that it is the man who knows what he is about, and who is accustomed to working the land, who succeeds; and it is not necessary that he should have much money if he gets land on reasonable terms. A great deal has been said about these special settlements, and they have been condemned by many who say that there has been a great waste of money in connection with them. I should like to ask the honourable member for the Bay of Islands, if the action which was taken to put five hundred people on the land up there in his district had not

been taken, what state would Auckland be in now with regard to the unemployed in the town? Supposing those settlements had not been formed in that way, Auckland would have been in such a state that it would have cost it nearly half this money for "unemployed" labour, and the work would have been useless, and the men would have been worse off after the work was finished than they were before, because the money they would have received would have been barely sufficient to keep them while the work was going on. I hope this village-settlement scheme is not going to drop. Although nothing has been said about it, I hope the Minister of Lands will see that this class of settlement is carried on: not as before, for that I did not approve of; but there is land in the South—I refer specially to education reserves, both high-school and secondary—which is very suitable for this class of settlement, for it is in districts which are already settled by people, some of them with large estates, who will give employment occasionally; and if these reserves are taken in hand and settled in this way there will be a very good class of settlement there, while the land will be as inalienable as it is under other classes of settlement. I hope the Minister of Lands will see to this. I shall give the honourable gentleman every assistance to pass this Bill with certain amendments. There are many of the clauses which require amendment, but still I give the honourable gentleman every credit for the attempt he has made to improve the land-legislation, and will assist him as I have done to previous Ministers who have brought in measures on this subject. I helped the Hon. Mr. Rolleston when he brought in his Bill in 1883, and if it had not been for some of us on this side of the House he would not have carried his Bill. There were four gentlemen—the honourable member for Waihemo, myself, and two others—who, at the last moment, helped him to carry his Land Bill or he would have lost it; and we did that although we were on this side of the House. The side of the House on which I may be never sways me when a Bill of this kind is brought in. I am sorry to say that there is no provision here for giving relief to the deferred-payment settlers. I have had great complaints to make in this direction, because in the district from which I come there are a number of settlers who were induced to purchase land on deferred payment through an advertisement having been put in the newspapers stating that there was to be a railway running through the district, without anything being said as to its being a district railway. Through that they were induced to buy land at auction, at some £8 or £10 an acre, about twenty-seven miles from Oamaru; and that was far more than the land was worth. I am glad the honourable gentleman is going to substitute ballot for this abominable auction and tender system. There are a number of those settlers who have had to struggle on under that ever since; and not only that, but they grumble at having to pay a tax to make up the deficiency in the

railway. If they are ever compelled to do that—I hope they will not be, and certainly I shall not assist in bringing it about—but, if they are, then I say a Bill ought to, and must, be brought in to indemnify these people, for they can make out a clear case that the money was obtained from them under false pretences at the time they bought the land. Then, with regard to the deferred-payment settlers generally, I think the Fair Rent Bill of the honourable member for Auckland Central ought to be passed, so that the tenants of the Crown, and, indeed, I would say, all tenants in the colony, should have a tribunal to go before, and see whether the rent they are paying is too high or too low. That would stop a great deal of hardship, and would prevent many people losing all they have got. It is not good for the landlord, whether he be the Government or any other, that the tenant should pay too high a rent. It injures every one concerned. The tenant loses his money, and allows the land to go to ruin, and he leaves it in a far worse state than he would if he had only a fair rent to pay. I therefore think that Bill should pass, and should include every tenant in the colony. I have nothing more to say except that there are some things in the Bill of which I approve, and there are others which we can amend; and I hope we shall pass it this session. I will support the second reading.

Mr. COWAN.—No doubt this Bill deals with one of the most important subjects that this Parliament can deal with—namely, the management of the waste lands of the Crown. There is this peculiarity in it: that the policy set forth in it is somewhat a reversal of the policy with regard to the settlement of land which has been in force in the colony for some time past. Two previous Ministers of Lands held very similar views with regard to the question. Though we have been in possession of a land-law of a most liberal character—in fact, I think we may say that it is the most liberal land-law that could possibly be in existence—still it has not had that amount of success attached to it which its merits deserve; and I attribute that to this reason: that it has been badly administered—badly administered, I mean, in so far as it has been administered in one direction—namely, in that of the particular idiosyncracies of the the last two Ministers of Lands. The grand principle of this Bill is that the option of the selection of the tenure under which the settler shall hold his land rests with himself instead of being left with the Minister of the day. That is a proper policy, and in that respect I approve of the provisions of the measure. The honourable member for Waihemo has given the Bill a trenchant criticism; but a great deal of that criticism I will leave to the Minister to answer. A large part of his speech I may say consisted principally of Committee objections. With regard to the honourable gentleman's idea that the Bill has for its principal object the throwing-away of our estate, I must say I cannot agree with him at all in that respect; because, although this Bill certainly offers inducements for the taking-up and occupation

of land, yet it is competent for this House, when the Bill is in Committee, to hedge round any of its provisions with such safeguards as honourable members may think desirable in the interests of settlement. The Minister has provided a certain safeguard as to the selection of land to be bought for cash, in so far as not more than 640 acres of first-class land, or 2,000 acres of second-class land, can be selected by one individual in any one survey district. I understand that "survey district" and "land district" are not synonymous terms. I was under that impression until I was informed differently by the Minister of Lands. A survey district represents an area of ten miles square, and therefore the safeguard provided in this Bill is the limiting of the right of selection within that area. As to throwing away the public estate, my opinion, after many years' experience—I may say after thirty years' experience in dealing with land in this country—is, the sooner the Crown parts with its estate in the way of obtaining settlers on the land, with certain safeguards for its occupation, the better it will be for the country. Therefore it will be our duty, when this Bill reaches Committee, to see that sufficient safeguards are contained in the Bill against the acquiring of large estates. I have been rather amused at the arguments of the honourable member for Waitaki and the honourable member for Wakaia as to Land Boards. Both those honourable gentlemen seem to be of opinion that those Boards are in possession of large powers and should be abolished. After experience for some years on one of these Boards, I may say that the Boards have really very little power. Those honourable members say that Land Boards are of no use, because they set too high an upset price on the land. In reality it is quite the reverse, because the Boards have no power to fix the value of land. The only duty the Boards have in that respect is to recommend certain prices to the Minister, and the Minister acts either on their recommendation or on his own opinion, as the case may be; and, from my experience, Ministers exercise their independent opinion with regard to the value of land. Now, speaking on the provisions of the Bill generally, I will try and make my remarks as concise as possible. I was pleased to hear the statement by the Minister that, outside the land required for the Midland Railway Company and Native lands, we have twenty million acres available for settlement—fourteen million acres of open country and six million acres of bush. We ought to be satisfied that this estimate is correct, seeing that it comes from such an authority as the Minister of Lands. I agree with him in the conclusion to which he has come—namely, that the lands should be offered to those who desire to occupy them on whatever terms may suit the means of the individuals. It is an opinion I have come to after long experience that unless a man has means it is really of no use his attempting to occupy land. While I agree thoroughly with the statement made by the honourable

*Mr. Cowan*

member for Waitaki that men have gone on the land without means and have succeeded, yet those are exceptions to the rule. It is equally certain that men have gone on the land with large means and have lost their all. The principle that the Government should have little consideration to the first price received for the land is one that cannot be gainsaid. The desire of the Government, if they are considering the best interests of the country, should be to get people on the land. If you cannot get people on the land at the price which Parliament and the Minister have fixed, then give the land for nothing; but do not on any account ask the utmost price for the land. With the general provisions of this Bill I may say I am pretty well in accord, with the exception of abolishing the Waste Lands Boards. To that proposal I have the greatest objection. My objection to the abolition of those Boards is, that I see there is an absolute necessity that there should be some local court of appeal as between the people and the Government, and that is really the use the Waste Lands Boards have been hitherto. If the Minister succeeds in carrying this provision of his Bill he will discover that he will bring on his department an amount of work of which he has no comprehension at present. The honourable member for Waihemo, who has been a member of the Dunedin Waste Lands Board for many years, has given the honourable gentleman an idea of the quantity of work which is likely to be brought under his notice from that particular Board. With regard to the Board I have a knowledge of, I may say that the people look to that Board as a court of appeal, a court at which they can air their grievances; and the Board acts as a go-between between them and the Minister. It is the intention to vest the whole of the powers of the Boards in the Commissioner. Who is the Commissioner? The Commissioner is, in reality, the Minister. He is the official who represents the Land Department, and the powers of the Boards are now to vest in the Commissioner. I should have had pleasure in supporting this provision if the Minister had selected some one of the local bodies for the duty. If the honourable gentleman had provided that the office of member of these Boards should henceforth be honorary, I think he would have found that the result would have been more satisfactory to himself as head of the department, and would have led to that economy which, no doubt, has induced the Minister to propose doing away with the Boards. I do not intend to go into the provisions of the Bill, but there is one feature to which I desire to draw the attention of the Minister, and that is the question of relief to Crown tenants. Undoubtedly, the Crown tenants must be relieved. The Act of 1885 provided a large number of modes of relief, and those modes of relief have been largely taken advantage of; but, notwithstanding that, the result is this: that the number of cases of arrears, and the amounts, are increasing. My firm opinion is that unless a considerable rise in the value of produce takes

place the Government cannot expect to see many of these arrears paid. The position of the Crown tenants with regard to finance on the 30th March, 1887, was as follows: There were 1,202 deferred-payment settlers in arrears to the extent of £20,240; 31 deferred-payment settlers on education endowments, £2,709; 177 perpetual-lease tenants, £2,859; 49 perpetual-lease tenants on educational endowments, £3,105: making a total of £28,914. I regret to say that this amount is likely to be an increasing one so long as the price of produce remains at a non-paying point, as it is now, and the arrears will not be recoverable, because ninety-nine out of a hundred of those individuals, if they cannot meet their obligations out of the land, have no other means whereby they can satisfy the demands of the Crown. The honourable member for Auckland Central has introduced a measure with regard to this question—the Fair Rent Bill; and I regret very much that, through the forms of the House, that Bill, I am afraid, has no chance of being considered by the House this session. I take this opportunity of congratulating the Minister upon what he has told us to-day—namely, that it is his intention to introduce a Bill to meet this very serious phase of the administration of lands—and I urge on him the absolute necessity of pressing the Bill through. Now, in addition to this difficulty, there is another to which I wish to call the attention of the Minister, and that is the stringent condition of clause 123 in the Act of 1885, the purport of which clause is this: that, when a deferred-payment tenant forfeits his section for reasons assigned in this Act, he is subject to a penalty of 25 per cent. on the value of the improvements made by him on the land which may be sold to his successors. This is considered by the deferred-payment people as a very great hardship, and the difficulty of obtaining a successor to these tenants makes the hardship all the more serious because so soon as the tenant is deprived of his holding—and that is the only condition which is contemplated by the Act of 1885—if the Crown tenant fails to carry out his obligation to the Crown the Waste Lands Board carries the law into force, and he is evicted from his possession, and a fresh tenant pays the value of improvements assessed by the Waste Lands Board Ranger, which value is paid to the outgoing tenant subject to a deduction of 25 per cent. And what is the result? That, these sections being left unoccupied, the improvements deteriorate rapidly, and we have instances where the valuation put upon them after one year was 50 per cent. less, the deterioration was so great and rapid. Any honourable members having a knowledge of farming must know that if a place is left uncared-for the deterioration in the improvements goes on at a rapid rate. I will, when the Bill gets into Committee, move that the value of improvements, less the cost of sale, &c., be paid to the outgoing tenants. Another provision of this Bill is one which I highly commend the Minister for, and that is the provision he has made with regard to the selection

of bush-lands before survey. Large sums of money have been needlessly thrown away on the sectional surveys of bush-lands, which before they are taken up have become valueless, and in many instances the expense has had to be incurred a second time. The idea he has embodied in this Bill—that of cutting roads through these bush-lands to be offered to the public for settlement, and making those roads the base-lines of application—is one which commends itself to my mind as being a very good one. There is a provision as to the area of small grazing-runs, and that is one to which I give my hearty support, for it has particular application to the district from which I come, where the country is very much deteriorated from what is known as the rabbit-pest; and I fear, from what I hear, that it will only be a matter of time before a large portion of our beautiful country will be subjected to the same ruin as the district from which I come from has been afflicted with. In regard to the provision contained in the Bill to retake the management of the education endowments, I hope the House will give this power. In the last Parliament this was proposed in a Government Bill, and it went through the Waste Lands Committee; but when the measure came back to the House that provision was struck out, the House feeling that it would be an undue interference with those bodies which had the management of those endowments. Without wishing to say anything prejudicial to those bodies, I must say that my opinion strongly is that the properties under their charge have not been judiciously managed, and I believe that when these lands are managed under the same system as the Crown lands a greater amount of satisfaction will be brought about. I therefore approve of the provision contained in this Bill in regard to re-taking the management of the educational endowments, if the House thinks it proper to do so. I shall not detain the House any further than to say that when this Bill gets into Committee I will give it my most hearty help, and I hope the House will join in assisting the Minister to make it a workable measure, and a measure sufficiently hedged round by safeguards against the acquiring of large estates, so that the administration of the lands, which I cannot say has recently been a success, will in future not only be a success, but will effect a large settlement of the lands,—and that is what we must look to in order to bring about a prosperous state of things in the colony.

Mr. SEYMOUR.—Sir, I propose to support the second reading of this Bill, not because I entirely agree with everything I hear of it, but because I think the good points in it very much predominate. I think I may say that I am extremely well pleased to find that the Minister of Lands proposes to throw open lands for choice by those who desire to settle upon them in any of the various modes which have been passed in the Land Act, but which modes have in times past only been operative in particular districts or parts of districts. It was the practice of the late Government to set apart certain

blocks of land in various land districts in which only one mode of acquiring the land should prevail. That, in my opinion, has very much impeded settlement, and I am extremely pleased to see it is intended to alter it. I never could see any valid reason why a district should be confined to the selection of land on one of the various modes of cash payment, deferred payment, or perpetual leasing. Persons will satisfy that sentiment which is in everybody to get a piece of land in freehold first, and then perhaps take up a piece of adjoining land on deferred payment or perpetual lease. It has been supposed that the effect of this change will be to very largely increase the land sales of the colony, and it is thought that, if that is so, that is an objectionable proceeding. In my opinion it would be quite the reverse. I think it would be an exceedingly good thing for the colony as a whole if it could dispose of a very considerable area of these lands. Very much of it belongs to what is called the "second class." There is not a very great deal of good land left. Now, what is the position the colony is in in regard to the settlement of these second-class lands? Very large areas of this second-class land are scarcely available now for settlement because there are no roads or tracks through them; and the position of the colony's finances in regard to public works seems to be that, not only can we not furnish adequately our railways, but there is no money at all out of which to make roads and tracks which will be required to open these lands for settlement. Now, it seems to me that, if we encourage the cash-purchase system, and devote the sums which come from that to the opening-up of the lands by roads and tracks, we shall be doing the right thing to settle very much of the land which is now lying open for settlement, and which cannot be settled now without that. I should like to say a word in this connection, too, with regard to a portion of section 19—and I am very much obliged to the Minister of Lands for introducing that portion of the clause—which will permit of the spending of one-third of the deferred-payment money which has been in the Treasury from lands taken up on deferred payment, through there being no local body in the county to whom the money could be paid, and where there are works requiring to be executed. There is no object to which this money could be more properly devoted. This, I presume, will now be the case, and the money will be properly applied. With regard to abolishing the Waste Lands Boards, I agree with others in expressing dissatisfaction at this proposal, and I hope the Minister in charge will reconsider this question. The proposal no doubt will be discussed in the Waste Lands Committee, and I trust the Minister will see his way to excise these clauses from his Bill. My own impression is that it will neither be popular in the country to abolish the Land Boards nor will it be desirable. I have spoken to many members having an intimate knowledge, and they point out that many questions come before them which cannot be properly determined

*Mr. Seymour*

by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who would simply send them forward to the Minister, who would be equally ignorant of the circumstances of the case. These are dealt with by those members of the Boards who have a local knowledge of the subjects, which proves extremely valuable. Then I will take the question of the assessment of the lands. In the district from which I come the lands are assessed between certain limits. So it is in the Nelson District, and, I believe, in other districts. The prices are not fixed; they are assessed by the Land Boards. Without a Land Board the Commissioner of Crown Lands can have no one to rely upon for a report upon these lands except the surveyor, and the report of the surveyor will not be sufficient, as I know from experience, to give him a good idea of what price ought to be fixed on these lands. The surveyor will state in his report how much flat land there is and how much hill. He will not be able to tell him what that land ought to be assessed at altogether, owing to the very different circumstances surrounding each block. On this account, Sir, I think it would be better that we should excise this portion of the Bill. It has been said that the Land Boards are very expensive. I would mention, as has been mentioned in an earlier part of the debate, that this could be met by the stopping of the payment of members of the Board, and I believe that throughout the length and breadth of the colony they would get just as good men as the members who are paid. I have no intention of taking up the time of the House any longer, but I would make this suggestion with regard to what I may call almost third-class land, which prevails to a considerable extent throughout the district I come from, and especially in the Sounds County: that a still further reduction should be made in the price of land below 10s. per acre, in order to bring that land fairly into the market and get it settled. Even at 10s. per acre the price would be too high, and I think it is worth the Minister's attention whether, in that case, as obtains in Auckland, I think, and Napier, and in some other parts of the colony, a reduction below 10s. would not be desirable. I would also ask him to consider whether he will not amend clause 180 of the present Land Bill by omitting the word "three" in subsection (1) and inserting the word "five." Briefly, the object of that would be this: The clause provides that protection should be given to the holders of pastoral licenses over their improvements when the country is relet to the extent of not more than three years' rent. Now, in my district small blocks of country are let on pastoral licenses, a few running into a thousand acres, but mostly five, six, or seven hundred acres, and the rent is very small for lands of an inferior kind, and to take as value for improvements a sum not exceeding three years' rent appears to me to be to take too small a sum. I suggest that the Minister should look into that question, and possibly he will make some extension in favour of these men.

*Mr. BEETHAM.* — I will not weary the

House at any length with my remarks upon this measure, because I recognise, as I have done in previous sessions, that it will appear again in possibly a very different form from that in which it is now before the House. I allude to the action that always takes place in the Waste Lands Committee. I have no doubt that the members of the Waste Lands Committee will exercise a wise supervision; and I trust that some clauses, which in the course of my remarks I shall refer to, will not come to the House again in their present form. I wish to congratulate the Hon. the Minister of Lands upon the manner in which he has introduced the Bill. He has treated the whole question in a businesslike and sensible way, and I do hope that the introduction of this Bill has marked a new era in our dealing with the waste lands of the colony. Up to this time, or at any rate for the last few sessions, we have, I fear, dealt with land questions in anything but a businesslike way. We have not endeavoured, as far as I can judge, to induce settlement of the land, but have taken the opportunity, in our dealings with waste lands, to air our chimerical ideas, our fads, and our follies. I may say to a most unwarrantable extent. In referring to the different provisions of this Bill, I would first congratulate the honourable member on his proposal to deal with rural lands. He has proposed to sell for cash; and I am entirely with him in this respect. I have endeavoured, in my place in the Waste Lands Board for some years past, to insure that there should be a fair proportion of land open for sale for cash, as well as land open on the deferred-payment and perpetual-lease systems. I believe those systems can run concurrently with great advantage to the colony; but to tell people that they can only have the leasehold system is destructive, I must say, of our best interests. The question of the land being opened before survey is also a very important point, especially in dealing with lands in bush districts. We have, Sir, turned away time after time—I speak as a member of the Waste Lands Board—for some years we have turned away desirable settlers from want of having a sufficient survey staff to keep pace with the demands for land for settlement. As quoted by the Minister of Lands, I have known many desirable settlers visit the Land Board in Wellington and go away disgusted because, knowing we had a quantity of valuable land for sale and were anxious to settle the land, for the reasons I have just mentioned we have not been able to give them the facilities they desired. The proposal to increase the area of small runs from 5,000 to 20,000 acres has my thorough approval, and I was surprised to hear the Minister of Lands say that his predecessor suggested this course to him. I think it is a great pity that that honourable gentleman did not take that action himself when he introduced the Bill in 1885. If he had done so it is quite possible that a number of runs which are now abandoned in the South Island might have been profitably occupied at the present time; but it appeared to me, when the Land Bill was introduced in 1885, that the inten-

tion of the Minister was, whether wisely or not, to limit the area in every direction without considering whether to do so would be for the interest of the colony or not. Now, with respect to the upset price of land, I am dissatisfied with the proposed clause relating to this subject, because I find it does not appear to apply to this provincial district. The omission in the Act of 1885 of power to fix a minimum of less than £1 an acre, I thought, was an error; but the late Minister of Lands afterwards said it was done purposely. The minimum price of land in the Wellington District was originally 5s. an acre; it was afterwards raised to 10s., and during the session of 1885 was again raised to £1 an acre. By doing that, as I pointed out at the time, it was rendered impossible to settle a large area of land in the Wellington District. The Waste Lands Board had not power to offer the land at a reasonable price, and the result has been that settlement has not progressed on third-class land. What I complained of was this: I could see no reason why the Wellington Provincial District should be treated specially. In the Marlborough District they had the power to sell the land at a lower figure; the Auckland and Hawke's Bay Waste Lands Boards had power to sell it at as low a price as 5s. an acre; the Nelson District had power to sell at 10s.; and yet Wellington, under, in many cases, the same circumstances, was debarred the right of settling its third-class land, and the result has been that its third-class land has not been settled to any extent since 1885. I notice—and I merely wish to mention it just now as a sort of hint to the members of the Waste Lands Committee, who, I am sure, will consider the matter, and I am sure the Hon. the Minister of Lands will also give the matter his attention—the wishes of the deferred-payment and the perpetual-lease settlers have been met to a certain extent by the proposed changes. The abolition of the provision that one-twentieth of the land should be cultivated within a certain time, and substitution of a condition that improvements be made within six years equal to 30 per cent. of the price of the land, I admit, will be a very considerable advantage to the settlers in bush districts; but I would point out that the Waste Lands Boards have had the right to give deferred-payment settlers in bush districts leave to reside off their land for a certain period—four years is mentioned; but the perpetual-lease settlers have no such right. I can see no reason why the same provision should not be given to the perpetual-lease settlers. I wish to call the attention of the Minister of Lands to this point, for it has been brought under my notice a great many times by settlers on the perpetual-lease system. I may say that I think it is not advisable to limit the area of land to 640 acres in any one survey district. Of course, it was somewhat difficult to understand what a survey district meant. In the first place, I considered that it meant any provincial survey district; but I gather from what the Hon. the Minister of Lands says that it means a

subdivisional survey district of 100,000 acres in extent. If that is so, then what has been pointed out by the honourable member for Wai-taki is correct, that the object of that clause, assuming it to be necessary, might be defeated by an individual taking the four corners of different survey districts, and thereby taking four times as much land as was intended by the clause—that is, 640 acres of ordinary land and 2,000 acres of second-class land. And I may incidentally mention that I do not think the term "ordinary land" should be used in the way proposed, because I think it would allow people outside to think that we have no first-class land—that it is all of an ordinary nature. It might appear to outsiders that "ordinary land" does not mean first-class land, and it might be inferred that the best land was all occupied. I think, as the honourable member for Waimea suggested, that there should be three classes of land—first, second, and third; and I would suggest that the Minister of Lands should consider the advisability of agreeing with his suggestion. There is another point that I wish to call attention to, and it is this: that, in the event of land being sold for cash—I allude more especially to the bush-districts of New Zealand, for, of course, I am more immediately interested in the bush-lands—that if land is sold for cash after roads have been made through it in only the perfunctory manner indicated by the Minister of Lands, the local bodies would suffer very seriously in the absence of their one-third refund for the purpose of making roads. Unless the refund is given in the bush-districts I fear that settlement will be very much retarded in the future. I know it may be said that this is returning to the old provincial system; yet I do think I am right in calling attention to it, because if in bush-districts settlement is to proceed at all there must be some refund from the land sold, if sold for cash, as well as from the deferred-payment and perpetual-lease systems. I, in common with others, was very glad that the Minister of Lands, in making his statement, was able to show that at the present time there is such a large area of land left available for settlement. I think this will weigh very much in the minds of individuals outside this House, that we can show that we have so much land available for settlement. The Minister carefully excluded mountainous and lake districts, so I presume from his knowledge, having the whole information of the department at his disposal, he alludes to land which is absolutely available for settlement at the present time. I am glad to think that it will go abroad to other countries that we have so much land available for settlement. I think it is an argument that we should use strongly to show this: that, whilst we have such an amount of land available, there is no necessity for Land-acquisition Bills, which I believe would prevent settlement in this colony more than any other measure which could be devised. I have seen communications from business-men in the Old Country who have stated this: that while we attempt such per-

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nicious legislation as any measure that may mean the taking of land from settlers, and dividing it amongst others, we cannot expect any satisfactory settlement of our waste lands, or hope for capital to flow into this country to enable those who are heavily involved to relieve themselves even by a partial sale of their property. Capital will not come into the colony while we are guilty of even considering seriously such an unnecessary proposal for almost confiscation. A great deal has been said about economy effected in the Survey Department. The honourable gentleman certainly did not himself talk about economy; but he alluded to the economy that had been effected—£30,000 apparently saved last year.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—Since 1880.

Mr. BEETHAM.—I think that the late Minister of Lands, the honourable member for Wanganui, said that he expected to be able to save £36,000 on the land estimates. If this has been saved, as he calls it, it has been saved at the expense of a great deal of settlement that would have progressed if a fair amount of money had been available for pushing on surveys in various parts of the colony. We have endeavoured to make our surveys precede settlement. While we were following out that principle, we should at any rate, if we were wise business-men, have insured that a sufficient amount was placed at the credit of the department to push on surveys, so that a sufficient amount of land might be available for settlement. This has not been done. I speak both of Mr. Rolleston and the honourable member for Wanganui, who have been, perhaps through Ministerial necessity, both guilty of the same error; and, to prove that what I said is correct, I have only to point out this fact: Time after time I pointed out that men with money who were wishing to settle could not do so because no land was available, no land was surveyed. I wished the special-settlement system should be tried in order that land might be opened in that way. The late Minister of Lands, when he came into office, assisted by the provisions of the Land Act of 1885, very wisely allowed land to be occupied under the special-settlement provision. In the Wellington District alone within the last two years—I am speaking now in round figures—100,000 acres of land have been taken up under these special settlements. I think that proves conclusively that an inclination to settle was inherent in our population, but the means were not available. Now, these settlers, who will soon be occupying this 100,000 acres, are surveying their own land. They have the land, generally speaking, for £1 an acre; the land we are selling on deferred payment and to perpetual-lease settlers has ranged from £1 5s. to £1 10s. We have given these settlers, and wisely too, the land they are settling on at the rate of £1 an acre, with an understanding that they were to survey themselves. Where is the saving? Although no money is granted to them for surveys, they have land for it, and land at a very much cheaper rate. Although an apparent



saving, there has been an absolute loss to the colony by not having surveys properly completed by the regular survey staff, whose system we know and understand, and who attempt, at any rate, to work out on a comprehensive system by extending settlement surveys from the different centres. Sufficient appropriation for surveys would have obviated these difficulties. I was very glad to hear the honourable member for Waihemo alluded to a great many times, and most of his arguments have been refuted very completely. I was glad to hear what was said about the necessity for giving a fixity of tenure in the southern part of New Zealand. I allude to the runholders there. Why, they are now merely tenants at will. It is absolutely impossible, with the great curse they are suffering from—the rabbit nuisance—that they can succeed. I believe the late Minister of Lands has at last begun to appreciate the difficulties the settlers have to contend with there; and therefore I begin to have more hope that those who have suffered from such disabilities in that part of the colony will now have a fair chance of success: and in their success the future of New Zealand will be very much improved. It has been pointed out that too much importance has been attached to the price paid for land. The price obtained is a material point for consideration, but successful settlement is the chief point; and I trust that will be carried into effect, whether by the Minister of Lands, or by Commissioners, or by the Waste Lands Boards, or any new Board that may be hereafter elected. Alluding to the question of Waste Lands Boards, I have heard it said in the House several times that we shall have every member of a Waste Lands Board on his legs, and that every such member will undoubtedly speak in favour of Waste Lands Boards. I have been a member of a Waste Lands Board for many years, and during my continuance in that position I have endeavoured to do good work. At any rate, if I have not done some good it has not been through want of experience or knowledge of the quality of land, but perhaps I may have neglected my opportunities. But I maintain that it would be a most unwise measure to do without any system of Waste Lands Board in the colony. I have myself—and I state it without reservation—the greatest confidence in the Minister of Lands. I believe him to be a hard-headed, wide-awake man; and I believe he understands the survey and land-settlement questions most thoroughly. I believe also that he has had good farming experience, and I believe he is not likely to run away with any particular fads. But I have seen Ministers of Lands whom I have not had so much confidence in, and I say this: that it is a most unwise thing to place the power that this Bill places in the hands of the Minister of Lands in any man's hands, whatever may be his character or whatever we may know about him. We are all liable to cranks and peculiarities, and he may be subject to some of these things as well as others. I have seen and known the difficulty that the Waste Lands Board in the Wellington District has

had in dealing with the late Minister of Lands. I know that on many points where the Board held strong opinions our opinions have been resisted and vetoed. He had the power to do so under the present Act. Under this Bill the Minister of Lands can do whatever he likes. I maintain this: that there should be some system of Waste Lands Boards in New Zealand. There should be some body between the Minister and the people. I have always maintained that the system of nomination was not a proper one. I believe there should be, at any rate, a certain elective principle in the Waste Lands Boards. I believe it is perfectly right that the Minister of Lands should have the right to nominate a certain number of members that might be fixed. Perhaps one-third should be nominated by the Ministry of the day. The interests of the colony are materially affected by any dealing with waste lands, and by the course I propose a continuity of action would be insured, as well as the representative principle. I do not at all believe in what fell from the honourable member for Waihemo on this subject. He suggested that the members of the Boards should be elected at the same time as members of the House of Representatives. I do not think he ever considered that, or, if he has, then he has not the good sense I gave him credit for, because in many cases there might be no elections. The nominations might be all that was necessary. How about the elections for the Board in such a case? Is it thought advisable by the honourable member that each district should elect a member? I do not think the honourable gentleman thought over the matter at all. I think I will leave that question to the honourable gentleman's further consideration. To simplify the matter, it appears to me that the best way would be for County Councils and local bodies to be grouped together for the purpose of electing Waste Lands Boards. The County Councils and local bodies should have the right to elect a member of the Waste Lands Board. I think that by so doing we should insure having the views of the settlers on the subject, and we have also this certainty: that the County Councils are certainly as much interested, from their own point of view, in the new and rapid settlement of the country, as any private individual can be, because, as far as I know, throughout the whole of New Zealand County Councils are generally impecunious, and anxious to have a large rating-area as soon as they can. It has been argued against Waste Lands Boards that they are expensive, and that a large amount is paid in their maintenance. I admit it seems a considerable sum, but, as has been mentioned by the Minister of Lands, £905 has been spent in fees and £1,305 in travelling-expenses, the whole amounting to £2,210. If this is the case, and if the services of forty-five men throughout the whole of New Zealand can be procured for the sum of £2,210 to carry out what is certainly one of the most vital questions in New Zealand,—the settlement of the land,—I say it is not at all an outside value

for their services. Now, I heard a remark not long ago that certain honourable members have been seen travelling on the railways with their passes in their waistcoats, and charging their expenses to the Waste Lands Boards. I have never seen that done; but, if it has been done, then I say our Audit Department and Lands Department have been very careless not to succeed in checking such a pernicious practice at once. Now, it has been said, and justly too, that the Land Board arrangements in Wellington are unsatisfactory, because two members come from one extreme end of the district to attend the Land Board meetings in Wellington, and their travelling-expenses amount to a very large sum. That is perfectly true, and I think the late Minister of Lands did act very unwisely in choosing two members for the Waste Lands Board from a remote part of the provincial district. One member from that district was a necessity, I believe; but, as it is, both gentlemen come from the centre of the bush-district now being settled in North Wairarapa. It was necessary that there should be one representative of the district on the Board, and I think the amount of £160 a year paid to secure the attendance of that gentleman at the Board was not a very large sum to pay for the services of an experienced man. Sir, I could say a great deal more on this point, but I feel that the debate is rather wearying the House, and it is quite possible that a similar debate may take place when the Bill comes back from the Waste Lands Committee; and, if it does not come back in the shape in which I hope it will come back, it will be my duty to again call attention to the clauses to which I object, and I give notice that it is my intention to propose a clause which will have for its effect the election of members of the Waste Lands Boards in the way I have indicated, with a certain proportion nominated. I gladly support the Bill, with the exception of the clauses I have mentioned, and I trust the honourable gentleman will be able to carry his measure—the first he has introduced—through this House in a satisfactory manner.

Major STEWARD.—Although previous speakers have gone pretty fully into the merits of this Bill, it is one in which so much interest is taken in the district I have the honour to represent that I feel I cannot allow it to pass through its present stage without saying a few words on it. Now, although I happen to sit on the opposite side of the House to the honourable gentleman who brings in this measure, I am not one of those who think that no good can come out of Nazareth. On the contrary, I heartily concur in the opinion expressed by one of the honourable member's own supporters as to his eminent qualifications for the office he holds; and I congratulate him very heartily on having brought down this Bill, in which I think there are many distinct improvements on the provisions of the present Land Act. Now, it has often been said in this House, and out of it, too, for that matter, that our system of land-laws in New Zealand is far too complicated. It has been said that we

have too many systems, and that it is quite impossible for any one to comprehend what is really the land-law of New Zealand. I have never agreed with that view, because I have held it was desirable that we should have as many systems as might be required to suit different circumstances and different classes of people wishing to occupy the lands of the colony. But the one thing that has been wanting is this: Instead of a certain piece of land being opened in one part of the country which could only be settled under one system, and another block being opened in another part of the country which could only be settled under another system, and, again, a third block being opened to be only settled under a third system, what was wanted was that there should be a free choice of system. Under the present system the whole thing depended on the will of the Minister for the time being, and so long as that sort of thing obtained there was the greatest possible cause of complaint and the greatest possible dissatisfaction. It was therefore with a great deal of pleasure that I noted that the cardinal feature of this Bill is that henceforth—if the measure pass—there will be unfettered option on the part of those who wish to select land as to the system they will select under. That being provided, we do away with all the complaints with regard to complication, and every person can be satisfied no matter what his predilections are: the deferred-payment system, the cash-sale system, and the perpetual-lease system will be equally open to all in every part of the country. I think that is a very distinct advance, and I congratulate the honourable gentleman on that leading feature of his Bill. Now, another feature of this Bill which commends itself to me is that which proposes to allow of the classification of Crown lands. That is not a new feature. Honourable members who were here in 1885 may remember that, when the present Land Act was being passed, certain clauses, almost in the very words of some of the clauses of this Bill, were introduced in the measure then before the House. They were introduced at my instance when the Bill was before the Waste Lands Committee, and were brought down in the Bill as it was reported by that Committee. Those clauses proposed, as it is proposed here, that there should be the power to fix the price of second-class land at not less than 10s. nor more than £1 10s. an acre. In this House a division was taken on that proposal, and it was carried by a majority of 31 to 28, I think; and that provision was retained as an integral part of the Bill as it was sent up to another branch of the Legislature, where it was struck out with some other useful provisions; and, although a Conference took place, this provision failed of being restored. There was also in the Bill of 1885—and I am glad to see it in the present Bill—a provision extending the area of second-class land that could be taken up under the deferred-payment system by any one person from 320 acres—the maximum under the present Act—to not exceeding 2,000 acres; but that

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provision was also excised in another place. But I do trust that on the present occasion it will pass through all the ordeals in both Houses successfully and become law. The provisions enabling the price of second-class land to be reduced, and also allowing each holder to take up a larger area under the deferred-payment system, are just the provisions that are needed to enable settlement to proceed in the Canterbury Provincial District. There the land is open for free selection for cash at £2 an acre; but all the really good agricultural land, indeed nearly all the land that could be used for agricultural purposes, has long ago passed into the hands of private individuals; and thus, while with one breath you say the land is open to the people, you with the next breath say they cannot have it unless they pay £2 an acre for it; and they are not likely to pay £2 an acre for land that is not worth it, and few wishing to take up land have the necessary means to take up a sufficient area of such land as is available and could be occupied profitably. Again, the maximum holding of second-class land needs to be extended very much beyond 320 acres; for, while 320 acres of agricultural land is enough to enable a man to support himself and his family, 320 acres which can only be devoted to pastoral purposes is certainly not sufficient; and the limitation to 320 acres has acted as an absolute barrier to the land being taken up on the deferred-payment system. Now, there are considerable areas of land that can be cut out from large pastoral holdings—in some cases from five thousand to ten thousand acres, or even more—which, under provisions such as are proposed in this Bill, would be eagerly taken up by farmers' sons, thrifty shepherds, and people of that class, who have saved perhaps from £400 to £700 each; and there are many of them who would be glad to take up a thousand, fifteen hundred, or two thousand acres on which to make homes of their own, and upon which they would be enabled to support themselves and their families in comfort. I congratulate the honourable gentleman, therefore, on having brought down clauses which, I believe, will largely conduce to the extension of settlement in the Canterbury District in particular. Now, in connection with that I will refer to the objection of the honourable member for Waihemo to clause 10, which says,—

“No person shall be entitled to purchase for cash within any one survey district more than six hundred and forty acres of ordinary land and two thousand acres of second-class land under this Act. And every person applying for land for cash shall, before he makes his application or within three days thereafter, make and lodge a declaration, in a form to be prepared by the Commissioner.”

The honourable gentleman said that, while the object is to prevent the aggregation of large blocks of land into single holdings, this clause will not effect what it is intended to effect; and I fear it will not. The object of the section has my entire approval, and I think it will

have the approval of all those who desire to see that it shall not be possible for a number of persons to agree to purchase sections as agents for one individual, who in this way might be able to obtain an estate of twenty thousand acres at 10s. an acre, by taking two thousand acres from each nominal buyer, and so be enabled to obtain a very large block almost as rapidly as if he had himself bought it all direct from the Crown. I hope the honourable gentleman will be able to draft another clause and submit it in Committee—a clause calculated to be more effective than the one now in the Bill. If the thing works out in this way, it seems to me that, whilst we might be doing a great deal of good, yet at the same time much evil would also be done: and it is absolutely necessary that we should have further safeguards than are provided in clause 11. Clause 13 provides a necessary *sequitur*, as I think, of clause 9. This clause 13 was objected to by the honourable member for Waihemo, on the ground that it took away all the safeguard for *bona fide* settlement of deferred-payment lands. I think the honourable gentleman was speaking a little without book there, for I can scarcely think that, well as he is acquainted with the Land Act, he could have recently referred to the clause or portions of the clause which it is here proposed to repeal; for, if he turns to subsections (5) to (8) of section 114, which are not to be applicable to these extended areas, he will see at once why these lands are to be exempted from the operation of those subsections. These provide, in the case of a licensee of rural land, that he is to cultivate one-twentieth of the land during the first year from the date of his license, another one-twentieth in the second year, and one-fifth of the land within four years, and so on. Now, as the land to be dealt with is not agricultural but pastoral land, it is quite evident that this provision could not be insisted upon in regard to land to be held in holdings of a thousand, fifteen hundred, or two thousand acres mainly intended to be devoted to pastoral purposes. Necessarily, there must be modifications, and I think that the modifications here provided for are reasonable. These require that he shall put substantial improvements upon the land, to the value of 10 per cent. in the first year, another 10 per cent. during the second year, and altogether 30 per cent. within the first three years. That, I think, is a sufficient safeguard for the *bona fide*-settlement intentions of the holders. Another feature of the Bill of which I heartily approve is that which deals with the provisos to sections 237 and 240 of the Land Act. Those provisos will be found attached to the sections of the Act which deal with the management of education reserves and other endowment reserves. The object of those clauses is this: that, whenever lands have been set apart for these purposes, they should be capable of being utilised for settlement without interfering with the trustees in the disposal of the revenue. Instances have occurred, however, with which the Minister of Lands is quite familiar, in which efforts have been fruitlessly

made to induce the bodies having the administration of these reserves so to deal with them that they might be utilised for settlement purposes; the Boards having control of these lands having refused to do so. Power is now given to the Governor in Council to require that these lands shall be so dealt with; and the Minister is quite right in saying that that power will seldom require to be exercised, because the knowledge that it exists will induce the bodies who have control of these lands to pay some regard to the interests of settlement and the wishes of the people. I touched to some extent upon this matter when moving, the other day, the second reading of a measure which had this very object in view. I will bring the matter clearly before the minds of honourable members by the following statement: If they will turn to the returns to be found in the Appendices of the Journals of the House, 1885-86, they will find that the area of education reserves amounts, in the Provincial Districts of Otago and Canterbury alone, to 880,000 acres. Among these education reserves there are 153 the acreage of which ranges from fifty acres to one hundred thousand acres, and, of these, 139 range between fifty and a thousand acres each. These reserves are scattered all over the country, and many of them are situated in precisely the positions where they could be utilised with the greatest advantage for such purposes as village settlements, small holdings, and small farms; and if they were so utilised the necessity for such a measure as the Land Acquisition Bill or a Land for Settlement Bill would be almost entirely done away with. The honourable member for Masterton spoke of the Land Acquisition Bill or any measure of that sort as a most empirical proposal, one that was under no circumstances necessary. I do not agree with him. I believe there are, as in the South Island—even if the education reserves were dealt with as I have recommended—places, like Oamaru and others, where it would be very desirable, if the land could be obtained at a reasonable price, that it should be so obtained and cut up into small holdings and leased for the benefit of the labouring population, and for small farmers also. But the instances in which it would be necessary to so acquire land would be very few if the education reserves could be rendered available for purposes of settlement as here proposed. I do hope, therefore, that the Minister will persevere with this proposal, and that we shall have it this year assented to; and then the necessity for coming down with anything like a Land Acquisition Bill will be postponed for some years to come. I touched, a short time ago, upon the necessity for some further provision, as following out the intention of clause 10, to prevent the pastoral estate of the Crown from being bought up at the low price of 10s. an acre. If most of the pastoral country is to come under the definition of second-class land, the whole of which may be purchased at 10s. an acre, I incline to think that the honourable gentleman will find that it will be speedily disposed of in the way I have indicated;

*Major Steward*

and it would not be at all desirable that that should happen, for, if there be any land that should be kept as a national endowment, it should be our pastoral estate. I think the honourable gentleman, if he agrees with me in that, will feel it his duty to devise some clause which will prevent this result, which, I again say, may possibly happen if the Bill is passed in its present form. I do not intend to delay the House by going into other features of the Bill, but there is one matter to which I must just refer, and that is the proposal to do away with Waste Lands Boards altogether. I am free to admit that under the administration of the Waste Lands Boards everything that we could have wished has not happened, and that many things that we should have wished otherwise have happened; but I doubt whether the proposal which is made in this Bill will not bring with it, if carried into effect, greater evils than those we are at present regretting. The honourable member's chief argument in favour of the change which he proposes to make is, as I understood him, that he wants to do away with the roundabout method at present in vogue, which interposes difficulties and delays between the making application for land and the time of actually getting the land. It is a very good object; but I fear that, if everything is to be referred to Wellington, and if the number of cases brought before the Waste Lands Board of Otago is any criterion of the number of cases brought before other Boards in the colony, and if the whole of these have to be brought before the Minister, he will not be able to give matters that prompt attention which he desires to give, and that the condition of affairs, in that case, will be worse than anything now to be observed. I do not know that it would not be wiser to take some less sweeping step in the meantime. I should like to see the Waste Lands Board, if possible, brought more into touch with the people than they are at the present time under the nomination system. I think that there should be some nominated members on the Board, but that mostly it should be an elective body. If a Board of this kind cannot be devised, then I think that, if the Boards were made to consist of a smaller number of members, as suggested by the honourable member for Waihemo, say, three, we should arrive at a better solution of the difficulty than we shall by leaving the whole matter to the Minister. That is a matter which, no doubt, will be carefully considered. In the meantime, I simply express my own view, and I shall, between this and the next time that the Bill appears before us, endeavour to give it the closest possible attention, with a view to seeing what will be the best step in that direction. With this one exception, upon which I cannot quite see my way at present to go heartily with the Minister, the Bill in the main has my approval. I congratulate him very heartily upon those features in the measure of which I have expressed approval. I believe this Bill contains a number of proposals which will be of great benefit to the colony, and that its result will be to give an impetus to settlement, and greatly help the

country to recover from the depression under which it is suffering.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, I cannot help thinking the honourable gentleman who introduced this Bill does not fully realise its effect as it is brought down before us, or, if he does so, then I say that it introduces a policy of quite a new character and of momentous importance; for, as I read the measure—and I have studied it carefully—it means neither more nor less, in its present shape, than to enable the Government to make forced sales of the principal lands remaining to the Crown. Before I proceed to criticize the Bill I should like to make a few remarks upon the quantity of land which remains at the disposition of the colony. I find, by a return which has been laid on the table of the House, that the area of land already disposed of, either by sale or otherwise, is 18,400,000 acres; of which, 12,700,000 acres have been sold, and 5,700,000 acres have been given away in grants or reserved. No less a sum than £12,800,000 in cash has been received as the result of the sale of these Crown lands, of which amount Canterbury contributed nearly half—£6,000,000—and Otago and Southland £3,600,000. We are told that the area remaining open for selection now is 11,500,000 acres; besides which there remains for future disposal, irrespective of Native lands, 19,600,000 acres. Of course, of this land remaining open for selection, irrespective of Native lands, and amounting, in round figures, to about thirty million acres, there is not much which can be considered as equal to that which has already been selected. It is, of course, natural that the best land should go first. On the other hand it has to be recollected that, as population increases, and as there is a larger demand in the way of local wants, and as interest falls, the price of the land which remains to us should not show a very great disparity as compared with the land sold in the past. Then, there is another point I should like to call the honourable gentleman's attention to, and it is this: that the average areas held by single owners in the colony are very large, unduly large, in my opinion. There are 1,924 persons holding each over a thousand acres, under different holdings, including freeholds and leaseholds, but not pastoral leases; they absorb no less than 12,600,000 acres, or an average to each person holding them of 6,564 acres. Surely it is not desirable that we should increase this average. Legislation, or, at any rate, the desire to legislate, appears to be in the contrary direction, for we have had, at various times, attempts made, with more or less of approval by members on both sides of the House, to buy back some of the land held in excessively large holdings. And yet this is a measure which goes in an exactly opposite direction. It is a measure which, in my opinion, will increase the size of the holdings instead of diminishing it. I may be wrong, but in my opinion the result of this Bill will be a war between the landed and the landless classes. We are proceeding in an exactly opposite direction to the course adopted in other countries,

where the inclination is to reduce the size of holdings, and to enable small proprietors to hold the soil. I express this opinion, and it must be taken for what it is worth: that if, by the greed of great land-speculation, this Bill is passed, the inevitable result will be a very severe graduated land-tax, if the colony finds that it is dispossessed of its lands at unfair prices as the result of passing this measure. We shall then have to insist upon the land-owners paying a heavy graduated tax in proportion to the extent of their holdings. This Bill, as I read it, enables persons to buy land to an unlimited extent. It is a Bill to encourage dummyism, if, indeed, dummyism is necessary; for it is so open under this Bill to obtain unlimited areas that real dummyism would only require to be concealed under the thinnest of veils. Permission is given to purchase 2,000 acres within each survey district. It appears to be open to the Government to appoint as many survey districts as they choose.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—The survey districts have been determined for years.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Is there no power of altering them?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—The whole of our records are based on them, and the survey business is transacted on them.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I am obliged to the honourable gentleman for the information. Will he further say how many there are in the colony?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—I cannot say that; but they average 100,000 acres each.

Sir J. VOGEL.—That is about 250 survey districts, or, in other words, permission is given to each individual to purchase 500,000 acres. I am obliged to the honourable gentleman for the information, and hardly think it will be necessary to increase the number of survey districts in order to give full play to persons desirous of obtaining large holdings. Well, Sir, as regards dummyism, it is open under this Bill, apparently, that each man can buy land, and his wife and his uncles and his aunts, his sisters and brothers and children, and his manservant and his maidservant can all buy land. In fact, I cannot see anything to prevent one family from becoming very large possessors of land without going outside their own limits. It is true there must be a declaration, and I do not know why the honourable gentleman has not put that declaration in the Bill; it has been usual to do so. I have taken a very high legal opinion this afternoon, and it is to this effect: that it would not be possible to put anything into the declaration which would at all meet with the statutory powers set out in the Bill. So that if the honourable gentleman relies on that declaration I do not think he will find it will enable him to stop dummyism. And even supposing a penalty is imposed and can be enforced—that is to say, that the person who had bought for some particular monopolist, having sold the land to him in defiance of the declaration which is not set forth, and which a high legal opinion says is of no effect, is convicted of having broken

the law—what is the penalty? Twenty-five per cent. It seems a large amount, but to persons who desire to have land in large quantities 2s. 6d. an acre is a small amount. Persons who are willing to give 10s. an acre for land would be quite willing to give 12s. 6d. Persons who secure land in this way—and many of them are forced to do it, as I shall show before I have finished—buy the land with the expectation of getting a large additional value for it when population increases. The price of produce at the present time has very little to do with speculations of this kind, for produce is certain to rise. As history tells us, wars will break out in other countries, and then the produce of these distant parts of the world is sure to rise, and with it the price of land. There is nothing, therefore, to prevent an era of speculation because of a penalty of 2s. 6d. an acre. The honourable gentleman will tell me that it is only second-class which is to be put up at 10s. an acre; but it appears to me that this is a matter which is to be left entirely in the hands of the Minister, because he abolishes all the Land Boards in the colony. There is thus an end to all local control and all local representation, and the Minister places himself in direct communication with the persons who may be forced, as I shall show, to buy land, or who may be desirous of entering into the speculation. Then, not only is this Bill framed so as to enable all the pastoral land in the colony to be locked up, but so as to destroy our present pastoral revenue of nearly £200,000 a year. Also, for the first time, power is given to obtain freeholds on the goldfields. A number of persons who now have land on goldfields, and cannot get freeholds from it will by this measure be permitted to do so. I have no doubt that honourable members have observed a sort of foot-note to the effect that the land on the goldfields will be subject to the Act which provides for the resumption of lands in case they prove auriferous. I do not know how such a clause could have got into the Bill. It seems to have been put in by a layman and not by a lawyer, for it is mere surplusage. All lands sold since 1873, whether on goldfields or not, are amenable to this provision as to the taking of land if it is auriferous, and that provision is of such a curious nature, and gives so little facility to miners, that, notwithstanding the law has been in force for some fifteen years, it has rarely, if ever, been used. So much, therefore, for the protection provided by the measure for the resumption of private land if it prove to be auriferous. It appears to me to be a very sad thing that we, in this hurried manner, should obliterate the work of years. We have for the last six years been going on in the direction of carefully preserving the lands of the colony for the purpose of settlement and of discouraging speculation. There are some features in this Bill which give relief to persons who have bought with a view to settlement, and those are the spots in the Bill of which I am able to approve. But I look, as I am entitled to on its second reading, to the whole scope and pur-

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port of the measure. It is a measure to reverse the direction in which we have been proceeding during not only the reign of the last Government, but during the reign of the Government which preceded it, the head of which Government was the same gentleman who is the head of the present Government. We are going, as I say, in the direction of undoing all the work of the last two Governments. If the Bill merely gave a choice of various tenures to persons who wished to acquire land, if the Bill contained adequate safeguards against the acquisition of enormous tracts of country, I should speak of it in a different tone; but it appears to me that the aid which should be given to those who really desire to become settlers is a small feature in the Bill. The prominent feature in it is the desire to establish a system by which the Crown lands of the colony can be sacrificed for the purpose of obtaining ready money. I shall proceed to remark upon a few of the points of the Bill, although it may be said that they can be remedied in Committee. I do not think it is right that the Surveyor-General should be in the position of valuing land. It is right, I think, that he should define its nature and describe what it is, but when it comes to putting a commercial value upon the land I think that is not a duty which ought to be intrusted to that officer. I am not speaking of the gentleman who now holds that office, because I am aware that no one could be better fitted than that gentleman to do anything of the kind; but I say it should not be in the nature of the Surveyor-General's business to take heed of the commercial value of land. As regards clause 3, this is particularising where I have before generalised, but I may say that it will enable the whole of the pastoral lands of Canterbury, which will shortly fall into the hands of the Crown, to be purchased for 10s. an acre, notwithstanding that the price hitherto has been £2 an acre, and that a large quantity of the land was withdrawn some eight years ago, I think, under the declaration that it was not desirable that it should be taken up at £2 an acre. This land is now to be offered at 10s. an acre. I put it to the House, is it a fair thing to those who, over a long course of years, have purchased from the Crown at a so much larger price, that this reduction should now take place? As regards the proposal for the unsurveyed land, I have treated it as being under the nominal restriction of 2,000 acres; but it is not at all clear that it is so. It is not clear that the honourable gentleman means to limit persons applying for unsurveyed land to the 640 acres of first-class land or 2,000 acres of second-class land. Again, I took a legal opinion upon that subject this afternoon, and that opinion was that it was exceedingly doubtful what was meant, and that it was transparently absurd to suppose that persons who wanted a large quantity of land for their wives and sisters, and aunts and uncles, and so on, would be content to make an application for 2,000 acres. Perhaps the honourable gentleman will say if it is the intention of the Bill

that persons applying for unsurveyed land are to limit their application to 640 or 2,000 acres.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—The quality of the land will be ascertained before it is opened, even as unsurveyed.

Sir J. VOGEL.—All that is in the patronage of the Government; and that does not go to the root of the question I am asking. What I want to know is this: If a person wants to purchase twenty thousand acres of unsurveyed land, whether he must send in twenty applications in different names, or whether he could send in one application in his own name and undertake to find the money for the twenty thousand acres. It is always usual in measures of this kind to attach a fly-page showing the alterations in the law proposed to be effected by the Bill. The honourable gentleman has explained to me that he inadvertently omitted to do that. It is a convenient plan, because we know then, without argument, what is the intention of the Bill. Now, however, each person must form his own opinion, supplemented, of course, by the remarks of the honourable gentleman in moving the second reading. I was unfortunate enough not to hear the remarks of the honourable gentleman, and therefore I have had to interpret the Bill to the best of my ability. This Bill means, first of all, an enormous amount of patronage to the Government. The abolition of the Waste Lands Boards throughout the country throws upon the Minister in Wellington the whole weight of deciding from one end of the country to the other who shall or who shall not be allowed to enjoy the advantages which this Bill will bestow. I do not think, whatever may be the cost of the present Land Boards, that the various districts of the colony which hitherto have enjoyed their assistance will be willing to part with them; and, no matter what can be said in the interests of retrenchment, such a piece of centralisation—it is neither more nor less—will not be acceptable to the colony, in my opinion. Then, the small-run system is ended. Twenty thousand acres cannot be considered a small run in a colony like this. Virtually, the provisions in regard to perpetual-lease and deferred-payment lands are also to be ended. Instead of those safeguards which now exist in the shape of an obligation to cultivate and to effect permanent improvements, amounting in the one case to 20 per cent. and in the other to £1 per acre, all that is asked of the settler is to put on 30 per cent. within six years. Supposing the land to be worth 10s. an acre he has to spend 8s. 4d. an acre upon it; or, if the land be worth £1 an acre, he must spend 6s. 8d. upon it. Whilst I think the present obligations are too heavy, and especially the withholding of the freeholds for six years is rather too onerous, I think this Bill errs in the opposite direction, for I consider that some security should be taken that persons who obtain the land under exceptionally advantageous terms should really intend to settle upon it. Then, as I have said, practically, for cash, any quantity of land is open to any one person to obtain. The Bill might be, I think, correctly entitled “An Act to encourage Land-

speculation.” Before I finish I should like to say a few words about the past. In 1876, when I had the honour of making the first Financial Statement that year, with the full approval of the members of the Government, its chief and leading feature was to point out the danger that had arisen from excessive land-speculation, and to recommend that a very material increase should be made in the prices of land. It was pointed out that it was not fair to those who had purchased land at a certain price that others should be able to come in and obtain the land with greater advantages. It was proposed to make a general addition to the price of land throughout the colony. It was an evil day when the Government which succeeded me abandoned that intention. The consequence was seen in the huge speculation and gambling in land. During the two years no less than two millions and a quarter of revenue was obtained from land-sales. I am speaking from memory—my figures may not be quite exact: at any rate, the amount was over two millions for the two years. It has left a legacy of disaster and misfortune to the colony which we have not yet escaped from, for it should not be supposed that it was altogether speculation arising out of gambling instincts. A great deal of it was caused by men who had no desire to purchase land, no intention to do so, being forced to purchase, because otherwise their properties would have been confiscated by speculators. They were forced to purchase runs a long time in advance of the time when they required them, because if they did not do so speculators would take them up. Now, this Bill revives, or endeavours to revive, that period again, and it does so in this manner: that it reduces the price of land enormously, gives the utmost facilities for obtaining it, and offers inducements to persons who are inclined to speculate. The banks are full of money now; and it is quite possible—I am not prepared to express an opinion—the Bill may answer the purpose for which it seems to exist, and it may lead to another huge gamble in land. Either it will do that, or it will stand upon record that the value of the Crown estate has become so enormously reduced that it will affect the fiscal operations in connection with the land-purchases from the Crown; it will create disaster in reference to the securities now placed upon the land according to what is supposed to be its present value, or lead to an era of speculation. And bear this in mind: The poor man will suffer. You will have what occurred in New South Wales, and what occurred on a small scale here—a new era of forced speculation. There will be no unemployed if this Bill passes. Any person possessing a very moderate amount of means could go round the various runs of the colony and exercise that occupation which is known as “black-mailing.” It would only be necessary for two or three persons to appear at a station and commence to drive in pegs and so on, to either force the owner of the station to purchase the land or buy off those who are “black-mailing” him. That is what took place in New South Wales.

Persons visited a station, and the holder of the run had to buy them off or submit to the eyes being picked out of his run. All the runholders of the colony who had not the means should either have to embarrass themselves by obtaining loans, or would have to submit to their runs being taken from them. That is a new version of finding employment, and a fresh local industry, though I cannot say that I think it a desirable one. I trust this Bill will not pass in its present shape. Because of its redeeming features, I shall not move that it be read a second time this day six months, but I hope it will come back to us from the Waste Lands Committee in an improved condition. But, if it is to pass as it now is, I venture to say that it will prove a curse to the colony, and that the present is a time when it is entirely undesirable to encourage fresh speculative operations—not only encourage them, but to force those men who are not inclined to do anything of the kind to do so in self-defence. I regret I should have spoken in so harsh a manner of this measure, because I do not fail to recognise the ability with which it has been drawn up; and, for my part, I recognise the solid qualities, and desire to be of advantage to the colony, which, I believe, eminently distinguish the honourable gentleman who is in charge of the Bill. It is really no reflection upon him that he should have failed, in the very short time he has had at his disposal, to bring down a measure altering so radically the land-laws of the colony; and I rather think the honourable gentleman might, without any discredit to himself, confess that the Bill goes much further than he intended, or admit that it is not right, at so short a notice, to bring down a Bill which I might, without offence, term as of a revolutionary character. Sir, I have purposely made my remarks as brief as I could make them.

Mr. FISHER.—Sir, the honourable gentleman need not have regretted his harshness of expression, because it is now generally recognised that he has become so blunted in feeling and perception that any harshness of expression on his part has little or no effect whatever upon the House. I hardly know what effect these rambling denunciations of the Government are intended to have upon the House, especially when applied to a measure prepared with such care as to have extracted from the honourable gentleman the admission that great care had evidently been bestowed upon its preparation. Why, Sir, in regard to the simplest provisions of the Bill the honourable gentleman has displayed the most complete ignorance, for he asked the very simple question, whether the right to select the 640 or the 2,000 acres was to confer the right to select any description of land of that quality before survey. The question is answered by the Bill itself. If that were the only point upon which the honourable gentleman had displayed such entire ignorance of the provisions of the Bill I should not have risen to answer his ranting denunciations, for the speech was composed of denunciation throughout, not criticism. He

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said the effect of the Bill would be to lead to a huge gamble in land. Sir, I hurl back that accusation; and I ask the the honourable gentleman whether such a charge should have emanated from him, above all men! I ask whether he has forgotten that now famous Land Acquisition Bill introduced by his colleague, the honourable member for Wanganui. Sir, if ever there was an attempt to play off upon this country anything in the shape of a huge gamble in land, it was contained in the Bill of the honourable gentleman's colleague. If ever an attempt was made by any Government, or by a member of any Government, to play into the hands of large landowners and speculators, I say the attempt was made in that Bill.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Will the honourable gentleman pardon me a moment? I wish to say I had in my mind what the head of the Government expressly stated—that the Bill was a desirable Bill.

Major ATKINSON.—No; I did not. I said, with safeguards.

Mr. FISHER.—Next the honourable gentleman said one of the principal objects of this Bill was to sacrifice the Crown lands of the colony for the purpose of obtaining revenue. Am I correct in attributing that remark to the honourable gentleman? The honourable gentleman gives an affirmative nod. Then, Sir, the answer to that statement is: that under the land-laws of his own Government, the honourable gentleman had so mismanaged the land revenue of the country that it had in one short year fallen off to the extent of £56,000; and because we propose in this Bill to administer the land-laws of the country that they shall, at all events, meet the necessary expenditure connected with their administration, we are accused of sacrificing, or with attempting to sacrifice, the lands of the colony for the purpose of obtaining revenue. Now, let us see by the records of the country, let us prove, out of his own mouth, how he managed—or, I should say, mismanaged—the land-laws and the land-revenue of this colony. In his Financial Statement for 1886 the honourable gentleman testifies to the very able and efficient manner in which he and his Government had administered the land-laws by making this statement:—

“The Land Fund Account had a balance at the commencement of the year of £31,931, and at the end of the year there was a deficit of £20,384. This eminently unsatisfactory result is but the consummation of a series of diminished receipts not compensated sufficiently by reduced expenditure.”

And the honourable gentleman, after this humiliating confession of his inability and the inability of his Government, comes down and says—because we propose to administer the land-laws in such a way as to insure that they shall not entail loss upon the colony—that we are proposing a scheme to sacrifice the Crown land for the purpose of obtaining revenue. He followed up the statement I have just read by saying in his Financial Statement for 1887—and here, again, is another tribute to the



honourable gentleman's great genius in land-administration,—

"The deficiency in the Land Fund has increased. I shall have to explain later that the change in the land policy is accountable for the result, and that it is necessary to make some permanent provision to meet the altered financial condition of this class of revenue."

That I hold to be a plain and distinct admission of the failure of the land policy of his Government. Then the honourable gentleman proceeded to say that it was a very sad thing that we should, in this hurried manner, obliterate the work of six years. What did the honourable gentleman mean by that? He meant to impute, I presume, that we were attempting to disturb the perpetual-lease and deferred-payment systems. Those were the systems to which the honourable gentleman alluded in his reference to the attempt to upset the work of the last six years. The statement is totally incorrect. But did the honourable gentleman himself approve of the systems which he says had been in operation for the past six years? For instance, what is his real opinion, when he cares to give it to us, of the perpetual-lease system? It is this; and neither I, nor any member of the Government, nor any member of this House, has ever spoken of that perpetual-lease system in the contemptuous terms in which the honourable gentleman has spoken of it himself: In his now celebrated Ashburton speech, he said no one but an idiot would ever think of taking up land on the perpetual-lease system. The honourable gentleman—

Sir J. VOGEL.—But you are misreading what I said.

Mr. FISHER.—I will read what the honourable gentleman said, if he wishes it. I am referring to the Ashburton speech, in which he said that no one but an idiot would ever think of taking up land on the system of perpetual lease. But this Bill does not propose to do away with the perpetual-lease system. We only propose to render the system less onerous to those who take up lands under it. And, because we do that, the honourable gentleman says we are attempting to do away with the work of the last six years. What a change has come over the spirit of the honourable gentleman's dream! How tenderly he now watches over the "idiotic" perpetual lease! And how has that wonderful change been brought about? It has been brought about by the honourable gentleman's translation from these benches to those. He has proved a perfect political teetotum. He is of one opinion to-day and another to-morrow on any given question. He never has and never had a fixed idea on any subject whatever, and we never had a better illustration of that than is contained in the speech of the honourable gentleman to-night. It is said this Bill will encourage speculation, and that the lands of the colony are to be mopped up by huge speculators and their sisters and their cousins and their aunts. That is the purest moonshine. What does the Bill propose to do? Its salient feature is that

it will promote settlement upon small holdings, for it says that not more than 640 acres shall be taken up in any one survey district—that is to say, 640 acres of first-class land. I agree with the honourable member for Masterton that the term "ordinary lands" is a mistaken term, and that it should be "first-class lands." Not more than 640 acres of first-class land is to be taken up in any one survey district, nor more than 2,000 acres of second-class land. I ask whether a Bill so framed is not a Bill devised directly in the interest of settlement and in the interest of small holdings throughout the country. Surely 640 acres cannot be called a holding of unreasonable extent. Is it more than a man can make a fair living upon? And then, when you come to the 2,000 acres of land of inferior quality, is that too large a holding? I say it is not; and when we declare by legislative enactment that no man shall hold more than 640 acres of first-class land or more than 2,000 acres of second-class land in any one survey district, I say that such a provision is fair and equitable, and beneficial to the interests of the country. Moreover, we have so altered the law that people who come here with moderate means will have the opportunity of purchasing for cash land set apart under any one of the systems which exist in the country; and Heaven knows we have enough systems. Yet, because we say a man shall have the option of acquiring land under the perpetual-lease system, or the deferred-payment system—which is the best system of all—or that if he has money and can pay cash he may acquire the freehold at once, that is called an illiberal system, or a system devised in the interests of speculators. I confess I never, in the whole course of my life, listened to a speech so devoid of common-sense. Is it not known to every member of this House that the provision which debarred men from taking up fifty or a hundred acres of land and paying cash for it has injured the country? Has it not been the cry throughout the land that the country has suffered through the stoppage of cash sales, and that people who came willing to purchase and to become valuable settlers have been, in consequence, driven out of the country? The answer is a universal answer, and every member of this House, I am sure, is in a position to give some instances of persons who have been compelled to go away from the country because they were not permitted to pay cash and acquire a freehold. Sir, I did not intend to discuss the Bill in detail, because to do so is the special function of my honourable friend the Minister of Lands. I should not, indeed, have risen but for the speech of the honourable member for Christchurch North, which, to begin with, displayed entire ignorance of the provisions of the Bill, and, in the second place, evinced a strong and wholly unwarrantable spirit of antagonism to the Government. I regret that the honourable gentleman should have spoken in such terms. Any member of the House who will analyse the Bill must clearly see that it is an honest and well-meant endeavour to settle the lands

of the country, and to insure that the expenses of administration shall be recouped by a moderate return from the sale of land. The principal and the only variation from the existing system is that a man who desires to acquire a moderate-sized freehold by paying for it in cash shall have the privilege of doing so. And to say that that is an unwholesome or undesirable feature to introduce into the land-laws of the country is to tell me something that is past belief. I am sorry such a speech should have been made. The Bill does not justify it. The honourable gentleman's remarks appear to have been dictated purely by his antagonistic feeling toward the Government.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, the Bill now before us well merits every word that has been said against it by the honourable member for Christchurch North; and I will say this: that I do not think that ever a more pernicious Bill was introduced into this Chamber, or a Bill whose effect was more detrimental to the welfare of the great mass of the people of New Zealand than this will be if it be passed. Sir, I think I shall be able to prove that when I go into details on the Bill: but, for the present, I will deal with the Minister of Education. That honourable gentleman's position upon the Government benches in reference to the honourable member for Christchurch North reminds me of a sable-coloured gentleman who was engaged by and always accompanied the Salvation Army. That gentleman's functions were well known to the larrikin class. The Hon. the Minister of Education has taken up the negro's forcible-ejection position in this House. It may say something for the physical, but without doubt it says very little for the mental, capabilities of the honourable gentleman. In the case of the gentleman that accompanied the Salvation Army little intelligence was required, but brute force was indispensable. But even those who sometimes were ungenerously treated found a way of punishing that gentleman, and that was simply upon occasions treading on his corns. It would appear to me as though the honourable member for Christchurch North had in some way or other trodden upon the corns of the Minister of Education, for he never misses an opportunity of reviling him as far as he possibly can, and of ridiculing any statement made by that honourable gentleman. If the Minister of Education were somewhat consistent in his statements, or would endeavour, as far as possible, to be consistent, I should, perhaps, excuse him; but he does nothing of the kind. He did not treat the honourable member for Christchurch North fairly, for in quoting the sentence from that honourable gentleman's speech at Ashburton, he should have completed the sentence, if he had the newspaper report here, and he would have seen that it would bear a different interpretation altogether. And, Sir, the law has been altered since, and altered by the Government of the honourable member for Christchurch North, from the state in which it was

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when he said that persons would be devoid of intelligence if they took up perpetual leases.

Mr. FISHER.—I will read the speech.

Mr. SEDDON.—My honourable friend should have read the whole of the paragraph when speaking. He ought to have done justice then: it is too late now. Then, as to this question of the deficit, as pointed out by the Colonial Treasurer there is no deficit; it is simply a question of the method of keeping the accounts and making certain charges against the Land Fund. No deficit would be shown if the rents were credited to the Land Fund Account: the revenue from the land is paid out in a different direction, and not credited to the Land Fund. To say that there is a deficit of £56,000 is saying that which is not correct. There would be no deficit if the accounts were kept as they ought to be. Then, I will put it in another way: if we have in days gone by been reserving the land for the people, whilst at the same time our population has been increasing, does it mean that, after so improving the value of lands, that profit is to be swept away by the Bill before us? Are we to have nothing to compensate us for that improvement? Far be it from me that I should be a party to sacrificing these lands because the country wants a few pounds now. We should not sacrifice hastily and without due consideration the savings of past years. Here is another instance of inconsistency on the part of the Minister of Education: I heard him say—and it tingled in my ears—words to this effect: "We shall not be found one Minister in one lobby and another Minister in another lobby;" and yet the night after that, Sir, I saw that honourable gentleman going into one lobby and his colleagues going into the other. Where is his consistency? And yet he points to the honourable member for Christchurch North and says that he is inconsistent. Then, where is the consistency of the present Premier? He was at the head of the Government from 1879 to 1884, when Mr. Rolleston was Minister of Lands—a gentleman who was one of the most able administrators of lands we have ever had, for he had given a lifelong study to the question; and are all his labours, the labours of a master-mind in that direction, to be swept away at a moment's notice—swept away, when the Premier holds the same position that he held when Mr. Rolleston was Minister of Lands?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Altered circumstances of the colony.

Mr. SEDDON.—Altered circumstances! The colony was in a much worse position from 1879 to 1883; and I can prove it. The present Premier, when Colonial Treasurer, told the people of New Zealand that we were on the verge of ruin, the verge of repudiation, and there was a deficiency of over £800,000. We have not been told that now. Yet did the Premier then endeavour to enact land-laws sacrificing the public estate for the sake of cash? No, Sir; because he was guided by his able colleague, the late Minister of Lands. During those times, when the colony was in a far worse position than it is in now, we conserved

the principles of the Land Act of 1877, and maintained the same principles in the Act of 1882; but now they are to be swept away. Here again I join issue with the Minister of Education. The late Minister of Lands considered that plots of land of from ten to fifty acres were sufficient for poor men; but here we have the present Minister of Education saying that a mile square of country is a small slice for a poor man, whilst, as the land-laws have been in Canterbury and Otago, five and ten acres was the most that was given in the proximity of towns. Now we are told by an authority on the subject that 640 acres of first-class land and 2,000 acres of second-class land is a small area. Every word that was uttered, every syllable, showed clearly and conclusively that the Minister of Education knew he was speaking that which was somewhat strained, because it had an entirely different meaning. It simply meant that the poor men here are the squatters, those engaged in sheep- and cattle-raising; not the settler, not the man who is in the large towns, the man who, in the interests of the colony, ought to be put on the land to lessen the number of the unemployed. I will now proceed to review the measure before us. Coming to the first part of it, I scarcely think the Minister of Lands—and I give him every credit for wishing to do his duty—I scarcely think that the honourable gentleman knows exactly the full effect of the Bill that is before us. I feel inclined to think that if he were aware of its effect he would not ask the House to proceed further with it. The 2nd section proposes an entire change in so far as the definition of land is concerned. I should like to ask the Minister of Lands whether he can find out any law relating to land in New Zealand where any land is designated "ordinary land." There is no interpretation in the Bill before us of what is meant by ordinary land. I find in the most vital part of the Bill that first-class land is to be £1 per acre. Then we come to second-class land: this is an alteration put there designedly, so as to be concurrent with the rest of the Bill. It is here provided that the whole power shall be vested in the Minister of Lands for the time being. He is to say what is ordinary and what is first-class land, and is to fix the value, and to say that so long as the minimum price of land is not less than appears in the Appendices this land may be sold at that price. Have honourable members turned over the Appendices to the Land Act? If they have, they will find that, excepting first-class land, the Government wish to take the power to themselves to sell the land at 5s. per acre.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—No. Show the Appendices.

Mr. SEDDON.—Auckland is classified as first, second, and third, at 15s., 10s., and 5s. respectively; Hawke's Bay, first, second, and third, at £1, 15s., and 5s.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—The honourable member stated just now that second-class in the Appendices was 5s. an acre. I presume he meant third-class land.

Mr. SEDDON.—The honourable member

misunderstood me, or I did not put it to the House clearly. I said the Government were taking the power to sell land under this Bill at 5s. an acre, and I say so still. We have Nelson land from 10s. to £2 an acre. In Marlborough the classification is rural and pastoral, rural land not less than £1, and pastoral not less than 10s. I wish to draw attention to what I believe is a cardinal point of the Bill: under the existing law no land can be sold in Canterbury at less than £2 an acre; and yet, in the face of that, the Government wish to take the power to sell the land of Canterbury at 5s. an acre.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—Where?

Mr. SEDDON.—Why, under the powers contemplated to be given to the Governor—and which means the Minister for Lands for the time being—under the Bill. Clause 3 clearly repeals the Appendices applicable to Canterbury under the Land Act of 1885, or otherwise no land could be sold at less than £2 per acre. In the repeals mentioned by section 29 of this Bill the following words will be found:—

"All enactments, words, phrases, and references throughout the said Act and the Appendices thereto which shall be inapplicable in the construction of or inconsistent with the context of the said Act as amended by this Act, or which have been rendered nugatory by this Act."

Again, the latter part of section 2 of this Bill is as follows:—

"The Governor may, in such notification, assign a price to each section within a block, and he may, subject to a new notification being given, and to the provisions of this Act, raise or reduce such price. He may also, where the land within a block is declared open at the same price per acre, by a subsequent notification or notifications, raise or reduce such price."

Mr. FISHER.—The honourable gentleman said that the Government proposed to sell land in Canterbury at 5s. an acre: will he point that out?

Mr. SEDDON.—I shall do my best to do so; but, like all other things, it takes time.

Mr. HISLOP.—Imagination.

Mr. SEDDON.—It does not require imagination or to have much of a legal training to point out clearly what is covered by sections 2, 3, 28, and 29 of the Bill. Clause 8 says,—

"The notification mentioned in section two shall fix the price at which, and the time when, the land mentioned therein shall be open for selection, but such price shall not be less than twenty shillings per acre for ordinary land, or ten shillings per acre for second-class land, except in the case of lands within land districts, where the same may, by virtue of the said Act or its Appendices, be sold at a less price; in which case the minimum price may be less than the foregoing prices, but shall not be less than the minimum price at which the same may be sold in terms of the said Act or Appendices."

What do they propose to do by this? To repeal a certain portion of the Appendices by this Bill, which is so nicely and quietly

wrapped up that honourable members are not to see or know it. I say, by the power of classification, by the power they take of fixing the price, they are reducing the price of land in Canterbury—it may be to 5s. an acre.—(No.)

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—The honourable gentleman is completely misreading the Bill. He either has not read the Bill, or has not paid attention to what has been said.

Mr. SEDDON.—The Minister of Lands may say what he likes, but there can be no other interpretation of this Bill. Now, I say you cannot buy an acre in Canterbury under £2 as the Appendices stand now. And does the Minister mean to say that he does not take power to sell that land—ordinary land, or, if the proper interpretation were given to it, first-class land—at £1? and, as to the second-class land, does he not take power to sell it at 10s.? I say he does definitely take power to bring down the price of land in Canterbury from £2 to 10s., and it may be still, if it is not so positively said, brought down to 5s. an acre, and perhaps before the Bill passes it may be amended so that land can be sold at 2s. 6d. an acre. I would like to know, is it wise to take a power to do that under present circumstances? Is it fair to those who for years in Canterbury have had to pay £2 an acre? That would bring down the price of third-class land at one swoop to 10s. I say, I am positive honourable members do not understand thoroughly what is contemplated by this measure, or it would not have gone so far as it has gone without having more discussion upon it. Westland land, I may say in passing, you cannot purchase under £1 an acre. That is the lowest amount that the lands of the Crown can be sold for in that provincial district.

Mr. HISLOP.—You cannot purchase them at all.

Mr. SEDDON.—Is this a time for scoffing? The honourable member knows full well why no land has been purchased there since 1884; he knows that it is owing to the East and West Coast Railway Act having been passed that settlement has been prevented there during these years. There have been applications for a large amount of land at £1 per acre. It is unfair, very unfair, to those who are deferred-payment settlers, and have paid £1 10s. per acre, with 10s. more put upon them. I say it is unfair to them for the Minister of Lands to bring down the value of this land to 10s. by the Bill now before the House. The Otago lands are classified as rural and suburban. The price is fixed at £1 for rural land. And what is the acreage that has been sold during the last few years to the deferred-payment settlers in Otago? Is there any provision in this Bill to say that the State now finds that we have charged those settlers more than the land was worth? Or is the State prepared to say that, because it requires cash, we must sacrifice the rest of the land, to the injury of the deferred-payment settlers, and even of those who have bought for cash? for we cannot give a refund or revalue of the land purchased from us or give the advantage of the reduction. Place

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the colony on the same footing as any commercial firm that was to carry on business under such circumstances as these, the result would be disaster; and I predict it means disaster to New Zealand if what is provided in this Bill as regards classification and sale of the land is carried. My honourable friend from Southland, the member for Hokonui, may feel a little uneasy. Where agricultural land was sold at £2 and pastoral land at £1, he will consider it a boon to get the price reduced, and, with a view to getting a reduction on the upset price of the agricultural land, we find him very anxious to assist the Minister of Lands, who also hails from that particular district; and no doubt, under these circumstances, a reduction might, in his opinion, be necessary; but, admitting that perhaps the minimum amount of £2 has been too much in Southland, it is not right it should be reduced to 10s. per acre. What injury is there not to be done in Southland! What would be the position of those unfortunate persons who have not paid for the land which they bought for £2 an acre, paying interest on the capitalised amount, when we suddenly give powers to the Government to bring down that price to 10s., whilst charging those people £2 10s. an acre? To my mind, such a change as that must, if made, in the long-run prove detrimental to every man who owns an acre of land in New Zealand. There is no definition of what is meant by the term "ordinary land;" but in the 9th clause "second-class land" is defined. But before coming to that I will refer to section 7. I have always held that the system of auction sales in the purchase of Crown lands has proved a curse wherever it has obtained; and it must always prove a curse. I am positive it has caused the ruin of scores of our best settlers, and that the system should not obtain at all. To go back to that system, after the trouble it has caused hitherto, would be a most retrograde step. Let us fix a fair price for a piece of land, and let the man who is fortunate enough to get it have every chance of being able to hold it profitably. We have plenty to supply all demands, and we should not seek to get from the buyers of our Crown land a price at which their holdings cannot possibly pay. It is better to let a little good fortune come to those who may get it than to have, as we have now in different parts of New Zealand, many poor settlers toiling and labouring away in their struggles to pay the price which they, in a moment of excitement in an auction-room, agreed to pay, and which the Government ought never to have received. But we go further than that, and say that the getting of unsurveyed lands shall be decided by priority of application. What does that mean? With that you provide for private survey under section 17, as follows:—

"The Commissioner, on the estimated cost of the survey being deposited with him, may allow any applicant for the purchase of unsurveyed land to have such land surveyed at his own expense by a surveyor employed by the Surveyor-General in that behalf, and an allowance

in the amount of purchase-money for the same shall be made to the purchaser for the cost of the survey at any rate, not exceeding the ordinary rate for the survey of rural lands, which may be prescribed by the Survey Regulations for the time being in force. Should the land be reserved or withdrawn from sale, the applicant shall be paid the cost of the survey at the aforesaid rate; but, should the applicant in any case refuse or delay to complete the purchase of the land after survey, if open for sale, he shall forfeit the cost of such survey."

There is a great power given under this, and there is great force in the argument of the honourable member for Christchurch North on this point. A man will "spot" a piece of land with a water-frontage, or with a good road-frontage, and will carefully watch it, knowing that the effect of his getting it must be to lock up a large area around it. He applies for this as unsurveyed land, and gives a description of it, engages a private surveyor, gets his survey made, and to all intents and purposes he has a pre-emptive-right to that piece of land. I object altogether to this system of deciding and allotting land by priority of application in the case of unsurveyed lands. The same rule should apply as with surveyed lands: there should be no distinction. To my mind that is one of the most dangerous provisions of the Bill. Section 7 reads as follows:—

"All applications for sections of surveyed land shall be deemed to be simultaneous if made on the same day, but priority of applications on the same day for unsurveyed land shall determine the right thereto."

Therefore, if two parties apply, even on the same day, for the same piece of unsurveyed land, the one who applies a minute before the other has a pre-emptive right to it. I cannot see why there should be this distinction, and I oppose it altogether. Section 8 reads,—

"All rural lands which at any time heretofore have been proclaimed, or which may hereafter be proclaimed, open for selection on deferred payments or on perpetual lease shall be open either for purchase for cash, subject as in this Act mentioned, or for selection on deferred payments or perpetual lease, at the option of the applicant. The cash price per acre to be paid for any such land shall be estimated from the price at which the same shall have been open for selection according to the respective equivalents mentioned in the said Act."

The meaning of this clause is this: Under our present and past land-laws there have been, in the different land-districts, areas of land surveyed and reserved, to be taken up only on deferred payment or perpetual lease. If it is necessary, in the interest of the colony, that a certain portion of this land should be sold now for cash, there should be a proviso limiting the extent of the land so reserved which can be sold for cash; otherwise the whole of the land which has been reserved for settlers on deferred payment or perpetual lease will be sold for cash, to the detriment of the poor people of the colony who may wish to take up land, be-

cause there will then be no land for them on the terms on which alone they could take it. Land which has been reserved for poor settlers, who could not pay cash down, will be sold for cash to others at 10s. an acre, and those who would have made good and valuable settlers by being able to take up land either on deferred payment or on perpetual lease will be quite shut out. Land that has been kept back to be sold in Otago at £1 an acre, and in Southland and Canterbury at £2 an acre, is now, without giving an opportunity to those who would take it up on deferred payment or perpetual lease at the reduced rates, to be all thrown into the market; all will be thrown into the pool and sold for 10s. an acre. Again, look at section 14, subsection (2). The poor deferred-payment settler is to pay 25 per cent. in addition to the price brought at auction; his poverty is to be taxed 25 per cent. I do not think the Minister could possibly have seen the full effect of this Bill, or he would not wish it to be passed, to perpetrate such a wrong as it undoubtedly must do. Section 9 is on a par with the rest of the Bill in giving extraordinary powers, which, though nominally given to the Governor, are really given to the Ministry of the day, who, on the certificate of the Surveyor-General, can say which lands are to be second-class, and which cannot be worked in small holdings. We find in the definitions that a small holding of second-class land is 2,000 acres, and a small holding of first-class land 640 acres. Those who drafted this Bill must have very large ideas of landownership, when they talk about a mile square of country of first-class land being a small holding, and 2,000 acres of second-class land being a small holding. I admit that there are two or three clauses in the Bill which are an improvement on the existing law: clauses 15 and 16, for instance, I think are improvements. There is the right given to deferred-payment holders to get relief, and there is also what I have always contended for—that those who took up land on deferred payment or perpetual lease in mining districts should be treated in the same way as others holding under the same systems in non-mining districts. There is an alteration made as to the application of the proceeds of the sale of the land, which is a departure from what the Legislature has authorised up to the present time. Power is given to take a portion of the proceeds of the sale of land for bringing in water-races for irrigation purposes. Where they have tried these schemes hitherto the people have rated themselves to provide the money for the construction of these works, but now the Government propose, by this measure, to set aside the law existing at the present time, and introduce a literal power to apply a portion of the proceeds of land-sales for the purpose of bringing in water-races. I say at once that they should tell me—they should inform the House—who has been the moving spirit in wishing to get this Bill introduced into the House. Sir, section 21 of the Bill further proves why and where-

fore this Bill has been introduced. I remember full well when the honourable member for Egmont, who was a member of the then Whitaker Government, with Mr. Rolleston as Minister of Lands, considered that 5,000 acres was sufficient for a small run. It took a whole night to discuss that question, and, by a large majority, the House decided that 5,000 acres was a sufficiently large area; and yet here we have that area increased to four times that amount—it is made 20,000 acres instead of 5,000. To a certain extent I must leave this question to those representing districts where the experiment of 5,000 acres has been tried; but when the system was introduced it was done with the view of assisting those who may have a small freehold, and who wished to have a small area of land as a run, and I believe that instructions were given to so subdivide the land for pastoral purposes as to carry out that object. Now we are coming back again to what we fought against in this House for so long—undue monopoly. I am afraid that the House does not fully realise the importance of this matter—does not see the effect this Bill will have on the colony if it is passed in its present shape. I am sure that the people of Canterbury and Otago do not know the effect of passing this measure, which provides, among other things, for the repeal of the proviso to section 237 of the Act of 1885, and takes out of the hands of the School Commissioners and Education Boards all power of determining how the lands vested in them shall be dealt with. The proviso to section 237 of "The Land Act, 1885," enacts as follows:—

"Provided always that no such Proclamation shall have any effect unless it be issued at the request or upon the recommendation of the body or person in whom such reserves are vested, or who have the administration of the revenue arising therefrom."

Here is an ingenious and covert repeal by section 29 of this Bill, of which, I am convinced, the people in the districts are not aware.

Mr. MARCHANT.—The Minister explained that.

Mr. SEDDON.—The Minister may have explained it, but it is very objectionable in the way it is done—objectionable and pernicious. In section 29 we have a list of the clauses repealed, and then we have it stated in another clause that, notwithstanding that there has been no repeal, where the language of the two Acts is inconsistent the last Act shall rule. This is an objectionable form of legislation, which is bound to bring about litigation and confusion. It would have been far better if the Minister had altogether repealed the previous Act, and had come down with this measure in a form in which it would have been thoroughly understood by the House. It is my intention to move an amendment even if I have to go into the lobby alone. The House will meet early next year, and the country should be made aware of the radical change that is proposed to be made. The question was never considered at the hustings, and we have

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no right, in this way, to change the whole land-system of the colony—to reduce the price of land without putting it before the people, so that those who represent them may have an opportunity of knowing their views on the subject. The question was not before the electors at the last election. In fact, the Government have denied officially that there was any intention to reduce the price of land.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—No.

Mr. SEDDON.—When it was said that the Government were going to help the revenue by sacrificing the land it was officially denied by the Government.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—Hear, hear.

Mr. SEDDON.—Does not this Bill sacrifice the land for the sake of revenue? No one who reads the Bill carefully can come to any other conclusion. I went into the Bill predisposed in favour of it, and of the honourable gentleman who has taken the trouble to bring it down; but I found that by passing it we should be doing an injustice to the people of New Zealand, and I can only do my duty by moving, That the Bill be read a second time this day six months. I take the responsibility of moving that to put my view before the electors. The late Minister of Lands, who takes a great interest in this matter, is, unfortunately, away, owing to circumstances over which he has no control, and there are many honourable members who desire to speak and consider this subject.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I second the motion. I think it is my duty to protest against this Bill, and for this reason: that the Minister of Lands—I was not present when he commenced his speech this evening—but during the time I was in the House satisfied me, at any rate, that there was not the slightest necessity for this Bill except for the purpose of reducing the price of land, and the important principle laid down by the honourable member for Waimate. According to the Minister of Lands' own showing, the present law provides for the sale of land for cash quite as well as does the Bill proposed by himself. He said that the late Minister of Lands and the previous Minister of Lands both gave an undue preference to a special system. Why could not the honourable gentleman himself give a preference to the system of sales for cash? He could do that if he wished.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—No.

Mr. TAYLOR.—The object simply is to reduce the price of land; and I must say, seeing the large interest which the people of the colony have in the land, and seeing that the leases are falling due shortly, it strikes me that this is a move to enable those gentlemen who have leases of the land to become the absolute freeholders of it. I am sorry that the honourable member for Auckland Central is not in his place. I have listened to that honourable gentleman, and I consider him the ablest word-painter in this House, and, moreover, I believe with him that the interests of the people are being sacrificed in this direction. We have the great bulk of the people to consider in dealing with an important question of this kind, and I am not going to be a party to assist in passing

it, for I look upon it as a first step in the direction of granting large monopolies of the only portion of the estate left to the people. A great deal has been said about perpetual leasing. How is it that it is carried on successfully in all the large cities of New Zealand? Take the City of Auckland, for instance. Large reserves were set apart there years ago by Sir George Grey for the very purpose of easing the rate-payers in the future. If the system works well there, why should it not be applied to the colony at large? None of these bodies have a right to sell their land: they lease them, and those who get hold of those lands lease them. Only the other day I saw an advertisement from an absentee at Home, a Captain Buckley I believe, asking for the lease of a piece of land in the centre of Christchurch for a number of years; and, if that principle is open to private individuals, why not apply it to the bulk of us? The honourable member for Gladstone tells me he is not in favour of large monopolists, and I give him credit for that. I take it he holds those views because he is one of the Young New Zealand party, and I am glad they are setting their faces against these huge monopolists, because they are against the interests of the people. I shall say no more. I have entered my protest, and, I think, on solid grounds, and I am not going to be a party to sacrifice what the honourable member for Auckland Central would say is the birthright of the people of New Zealand.

Mr. GUINNESS moved the adjournment of the debate.

The House divided.

AYES, 6.

Joyce	Taylor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Seddon	Walker.	Guinness
		Moss.

NOES, 38.

Allen	Lawry	Russell
Barron	Macarthur	Seymour
Blake	Mackenzie, M.	Steward, W. J.
Bruce	Mackenzie, T.	S.-Menteath
Cadman	Marchant	Tanner
Cowan	McGregor	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Moat	Thompson, T.
Fraser	Monk	Ward
Graham	Peacock	Wilson
Hislop	Pearson	Withy.
Hobbs	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Isard	Richardson, G.	Fitchett
Jackson	Ross	Kelly.

Majority against, 32.

Motion negatived.

Mr. BLAKE.—I had not the slightest idea of speaking on this Bill to-night; but it seems to me very certain that, if I do not say the few words I have to say now, I shall lose my opportunity of getting a provision inserted in the Bill which I am quite certain is a great necessity. I do not see anything in the Bill to provide for the necessities of the working-man—who, I know well, requires some looking-after—in the shape of labour-settlements in the country. These settlements are very necessary all through the country districts, where the

men can be employed by the farmers in various ways for some months of the year. These labour-settlements could easily be established by the Government throughout the country, and it would very much alter the Bill, in my opinion, if this were done. I have read through the Bill, and am very much pleased with some of it. I am pleased that the Minister of Lands wishes to induce people to come into the country to buy land. I hate the sight of a poor man, because I wish they were all rich. I think, however, it is unlikely the honourable gentleman will bring into this colony a class of men who will buy the class of land we have to sell, at any rate during the time the prices of produce are so low as they are at present. As I say, there is no provision made for the land to be leased in the manner which I should like to see. I am not very fond of the deferred-payment system; and I would much rather see added to the clause dealing with that subject words something like these: that leases be also offered of not less than 200 acres of the best land and 2,000 acres of the second-class land conjoined, at a rental of 5 per cent., based on the present proposed selling-price of £1 and 12s. 6d. per acre respectively; the leases to be not less than ten years or more than twenty-one years, with a right of purchase at any time during the lease. If not purchased by the occupier at the end of the term, 75 per cent. for useful improvements to be allowed by any tenant or purchaser overbidding for the second term; but, if the occupier gives it up or fails to pay rent, no valuation for improvements to be allowed. That would give a chance to the farmers' sons of the country to take up land by lease, instead of its being bought up by speculators. We have a large number of farmers' sons with a certain amount of capital, but not enough to buy the land and fence and stock it. If the Government would do this they would get interest on the land, and would get the money for it in the end. These people, if they could not get money enough in twenty-one years to buy it, would be sure of getting their improvements allowed for if the land were taken up by any one who would give any more money for it. In that case they would be paid for their improvements. There is no provision in this Bill to give facilities to the inhabitants of the colony to take up land instead of speculators taking it up and charging a bigger price or larger rent. One or the other is sure to happen. I have no wish whatever to find fault with the Bill. Other honourable gentlemen who are better able to judge of the legal portions of it than I am have looked through the Bill. But I do think a different system of Land Boards should be established. I think the members of this House should be members of the Land Boards—not the town members, but the members from the country. They travel free by the railways, so that their expenses would be very small; and if there was any patriotism in them they would do the work without any pay. I think if a man is popular enough to be elected a member of the House of Representatives he

would be acceptable as a member of a Land Board. I have something which I very much wish should be inserted in this Bill, if I am not trespassing too much on the good-nature of the Minister of Lands. It is to make labour-settlements. These labour-settlements are required throughout the farming districts. I have often had nine or ten people living in tents upon a spare piece of land I have. They work for me or my neighbours probably for eight or nine months a year. They have nowhere to go during the other four months, except to the publichouse to spend their money. If they had only an acre to live and work on when they had no other work to do it would be a great thing for them. Hundreds of men would be glad to take up land upon this principle. I would suggest the following: That labour-settlements be established, in localities where employment may be obtained, at a cost of not more than £50; not more than five occupiers to be placed in one settlement; not less than 10 per cent. cash to be paid as first deposit; not less than 10 per cent. per annum to be paid in half-yearly instalments until the whole be paid; each settler to get from the Land Office a license to occupy, and at any time after 20 per cent. has been paid the owner to be allowed to sell by transferring his license to occupy at the Land Office at a cost of 5s.; no land to be found until three applicants have deposited 10 per cent. each. Anything in this shape would make these small labour-settlements about the country useful—say, five or seven miles apart; and the settlement might be established in districts where the men could obtain work for the greater part of the year. When they are not employed they get away all over the country, and it takes a great deal of trouble, when the owners of the stations or farms want the men, to get them together again. If they could settle in the manner I have suggested they would always be there, and they could fill up their spare time by working on their sections. If the Minister of Lands will look into this matter he will, I believe, see that it is necessary, and that if my suggestion is carried out it will do the country a great deal of good. I am sure if he were to ask the farmers in any portion of Canterbury, or any of the station-holders about the Hurunui, they would say that they would be very glad to have settlements like this upon their runs, because they are always in trouble when they want labour. The Government would be sure of their money, and the men would always look on their land as freehold; because, when once they had paid 20 per cent. of the price of their sections they could at once sell their sections, and put the proceeds in their pockets, and any improvements would be paid for by the purchaser. I hope the Minister of Lands will allow me to see him on this matter, with a view of allowing this provision to be inserted in the Bill. I think if I lost this chance of getting it before the House, with a view of getting it inserted this session, I should have no other opportunity. I do not wish to offer any factious opposition to

*Mr. Blake*

the Bill. What I want to see is people settled on the land, and the class of people I want to see settled on the land are the sons of farmers in all parts of the country. I do not want to see people brought from other parts of the world to settle on the lands.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why?

Mr. BLAKE.—Because it seems to be neither patriotic nor reasonable; it seems to be a way of getting revenue from the land just because we are a little poor. I know hundreds of young men who have from £300 to £500, and with this they could lease a section, and, if they did not buy it in twenty-one years, surely they could live on it and improve it, and it would be worth more to the Government at the end of that time. There can be no loss made, and I am sure they would be glad of any provision of the kind. I have lived in New Zealand for a long time, and I am speaking simply because I wish the thing to be done in the best way. If the Minister of Lands could meet the case by a better method than that I suggest I should not oppose it. I come from a farming district, and look at these matters more particularly than honourable members coming from other parts. We want the land settled, because the unemployed drain away into the towns, and we want to get them in the busy times, but they are all over the country, and it is difficult to find them, whereas if they lived at a place where they could get work they would have lots to live on, and could improve their place when times were dull. We are always hoping that the times will be better, and that the Government will do the best it can to help us in these bad times with our lands—not to take them away from us just because times are so bad, but to give us a chance to lease them and eventually to buy them. I do not believe in special settlements and that sort of thing, and I am not asking for it. If my scheme were adopted the cry of the unemployed would decrease. Not that the men I have referred to specially constitute the ranks of the unemployed. The men who work the hardest "spree" the hardest, and they drift into the towns when they have nothing to do, where they are idle. I hope the House will adopt this scheme, because then we should perhaps once more be able to say,—

Good luck to the flocks and the fleeces,  
Good luck to the growers of corn,  
With a blessing of plenty and peace.

And I do hope the Minister of Lands will assist us in the way he ought to do. I should be glad to give him my suggestions, but I suppose he knows more about it than I do. I will leave the matter in the hands of the Minister, and will see him in the morning, with a view of introducing a clause to effect this scheme. The rest of the Bill I leave to the lawyers to deal with.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I intend to support the second reading of this Bill, but wish expressly to reserve to myself the right to discuss the principles of the measure at a later stage. The Premier has said that in supporting the second reading we do not necessarily affirm the principles. I accept that assurance. As to the



Bill itself, I see no one leading principle in it. There are many conflicting principles; but I admit the right of the Government to press the Bill forward a stage, and therefore I shall support the second reading. But there are many things in it to which I take exception, and, without attempting to discuss it exhaustively, I will briefly indicate one or two. I think a great deal of harm will be done by selling these lands by auction. This opens the door to very great evils—evils from which we have suffered in the past. Again, there is danger of dummyism, of gridironing, and of picking the eyes out of the country. A man can take up 640 acres of one class of land and 2,000 of another; but the section does not say that it is to be taken in whole blocks, and it seems to me to be competent for any man to so split up his 640 acres or his 2,000 acres as to pick out the eyes of the district. Again, I must object emphatically to the ingenious method by which the Bill takes from all trust bodies in the colony the power to deal with their reserves. A measure to effect a similar object was introduced some time ago, and was then defeated; and I shall strenuously oppose any attempt on the part of the Government to interfere with the right of all bodies, whether educational or otherwise, to deal as they think fit with their reserves. This Bill effects that end by simply repealing the clauses in the Land Act which require the consent and request of the trust bodies before the Crown can sell the reserves. In regard to the proposed abolition of Land Boards, these may be expensive, but to abolish them on this account is like cutting off a limb because it aches. If you consider the large tracts of land they have to deal with in Otago and Southland, it would be impossible to do the work properly from Wellington; and I protest against economy being made a pretext for centralism. At present a person interested can attend the Board meetings and hear all the *pros* and *cons.*, and the decision of the Board. An enormous evil would follow the abolition of these Boards; therefore I hope the Government will consider the necessity of retaining them, even if, in doing so, they increase the expense of the country.

Mr. MOSS.—The honourable member who has last spoken tells us that he cannot see any principle in the Bill.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I see many principles in it; but I said I could not see any leading principle in it.

Mr. MOSS.—Had the honourable member heard the speech of the honourable member for Kumara I do not think he could have said there was no leading principle in the Bill. We felt so much confidence in the honourable gentleman who has charge of this Bill that we were inclined to be exceedingly careless. It was stated, in the blandest manner, that the Bill simply opened up the country to settlers of all kinds. Now, confiding in that statement, very many of us did not look into the Bill as we should have done. Besides, there is another reason. We have had for over three years on those benches a Government which,

whatever its other faults, had strong sympathies with the people of the colony; and we know they were a Government incapable of playing the Land Act into the hands of any particular section or class of the community. Therefore we had got into a habit—rather a careless one—in dealing with their Land Bills which I think we shall throw off after this experience. Sir, it is said we should pass the second reading of this Bill as a matter of form, without any debate at all. It is quite true that when the Bill comes from the Waste Lands Committee it will be competent to discuss the Bill; but we shall have affirmed the principle of the Bill if we agree to the second reading now, and unquestionably the principle of this Bill is to sell the land regardless of *bond fide* and productive settlement, and to put the money into the Treasury. The honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill may deny—and so may the Minister of Education, who is the only member of the Government at present in the House—that that is the principle; but it runs throughout the Bill, and it is an entirely new principle in our legislation. In proof of my assertion I will quote the Minister of Education, who said, “We are reproached because we are endeavouring to administer the lands of the colony in such a way as that they will not entail a loss.” That is the principle of the Bill. We have been told that the Government have no time to consider other important measures, but they must get through the session to deal with retrenchment. Then, why do they want to force this Bill through the House in this way? We have done our duty as members in protesting against what we consider an ill-advised attempt to force a great measure through the House. A radical change is proposed in the principle of our land-administration. Settlement is to be discarded altogether, to fill the Treasury. There is no doubt that that is the guiding principle of the Bill. It means retrogression in our land-legislation, and I strongly object to such proposals. Whilst there is power given to sell land at low figures, there is no power to reduce the price to special settlers, and no inducements are held out to village settlers. I am quite sure of this: that one of the most beneficent schemes of land-administration has been the village settlements, and that the village settlements established in Auckland have been an unmixed good. No doubt there will be occasional failures in this; but I would bear my testimony in the most emphatic manner to what I believe to have been one of the most beneficent and successful attempts to relieve the distress that was then prevailing, and to give homes to those who otherwise could not hope for them. The speech of the honourable member for Kumara is the clearest exposition of the Bill, and it stirred up several honourable members, myself amongst them, to the character of the Bill. And now, without giving honourable members the opportunity of considering that speech, the Government are pursuing their old high-handed tactics, against which I have heard the Colonial Secretary himself most loudly com-

plain in former times. I am satisfied that we have done our duty in expressing reprobation in the strongest possible terms of the conduct of the Government in this matter. After having declared that the sole purpose of the session was retrenchment, and refusing recognition of other measures urgently demanded by the country, they bring down a Bill which is an entire reversal of the existing and of the past policy of our land-legislation, and which, Sir, in its effects, must be serious and far-reaching. This Bill, if it be passed to-night, and pass through the House ultimately in its present form, will, I firmly believe, be a curse to those who come after us for many generations, and whose interest in the land we are thus asked to forestall and dissipate.

Mr. KELLY.—It appears to me that the honourable gentleman who has just sat down has not carefully studied the Bill that is before the House. I have studied the Bill carefully, and I find that the deferred-payment system and the perpetual-lease system, which he has alluded to, are not interfered with. The honourable gentleman has said that he has made a protest against an ill-advised attempt to push this measure through the House. In my opinion there has been no attempt to push the measure through the House. I understand that the Bill has to go to the Waste Lands Committee; and in all probability it will come back from that Committee in a different form from what it is now in. I have some amendments myself which I wish to have put into this Bill when in Committee, and I have no doubt that other honourable members will attempt to get their amendments in the Bill when it is before the Waste Lands Committee; so that it may come back to the House in a very different form. The honourable member for Kumara says that he objects to the price of land being reduced. He said that the upset price of land in Canterbury was £2 an acre, and that now it was to be reduced to £1. I object to the price of land being raised. In the district that I represent the upset price of land is 15s. for first-class, 10s. for second-class, and 5s. for third-class. Now, it appears, according to this Bill, that the price of land is going to be raised to £1 per acre for first-class land. As far as I know, the first-class land of my district has been sold long ago, or given back to Natives. There is very little first-class land remaining in the district, and round about where I live there is not even second-class land. I have been to the Minister of Lands myself, since I came to Wellington, to induce him, if I possibly could, to reduce the price of land; and now the honourable member for Kumara complains that the price of land ought to be more than £1 per acre—that that is too low altogether. The honourable member for Christchurch North said that land was put up some ten years ago in Canterbury for £2 an acre. Now, Sir, that land, if it was any good at the time, would have been taken up at £2 an acre, because land all over the colony, I must say—at all events, in the North Island—is not worth half

what it was ten years ago. Cultivated farms are selling at half the price they were selling at ten years ago. But I think the Government are right in reducing the upset price all over the colony, and in their wishes to encourage settlement in every possible way. I say that a landed estate is not a proper estate for the colony to hold. The Government have a right to dispose of the land as they wish. It appears that we have twenty million acres of Crown land at present. Now, considering the depressed state of the colony, I think the whole of this land should be disposed of, to reduce the debt of the country. Supposing fourteen million acres of land are sold at 10s. an acre, we get from that £7,000,000. Then we have six million acres of bush-land, which I heard one honourable member say was valued at £4 an acre. If we value it at £2 an acre, that would give us twelve millions more, and this would reduce the debt of the country very considerably. I am not going to occupy the time of the House at any great length now, as I shall have another opportunity of speaking on this question; but it is my intention to support the Government as far as I possibly can in these liberal measures: and I contend that this is a liberal measure, notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary.

Mr. WARD.—This is a most important Bill, and before the question is put I desire to make a remark or two upon it, and I trust honourable members will not think I am trespassing too much on their good-nature in doing so at this late hour. There are many clauses in the Bill with which I cordially agree, and I think it is a step in the right direction to reduce the price of land as indicated in this Bill. I also believe in the principle of allowing persons to take up land either for cash, or on deferred payment, or on the perpetual-lease principle, for I think every possible facility should be afforded to induce people to take up land. I advocated that the three methods provided in this measure should be the law of the country, when contesting my election: and I am consequently the more gratified to find them in the Bill. But I do not like the idea—which is too vaguely particularised—about the selection of 640 acres or 2,000 acres in various districts. I am of opinion that the acreage, in both instances, is too great, and there will be much room for abuses to be practised as they now stand in the Bill, and I hope they will both be reduced. It appears to me that when this Bill goes before the Waste Lands Committee or a Committee of the House the possibility of dummyism will have to be very carefully guarded against. I am anxious to bring under the notice of the Minister of Lands this: In South Invercargill there are a number of deferred-payment sections. I think a proviso ought to be passed to enable that borough to take advantage of the deferred-payment thirds, similar to that provided for special and village settlements. Possibly the Minister of Lands will see his way to make some provision of that kind, and I shall be very glad indeed if he does so.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—There is a statu-

Mr. Moss

tory provision in this Bill to deal with these exceptional cases, and also with the peculiar case of the Invercargill Road District.

Mr. WARD.—I am under the impression that such is not the case, but I shall be glad to learn that I am mistaken. The Borough of South Invercargill has laboured under an injustice in this matter for some years; and I think the Minister will find I am correct that, while the Bill provides retrospectively for the payment of deferred-payment thirds to village and special settlements, in the case of South Invercargill it does not do so. I believe it is the only borough in the colony that has a large number of deferred-payment sections in it, and I press its claims for fair and equitable treatment. I am opposed to the abolition of the Land Boards. They should be continued without payment to members. I am not going to trespass on the time of the House any longer. I do think that, now we are having a very liberal land measure placed before the country, it would be a good thing if the auction system were abolished, and the ballot system introduced in its stead. So far as Southland is concerned, from what has occurred in the past I believe that, if the ballot system is introduced, it will be hailed with very great satisfaction.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I purpose supporting the second reading of the Bill. I take exception, however, to some of its provisions. I take exception to clause 8, which provides that all the land at present set aside under deferred payment and perpetual-leasing must be sold for cash. I also take exception to clause 10. I think 640 acres of first-class land is too much to sell to any one individual. I think also that 2,000 acres of other land is too large a block, and opens the door to improper practices. I think that clause 14, which permits of competition by auction, is a pernicious provision, because it leads to fictitious prices being given for land: farmers, as we have seen in the past, bid a higher price than the land is worth. Then, clause 17, dealing with the system of surveying land, provides that all surveyors surveying land must be persons in the employ of the Surveyor-General. This would be a great hardship on people in my district, because it often happens that the nearest survey party are nearly a hundred miles away, and it would be very inconvenient if they had to be brought the whole of that distance to survey lands; and small selections cost more for surveying than the upset price of the land. I think any duly-authorized surveyor ought to have the privilege of being selected by the selector to survey his land.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—This clause is specially drafted to allow the Surveyor-General to employ all qualified surveyors in this capacity.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—Yes; but the Bill distinctly states "in the employ of the Surveyor-General," and private surveyors cannot be said to be in the employment of the Surveyor-General, and may be overworked. I think, if every authorised surveyor had a right to survey the

line when he was asked to do so by the selector, the work could be done at a very much lower rate by surveyors resident in the district than if surveyors in the employ of the Surveyor-General had to come long distances to do it. I disagree with clause 22, which permits of small grazing-runs being increased from five thousand acres to twenty thousand acres. With these exceptions, I purpose supporting the second reading of the Bill, and trust that it will be modified in Committee in the directions I have already indicated.

Amendment negatived.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

AYES, 34.

Allen	Macarthur	Steward, W. J.
Barron	Mackenzie, T.	S.-Menteath
Blake	Marchant	Tanner
Buchanan	McGregor	Thompson, T.
Cowan	Moat	Walker
Fisher	Monk	Ward
Fraser	Pearson	Wilson
Graham	Rhodes	Withy.
Hislop	Richardson, G.	
Jackson	Ross	Tellers.
Kelly	Russell	Hobbs
Lawry	Seymour	Thompson, R.

NOES, 4.

Tellers.

Joyce  
Taylor.

Moss  
Seddon.

Majority for, 30.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to three o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 30th November, 1887.

First Reading—Second Readings—Third Readings—  
"Unemployed"—Tenants' Relief—Oamaru Harbour Board Loan Bill—Midland Railway Revised Contract.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Proclamations Validation Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

Slaughterhouses Bill, New Plymouth Borough and Harbour Board Street and Reserve Exchange Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Wesleyan Methodist Church Property Trust Bill, New Plymouth Recreation and Race-course Reserves Bill.

"UNEMPLOYED."

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI asked the Hon. the Attorney-General, if it is true that the

Government intend to provide work for the unemployed at the Public Domain, Auckland, such work to consist of forming and constructing carriage-drives, &c.; and, if so, will the Government extend the same benefits to the unemployed in other towns and municipalities in the southern parts of the colony? He had been induced to put this question on the Order Paper in consequence of an article which appeared in three Wellington papers on Saturday last to this effect:—

"UNEMPLOYED IN AUCKLAND. — By telegraph: Press Association. — Auckland, 25th November.—A telegram has been received by Mr. Phillips, Town Clerk, from Mr. Goldie, M.H.R., requesting that arrangements may be made without delay for work for the unemployed for this city, as the Government had promised to find work. The Minister for Public Works had suggested that work should be taken up in the Domain, and it is proposed to let contracts for making three carriage-drives to be formed through the Domain."

It appeared to him that there were other places in the colony which had to contribute towards the unemployed—smaller places and places which were heavily taxed at the present time. If any assistance was to be given towards work for the unemployed it should be given in the smaller places as well as in the larger towns.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said the Government had not authorised any expenditure as indicated in the question, nor did they intend to do anything of the kind. What there was in the newspapers he did not know. He had not seen the telegram which had been read, but he hoped his honourable friend would not place confidence in everything that he saw in newspapers. With regard to the second part of the question, he was informed that sums of money had been spent in some of the southern provinces in work of the character described in the telegram. In what places that money had been spent he was not aware; but, if his honourable friend wished to know, and would move for the information, he (Sir F. Whitaker) would get it.

#### TENANTS' RELIEF.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—Sir, I have been induced to table this motion in consequence of conversations that I had with Sir George Grey in reference to two Bills he had introduced into the other branch of the Legislature. Those two Bills may have come under the notice of honourable members: they are the Fair Rent Bill and the Freehold Tenure Acquisition Bill. The Bills passed their second reading, and were down for committal; but, owing to arrangements which had been arrived at with reference to private business in the other branch of the Legislature, he saw there was little chance of these Bills being taken up in the course of the present session. Therefore he spoke to me and asked me to take up the Bills in this branch of the Legislature, being of opinion that, if they passed through the Council, steps necessary to insure their coming into

operation would be taken in the House of Representatives. I looked through those Bills, and I must say, on the whole, I agreed with the principles of the measures, and thought they were calculated to effect a very considerable public benefit in the present state of matters. But I saw, likewise, that the machinery provided was not such as was likely to work satisfactorily; and I felt that, at this very advanced period of the session, it was little likely that I should be able to pass through this Council a satisfactory measure—at any rate, in time for its being passed by the other branch of the Legislature. But, Sir, in course of conversation with Sir George Grey and with other honourable members my attention was struck, to a greater degree than had been the case before, with the necessity for some immediate action being taken in this direction. There are, as honourable members are aware, many hundreds—I do not know whether I can go so far as to say thousands—of persons who have taken land under various tenures from the Government—in some cases as perpetual leases, in other cases on deferred payment; and there are other persons who have taken land, upon terms which now prove very onerous, from public bodies. These tenants find, in the altered circumstances of the colony, that it is utterly impossible for them to pay their rents. They must obtain relief, or they must pass through the Insolvency Court, and, in all probability, be forced to leave the colony. As regards private landlords, they can deal with these cases. No man, although he might be a hard man, would refuse to grant a concession to a tenant if he saw that his refusal would necessitate his tenant abandoning the property and going elsewhere, leaving the property unoccupied upon the landlord's hands. But the Crown is not in that position, nor are the various public bodies in that position; and the consequence is that these tenants are hanging on now not knowing what may become of them in a short time, and feeling that, in the present circumstances of the colony, it is impossible for them to carry on their engagements. I am told that already several persons have been forced through the Insolvency Court in consequence of the inability of public bodies to reduce their rents. The public bodies are quite willing to reduce the rents, but they have not the power to do so. As regards the Crown tenants, it is equally clear that the Government has not the power. These tenants are scattered about in all parts of the colony, from Hokianga in the North to the Bluff in the South, and dealing with their cases would necessitate a great deal of time and trouble, and some considerable amount of expense. I am glad to find that the attention of the Government has been directed to this subject: indeed, there was an allusion to it in the Governor's Speech, where, honourable members will remember, it was stated that a measure would be introduced to grant relief to certain small settlers who were suffering from the nature of their tenure. In the Land Bill that is before the other branch of the Legislature

*Hon. Mr. Shirmski*

there is some provision to meet the future necessities of certain portions of the Crown tenants, more especially the deferred-payment settlers and the perpetual lessees; but no provision is made to meet the necessities of those persons who stand in so much need of some immediate relief. I do not know what may be the intentions of the Government in reference to this matter; I believe, however, they intend bringing forward some measure of relief during the present session; but I feel that it would not only be strengthening Sir George Grey's hands, but would strengthen the hands of the Government, if this House passed a resolution to the effect that it was a matter of essential importance that during the present session a measure of relief, such as is indicated in this resolution, were passed. I well know that the Government cannot always give effect to their intentions. They may have the best intentions in the world, but may feel that, under the circumstances, it is not in their power to carry those intentions into execution. There are always cases where the Government purpose passing measures through Parliament, and are really and sincerely desirous of passing those measures; but in the hurry of the last moment, with the view of closing the session within a certain time, they are obliged to drop them altogether, or to unduly prolong the session. At the present time there is talk of proroguing Parliament about the 17th of next month, and if honourable members are to get to their homes by Christmas it is undoubtedly essential that Parliament should be prorogued at that time; but the mass of business to be done between this and that time is so enormous as to present little hope that the whole of that legislation which it is desirable should be passed will be given effect to. I very much fear that many measures may be dropped at the last moment. We know that under the pressure of the last few days of the session Governments do things in the way of sacrificing measures which at other times they would themselves deem not possible. The object of this resolution is to strengthen as far as possible the hands of the Government, and induce them to bring forward this session—short as the days are which remain of it—a measure of relief to these settlers. I am far from being of opinion that any satisfactory measure can be introduced at this very late period of the session. If it can be, I shall be delighted; but, if it cannot be, I would suggest the introduction of a measure giving the public bodies and the Government the power of granting immediate relief of a temporary character to the persons to whom I have referred. I think they might give relief for the present time, waiting the passage of a more complete measure next session, which I hope will not be very remote. It is, I am satisfied, a measure of the utmost importance; it is a measure that is looked forward to by large numbers of persons who are suffering from the depressed state of the markets and the altered circumstances of the colony; and, unless some measure of relief be granted to them, I believe numbers will cast

away all hope of relief, and the consequence to the colony may be very serious. I beg leave to move the motion standing in my name.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this Council, it is a matter of the most urgent public importance that a Bill should be passed during the present session to grant to Crown tenants and the tenants of public bodies that relief which is necessitated by the change in the circumstances of the colony."—(*Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.*)

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—The Government are aware of the importance of giving the relief which is sought by this resolution to be given to the tenants of the Crown under certain circumstances, and also of giving power to the local bodies who have lessees to give them the necessary relief. We consider that the best course to take for this session will be to give to the local bodies concerned power to deal with their tenants in the same manner as any landlord would be able to deal with his tenants, subject only—to avoid the possibility of any objectionable course being taken—subject only to the approval of the Minister, who, I imagine, would be the Minister of Lands. That Bill is in the course of preparation, and the Government will do their best to pass it this session. As regards the Crown tenants, there is a distinction. The Government might take power, certainly, if the Legislature thought fit to grant it, to make similar arrangements with regard to deferred-payment, perpetual-lease, and other tenants; but, on the whole, it appears desirable that no final course should be taken this session without the fullest consideration, and an attempt to place arrangements upon the best basis. We think, therefore, that the best course to take with regard to that class of tenants is to pass a Bill suspending eviction and recovery of rent in these cases until next session, when Parliament will be invited to deal with the whole of that subject in what may appear to Parliament to be the best manner. My honourable friend Mr. Waterhouse has made reference to two Bills. The name of one of them I did not catch. With the provisions of the Fair Rent Bill I am generally familiar.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—The other is the Freehold Tenure Acquisition Bill.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—That Bill might not perhaps give much relief as regards arrears of rent and liability to eviction; and we think the best course, considering the limited time at our disposal, is to propose to Parliament the measures I have spoken of.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—I would suggest to the honourable gentleman that the course which he proposes to take in regard to Crown tenants might also be adopted in regard to tenants of local bodies, because, as it seems to me, if he takes the course he proposes, of allowing them to do precisely as a private individual would do with regard to reducing rents, difficulties would arise, and the Minister of Lands will find himself in a very difficult position when he has to decide whether any particular locality shall make these reductions

or not. It seems to me the Government cannot possibly have before them a sufficient amount of information to enable them to propound a thoroughly satisfactory measure this session; and therefore it would be better merely to delay eviction of tenants in all cases, till the whole matter could be thoroughly considered in some future session. A very large question is involved, and there does seem to me some indication of the colony taking a step somewhat in the direction of Mr. Gladstone's Irish legislation, which has proved so disastrous. Anything like tampering with rents, it appears to me, would be exceedingly mischievous, and certainly ought not to be entered upon without the fullest consideration.

Motion agreed to.

#### OAMARU HARBOUR BOARD LOAN BILL.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES said a storm of extraordinary violence swept over the East Coast some months ago, and injured the breakwater at Oamaru very considerably. The shipping, however, suffered nothing, because, although injury was done to a certain portion of the breakwater, the shipping was quite secure at the wharf. After this occurrence, the Harbour Board thought it desirable to obtain advice as to the best means of having the damage repaired, and they asked for the services of Mr. Blackett, the Government Engineer, who came down to Oamaru and, with the local manager, examined the damage and suggested a remedy. His opinion was that it would take about £8,000 to make the breakwater quite secure; but, at the same time, in looking over the work, he imagined that it would be better, before anything further occurred, to spend more money on it and make it perfectly secure for all time to come. He would explain that the present breakwater was an upright wall, and Mr. Blackett proposed that outside the wall large blocks should be thrown indiscriminately, to give strength to it, so that the sea coming against it would not have so much effect on the present breakwater. He estimated that this work would cost £22,000. In addition to that, the Harbour Board was rather behind in its engagements with the Government, and the result was that there was a deficit of a little over £8,000 in this respect; and the Board thought that, while they were borrowing, they might as well clear off all old scores, and they included this £8,000 in the other amount to be borrowed; so that the result was that a loan of £40,000 was asked for by this Bill. The Bill had been before the Local Bills Committee, and that Committee had taken evidence upon it from Mr. Blackett, the Government Engineer, and from the promoter of the Bill, the present Colonial Secretary. The latter was examined more particularly with regard to a portion of the Bill that the Committee did not seem to believe in—that was, with regard to the consolidation of the loan; and, after the Committee had questioned him, still they could not see that there would be any great advantage derived by consolidating the loan.

*Hon. Mr. Pharazyn*

Taking into consideration the present state of the money-market, and the position of New Zealand securities, the Board thought it advisable to relinquish this portion of the Bill altogether, and merely take power to issue debentures for £40,000, which money should be confined to the special works mentioned in the Bill—namely, repairing the breakwater and increasing its strength, and the repayment of liabilities. He would only say, further, that £280,000 had been spent on harbour works at Oamaru. The harbour works included sixty acres of still water, and gave a depth of 24ft. at the principal wharf. The works had been a great advantage to the locality, giving easy access to vessels, and providing easy means of transport for the produce of two million acres of land, thereby saving at least £10,000 a year to the persons using it. This was all he considered it necessary to say about the Bill, except with regard to the security for the loan. The security was a rating-power over rather more than a million acres of the very finest district in the whole colony. It included all the agricultural land in the neighbourhood of Oamaru. It also included, north of the Waitaki, a very considerable portion of valuable land, and of valuable hill-land up as far as the Lindis River; so that the security was ample. There was a limit to the power of rating, but this gave an ample margin for the amount borrowed. He moved the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE inquired if he rightly understood his honourable friend to state that he proposed to ask the Council to assent to the borrowing not only of £30,000 for certain works which he specified, but also of £10,000 for the payment of interest, and that that was the recommendation of the Local Bills Committee to which the Bill had been referred. He must say that that was a very objectionable provision. This sort of thing might have been done indirectly on a former occasion, he was not sure; but this was the first occasion on which persons or bodies had come forward directly and had asked the Legislature to allow them to borrow money to pay interest on money already borrowed. For himself, he would not allow that sort of thing. He thought they had better face the difficulty. He did not know who had advanced the past interest, but he believed it was the Government.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE did not think the Government ought to take up these loans in the way they had done; and in Committee he should move that the amount applied for be cut down from £40,000 to £30,000.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said the honourable gentleman who had moved the second reading of the Bill had come out in quite a new character. He could not congratulate him upon it, because he had looked upon him as one who opposed loans. The honourable gentleman proposed a Bill for a loan to pay interest on a former loan. The honourable gentleman had altogether changed his colours in regard to borrowing. He hoped that when

the Bill came to be considered they might see some reason why this money should be borrowed; but that it should be proposed to borrow money to pay interest on borrowed money did appear to be going to excess in borrowing. He always understood that Oamaru was already the most heavily-taxed town in the colony; and yet another burden was proposed to be put upon it. He recollected on a former occasion an honourable gentleman who lived in Oamaru saying it was quite impossible for the Oamaru people to meet the taxes put upon them, they were so excessive in comparison with those on the rest of the colony, and suggesting that the colony should take their liability over; and now he found that his honourable friend, in addition to this burden, proposed to put another burden upon Oamaru. It might be indispensable that the money should be borrowed to repair the breakwater; but he thought the Council ought to refuse to go further than that. He would support the second reading to-day; but the matter should be considered very carefully in Committee. When the Bill went into Committee no doubt the question would be raised as to how much money ought to be borrowed under the circumstances.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK asked how long the money was proposed to be provided for; because in the preamble it said it was for "the present and the future."

The Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL knew something about this proposal, and he took a very active part in trying to defeat it when it was before the ratepayers, when it was carried by only a small majority. As to the amount proposed to be borrowed, so far as he could recollect it was originally £33,000, but now it had been increased to £40,000, and he noticed in the Bill they would have to pay 8 per cent. for the advance. One of the principal endowments of this Board consisted of a rabbit-infested run, consisting of 65,000 acres, and which was now let for about £3,000, and the lease expired in 1890. If that run were put up to auction to-day it would not fetch £700. He knew the run well, and he would not give that for it. They had now got to face that aspect of the question. Then, the colony had made an advance of £35,000, and he did not know where the security was. The Board shifted their account from the Union Bank to the Colonial Bank, and £5,000 which had been advanced was sent to the Colonial Bank, and the Colonial Bank actually collared the money. Then they shifted their account to the National Bank, in whose hands they now were. In passing this Bill he believed they would be doing an unwise thing. He spoke as having a great interest in that part of the country, and he advised the Council to make some inquiries into the subject. They had been assured that the breakwater could never be destroyed; and yet it had met with this accident. He suggested that the further consideration of the matter should be left over till next session.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI did not feel obliged to the honourable gentleman who had advocated the rejection of the Bill; but no

doubt the honourable gentleman had reasons and causes for doing so. He (Mr. Shrimski) was an old settler there, and had an interest in the place, and all he could say was that, as far as the Board were concerned, they were endeavouring to discharge their duties to the satisfaction of the public. No one could charge them with being actuated by motives of personal gain in what they did. They were constructing a public work, which was not only for the benefit of the people of Oamaru, but also for the whole of the colony, because if the harbour works were carried to completion there they would allow ships to enter and leave that port in safety, and Wellington and Auckland would be benefited, because they would get their goods so much cheaper; consequently Oamaru should not be called upon to pay the whole of the taxation as proposed. If by the will of Providence this work had been damaged to a certain extent, who was responsible for it? Surely not the Board? If the Board were allowed to borrow this sum they would be able to meet their engagements; but, if not, where was their income to be derived from? He asked the Council to consider whether, for the sake of £40,000, they would allow the works already constructed to go to waste and ruin, or whether they would allow the people to tax themselves to the extent of £40,000, so as to enable them to carry out the work. No doubt the Hon. Mr. Campbell spoke from a personal knowledge of the subject. Whether he held first mortgages or second mortgages he (Mr. Shrimski) was not aware, but the honourable gentleman's remarks led to the conclusion that he was a bondholder of the first class.

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND thought that the present state of the Oamaru Harbour, as referred to in the discussion, pointed to the mistake they had made all along in allowing small local bodies to make works of this description. But it would not do, having made the mistake, to drop the matter, and they could not refuse to authorise the means for the restoration of the works. He could give his experience on the matter of the restoration of such works, as he had lived for two years in the neighbourhood of a large similar work in Algeria constructed on this same plan, which had been expected to withstand the storms of the Mediterranean without the additions which it was now proposed to make at Oamaru. They very soon found out that that would not do, and it was found necessary to construct an artificial beach outside in that harbour, capped with blocks of concrete on a larger scale than were used in New Zealand or in England generally, *mètres* being substituted for yards. He presumed that the stress to which the Oamaru breakwater would be subjected was not less than that which arose in the Mediterranean, and he had seen those large blocks, 13ft. long by 7ft. square, lifted up and thrown against the face of the breakwater. He mentioned this in order that the Council might see that it would be very undesirable that this work should be done in an imperfect fashion, and that the mere taking out of the

broken stone would be utterly insufficient; and if the Board were pinched for the means of making proper blocks, which were absolutely necessary, and if as a consequence they were driven to slop-work, the work would have to be done over again before very long. This was the first time he had voted in favour of a loan, but in this case he believed it to be necessary, if it was considered necessary to retain the Oamaru breakwater.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER said that the real question they had to consider was, whether they should allow the £300,000 which had been spent in the construction of harbour improvements at Oamaru to be utterly wasted, or spend the necessary money in repairing the breakwater. With regard to what the Hon. Mr. Richmond had just said, he gathered from his remarks that he was not aware that the Harbour Board, from the first moment this injury happened, consulted the Government, and that the repairs were being carried out by the advice and under the control of the Government Engineer. That was the best thing the Harbour Board could do. No man could say what was to be the ultimate result of any of these breakwaters. The Oamaru breakwater was, from the first, admittedly of an experimental nature. Considering the almost total ignorance which existed with regard to these works when this harbour was commenced he thought it could not be denied that it had been a very successful work. It was true it had sustained considerable injury, but that injury would not have been sustained if sufficient funds had been available during the time of the construction of the breakwater. Out of the proposed loan, £22,000 ought to have been spent during the construction of the breakwater. There were certain members of the Board, in the old times, who wished to expend more money upon the breakwater proper, before what was called the mole—which was the protective work on the north—was commenced. That was overruled, and the consequence now was that it was seen that the breakwater was not sufficiently strong. The Government Engineer had, very properly, determined that he would recommend that a sufficient expenditure should be incurred at once, to prevent such a disaster occurring again. Knowing the whole history of the matter, he (Mr. Miller) was bound to say—although he was not a bit more for borrowing than anybody else—that he could not for a moment admit that they ought to allow a work of that magnitude and benefit to the district to go to rack and ruin and become utterly useless for the sake of saving the proposed necessary expenditure. The saving to the district in cost of exporting and importing the produce amounted to a very large sum.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—How much is paid for interest?

The Hon. Mr. MILLER said he was coming to that presently. During the present year there had been 5,080 tons of produce exported to Sydney alone. That was within the nine months which had passed when the return which he held in his hand was made up.

*Hon. Mr. Richmond*

That trade to Sydney could not possibly have existed without this harbour. It was of no use saying it would have been better if the country had never spent a farthing on this breakwater and thus made the people use the railway. It was the railway freight which made the difference. The Oamaru district had furnished a very considerable part of the whole trade of the colony to Sydney. When the wheat trade almost collapsed, and the depression became general, the people in that district turned to growing potatoes; and the export of potatoes had been very considerable. The rate which was levied under the Act of 1882 was three-sixteenths of a penny. The Act gave power to levy three-eighths of a penny. Three-sixteenths of a penny was levied, and that produced £3,000. He would have been extremely glad if the district could have escaped the tax; but he was perfectly certain of this: that they were better off with the harbour rate and the harbour than they would be without the harbour. There was no question about the wisdom of going on with the work, because if the work were not proceeded with it would mean not only throwing away all the money that had been spent, but it would plunge the district into a state of depression—of ruin, he was going to say, but at least of depression and isolation which would be a colonial disaster in itself much greater than the loss of the £30,000 or £40,000 which it was proposed to borrow.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR would support the second reading of this Bill. All along, since the work had been commenced, he had as far as possible assisted Oamaru in getting their harbour. He had always taken a considerable interest in the matter. He felt that a very great wrong and injustice would be done to the people of the district if this money, or, at all events, a portion of it, were not granted. As long as the people of the district were prepared to rate themselves, and stand the expense incurred, he thought the Council would do wrong if it refused to pass the Bill. He hoped that the consideration which had been given to that part of the colony interested in the measure before the Council would be extended to districts with works of a similar character in other parts of the colony.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES said the Hon. the Attorney-General had expressed surprise that he (Mr. Holmes) should introduce a borrowing Bill. He exceedingly disliked borrowing, but he had taken the Bill up at the request of the people of the district. There was a rate to be levied over a large area, and he himself paid a considerable amount of that rate. Therefore he had a direct interest in the Oamaru Harbour. If the rate were four or five times what it was, he would gladly pay it rather than have the harbour done away with. The harbour had become a necessity. It could not be done without in a district so thoroughly agricultural. As a harbour of refuge it was very good. He had never seen an accident there, although he had noticed ten or twelve vessels in the harbour at one time, and there was a gale blowing at the time. Even when the accident occurred to



the breakwater the vessels in the harbour were uninjured. On public grounds this harbour was one of the works an effort should be made to maintain. It was really a public work of very considerable importance to his district.

The Council divided on the question, "That the Bill be read a second time."

AYES, 28.

Acland	Menzies	Richmond
Barnicoat	Miller	Shephard
Bonar	Oliver	Shrimski
Brett	Peacock	Stevens
Buckley	Peter	Swanson
Dignan	Pharazyn	Taiaroa
Fraser	Pollen	Walker
Hart	Reeves	Whitaker
Holmes	Reynolds	Williams.
Lehmann		

NOES, 8.

Campbell Morris Scotland.

Majority for, 25.

Bill read a second time.

#### MIDLAND RAILWAY REVISED CONTRACT.

##### ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—I have very little to add to my remarks of yesterday, when I showed that all the coal from the West Coast mines must be taken by water, and therefore that the construction of this railway would be of very little use in that respect. The only coal that could be taken without loss would be the coal that might be required for those in the interior settlements or about Christchurch. Then, the course of the trade of the West Coast has altered. I imagine that Wellington does a large portion of that trade now. Certainly the cattle trade is with Wanganui and Taranaki, though it was formerly with Canterbury; but I think the trade is now in the hands of the people of the North Island. There is another question that I think is of importance. Will the property of this company be subjected to the property-tax the same as the property of private individuals? If so, I have calculated that, the prime cost of the railway property being £2,500,000, and land £1,250,000, the property-tax would come to £15,625 a year; and I do not know how English capitalists would like to pay at the rate of 1s. 8d. in the pound, instead of 7d. in the pound, which they have to pay in England on the income-tax. This is nearly three times the amount. Then, the property would also be subject to the county and road rates and the charitable rate, as I imagine that the people of the West Coast would not allow the company to go free. These are all matters for us and the capitalists to attend to. I have just one remark to make with regard to the lines themselves. It might be assumed that, provided we had abundance of capital and the proper time had arrived, it would be worth our while to make the line from Springfield to Brunnerton, and also from Hokitika to Reefton; but how any sane man—any man with the smallest modicum of com-

mon-sense—could think of making a railway from Reefton to Belgrove I cannot understand. It will pass through scarcely any agricultural land for 120 miles. Mr. Foy said that for sixty miles of the line two drays per week were quite sufficient to do the cartage on that road. If there is only that amount of traffic on the line, what hope is there for the railway? There are a great many difficulties to be overcome, and therefore, whatever there may be to justify them in making the other parts of the line, there is nothing to justify them in making the line I have referred to, and I say any man who votes in favour of making that line is an enemy to the country. There is no doubt that there is a desire on the part of people all over New Zealand to have large sums of money spent in their own districts. They imagine that somehow it will filter into their pockets; but that is a great mistake. Money spent on bad enterprises is a positive loss to the State and to every person in connection with it. There is no axiom of political economy to justify the wasting of money on bad enterprises. I remember sitting in the gallery in another place with Sir George Whitmore and listening to the late Colonial Treasurer when he delivered an address on the subject of how much money had been spent on worthless works out of the first loan merely for securing votes, and he calculated that one and a half millions out of eight millions had been spent on works which were really of no value, although he was a party to it, and although the object of it was to secure him a following. In *Hansard*, Volume XVI., 1874, Mr. Vogel said,—

"We have sanctioned the borrowing of ten millions, but it is bitterly mortifying to me to know that only six and a half millions, instead of eight millions, are for railways; there is thus a difference of one and a half millions, and every honourable member must know that is represented by expedients to which we would have had to submit in order to purchase support from the provinces, in order to induce them to allow us to carry on the immigration and public-works policy."

I would just say, in conclusion, that it is not advisable to get into trouble with English contractors. We had enough of that in the case of Messrs. Brogden and Co. I feel satisfied that those who are better acquainted with the matter will agree with me that the contractors in the colony would perform the work with less trouble and at a cheaper cost than the English contractors, so far as we have had experience of them. I therefore think that if this contract had not been entered into it would have been much better. If the railway had been applied for when times were different I believe Parliament would have voted the money for the line from Springfield to Brunnerton. I believe it is desirable to connect the East and West Coasts if we had the money to do it; but I altogether deprecate the idea of giving away a large quantity of land for an object that is not really required. If it were seven or ten years hence it would be far more reasonable to apply for it; but my opinion is that nothing would

justify us in going on with this work at the present time.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON.—I have listened with attention and interest to this debate, and I must confess I have felt some surprise at what appeared to me to be the desire on the part of some honourable members to refer as little as possible to the early history of this undertaking, and to confine the discussion to the proposed new contract, which, no doubt, is more immediately under our notice. I think, too, Sir, I can recognise the position from which such a course would appear to be the right one; but I venture to say that the adoption of it will, in all probability, lead into great error. We must absolutely look closely into every circumstance connected with this undertaking. I was therefore sorry that the motion to refer this question to a Select Committee proposed to confine the labours of that Committee to the consideration of one or two points. However, I hope that motion will be amended, and the Committee left absolutely free to adopt what course they choose in the course of their investigations. Now, Sir, this motion seems to involve two large questions. The first is, whether we should agree to grant the concessions now asked for; and the second is, in what form, supposing we are willing to grant those concessions, we should legalise those concessions—give them legal effect. And I think these two questions are very wide apart. I have noticed in the debate a tendency on the part of many honourable members to agree to these concessions that are now proposed provided they are assured that the construction put upon them be that stated by the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker, and provided also that sufficient caution is taken to protect the colony from any future and unlooked-for claims. I myself am not prepared to go so far as that. There is at present a contract in force—that made in 1885. That contract was considered sufficiently liberal to be accepted by the contractors and executed by them. Nor must we forget that these contractors, and their representatives at the present time—the company—claim to be quite as well informed on all questions relating to this matter as we are ourselves, and therefore quite able to protect themselves without any action on our part. It is true it was agreed that that contract should be modified to a certain extent; but those modifications can be quite clearly understood, and there will be no difficulty in introducing them into the contract of 1885. I think, therefore, that we ought not to go further than the Act of 1886 authorises us to go in modifying that contract. But it is said that if we do not grant these concessions now asked for the whole work will fall through—that the railway will not be made. I do not think there is any great ground for alarm on that account. No doubt alarm will be felt by those persons who look for immediate benefit in connection with the construction of this work either from the expenditure of money in constructing it or from the easier access to other parts of the colony to be provided by it. But these

advantages are not the only ones that we have to take into consideration. They may be purchased at too great expense to the colony; and I think they would be so if this contract which we are now asked to confirm is the price of them. I would also ask whether there is no risk of this undertaking falling through from other causes, even supposing these concessions were granted. When we remember that the total subscribed capital of this company, which has undertaken to construct works estimated to cost at least £2,500,000, is only £250,000, it seems to me that the prospect of these works being rapidly carried to a conclusion is remote. I cannot think that it will be within any reasonable time that this work will be carried out. Then, again, under the present proposals we have virtually to provide the capital for these works by supplying in advance lands to be mortgaged to raise the necessary funds. There should be some very great general benefit to be obtained by such a sacrifice; but I fail to see any that is at all adequate. When I consider this undertaking even with the most friendly feelings towards it, I cannot but come to the conclusion that it is premature and uncalled-for at the present time. Now, Sir, I will not say more upon the subject of the contract itself, or upon the terms of the contract. Other honourable members have gone into those points fully. I have merely expressed my opinion to this effect: that we should not go beyond the concessions granted by the Act of 1886. I will now refer, Sir, briefly to the other point; and that is, supposing these concessions are granted, then what is the form in which we should give legal effect to them? I say most positively that I object very strongly to the form now suggested. If we take the original contract and examine it closely by the side of this proposed contract, we shall find that there is nothing in the original one which is actually cancelled, but that almost every important clause in that is more or less modified by and, at the same time, incorporated with this new contract; so that, if you place one beside the other, it is almost impossible to say what is the legal construction to be put upon these modified and combined terms. Why is that so? Why should this be the form of contract offered to us? Would it not have been far better to have framed an entirely new contract, containing all the conditions agreed upon, and by the execution of which all existing engagements should be cancelled? Under these circumstances we should have been in a very different position; we should have been able to understand fairly what was proposed, and to consider fairly what the concessions asked for are. As it now is, I maintain we are quite in the dark as to what will take place if we adopt the present proposals. Looking at it from this point of view, I can only say that I believe it will be simply leading the colony into a trap if we adopt this agreement—a trap none can see how we shall escape from. It is undertaking responsibilities the extent of which we cannot

*Hon. Mr. Holmes*

now calculate, and for a consideration which is quite inadequate. I therefore shall certainly not vote in favour of this contract, at any rate, as it stands. I shall, however, vote for the motion of the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, that the question be referred to a Committee; and I trust the Committee will investigate the case from the very beginning.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—The amendment moved yesterday by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse was that clause 3 of the proposed contract should be referred to a Select Committee. Doubts have been expressed as to whether the clause as it now stands is sufficient for the purpose for which is intended. Upon consideration, I have come to the conclusion that it is sufficient; but, in order to obviate all questions in regard to it, I am quite willing that words shall be added to it which will, if possible, make it still clearer than it is now. These words were proposed in the House of Representatives, but were rejected on the ground that the clause itself was quite sufficient without the words. What I would suggest is that that part of the clause should read as follows: "And, if the aggregate of the money so received and owing, together with the sum of such valuation, shall not amount to £1,250,000, the only claim of the company in respect of such difference (if any) shall be a right on the part of the company, within six months thereafter, to select further land out of the land then remaining unselected." That, I apprehend, would make the matter perfectly clear, and would satisfy some honourable gentlemen who consider that the clause is not sufficiently clear as it stands. The Hon. Mr. Johnson, I think, rather misapprehends the position; and the Hon. Mr. Holmes also misapprehends it. With regard to the Hon. Mr. Holmes, in the first instance, I should to a great extent agree with the speech he has made if the original question as to whether this railway should be constructed were now before us. If we could revert to the position we were in when the first Act was before the Legislature I think many honourable members would take a different view from that which they take at the present time. But, as I endeavoured to point out when I proposed the resolution yesterday, it is quite clear we have got into a totally different position at the present time. We are bound to make a new contract; there is a stipulation made on the part of the original contracting parties that a new contract shall be made. The only question the Council at present has to consider is, what is to be in this new contract. I shall again repeat a portion of what I stated yesterday. In the Act of 1886 it is set out that a contract had already been made; and that contract was confirmed. It also stipulated that there should be other conditions, and a new contract was to be made with these conditions in. Those conditions were inserted in a new draft contract, which was agreed to between the representatives of the company and the Government in December, 1886. The draft contract we have before us is that which the Government does agree to, sub-

ject to certain modifications suggested by the House of Representatives and by the Government; so that we have got into this position: that we must have a new contract made. Honourable members have the contract of 1886 between the Government and the company, and that contract stands with such alterations and additions as may now be made. This matter has been before the Assembly now for a length of time. It has been before the Council for some six or seven days, with the resolution which was passed by the House of Representatives on the subject, so that honourable members have had every opportunity of examining the matter. If honourable members will look they will see that the contract which was made in December, 1886, between the agents of the company and the Government of that day is modified in some respects in favour of the colony. They will find that every provision is now made to protect the colony. There is one stipulation which is of importance: we are to give land to the value of £1,250,000. The draft contract was that the company should select land to that amount anywhere, and as it is now arranged it carries out what was originally intended by the parties. Every alteration made subsequent to that has been in favour of the Government, with two or three exceptions. Now, I want to point out to honourable members that there is one stipulation at present in the Act of 1884 which it is of the first importance we should get rid of. The Hon. Mr. Holmes said we are giving up a great many things and we are getting nothing in exchange. I say we are getting, at all events, one most important thing in exchange, and what we are giving up is of far less importance to us than that which we are to get. The stipulation referred to was, that we were only to reserve those bits of land on which miners were engaged or which were known to be auriferous at the time the selection was made. Again, the company have the right of selection of alternate blocks within fifteen miles of the railway, and it will be found that that includes a great portion of the goldfields on the West Coast; so that, if no alteration had been made, the company could have taken up the greater portion of land believed to be auriferous, and which under this draft contract may from time to time be brought into operation in the goldfields. I say this is of the very first importance to the goldfields on the West Coast. There is an interest there of greater importance to the people on the West Coast than anything else in this contract. We are bound to protect that part of the country from being taken up to the exclusion of the miners. I say that is of the first importance, and I hope the Council will look at it from that point of view. We are giving up alternate blocks, which are of little value comparatively, because much of the railway goes through very broken land. The Hon. Mr. Johnson says we ought to value the land as it will be after the railway is made. That is a legitimate profit the company are to get. They take the land at the valuation fixed upon it, and

there is one provision as to the valuation which is very much against them. None of the land is to be valued at less than 10s. an acre, and I apprehend that a great deal of the land is not worth 10d. an acre. The Hon. Mr. Johnson says we ought to have all the Acts and agreements put into one contract, so that everybody may understand it. That is exactly what the resolution passed by the House of Representatives recommends. If the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse will withdraw his amendment I will get my honourable colleague Mr. Stevens to propose that the words I have stated be inserted, with the view of clearing up the difficulty which has been pointed out. I am quite sure that, if now we were to reject that which is proposed by the House of Representatives, we should place ourselves and the colony in a false position; and, seeing that every protection is given to the interests of the colony, I trust the Council will allow the resolution to go through.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE. — As the honourable gentleman has appealed to me, although I have spoken to the amendment perhaps I may be permitted to make a few observations in reference to what has just fallen from the honourable gentleman. I may state that from much he has advanced in his speech I entirely differ, and much that he has said goes to confirm the view I have already expressed, that I felt myself logically impelled to vote against the Bill altogether. There is a very important consideration which he has brought forward—and to which he has referred more explicitly to-day than he did yesterday. That does very much influence me, as it did influence me yesterday. It is this: that there was a great defect in the Act of 1884. The contract that was made under that Act did not provide, as it ought to have provided, for the reservation of mineral land, and we must make great concessions in order to remedy the mistake then made. I am therefore prepared, if the Council will permit me, to withdraw my amendment in favour of the course suggested by the Attorney-General. I believe, under all the circumstances of the case, that is the best course we can adopt, and I am pleased to find that, if that course be adopted, it is likely to be satisfactory to all parties. We shall then be provided amply against any claims for compensation in the future.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Debate adjourned.

The Council adjourned at five minutes to five o'clock p.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 30th November, 1887.

First Readings—Se-  
ments Bill—P  
Flogging  
High School  
Chas  
Grey  
Lib

—Land for Settle-  
ment—Newton  
Age and Girls'  
1st Australia—  
Transfer Act—  
Cards—Public  
Native Lands—

South Island Native Land Purchases—Tongariro National Park—Administration Bill—Parliamentary Honorarium and Privileges Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### FIRST READINGS.

Auckland Girls' High School Bill, Public Bodies' Leaseholds Bill, Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill, Loans to Local Bodies Bill.

### SECOND READING.

Christchurch Hospital Bill.

### LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS BILL.

Mr. FULTON brought up the report of the Waste Lands Committee on this Bill, and moved, That it do lie on the table.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable member in charge of this Bill could now have it restored to the Order Paper if he so desired.

Sir G. GREY said he had no opportunity of doing that, because private members' days had been taken away. What he wished to submit to the House was this: that this Bill was sent to the Committee on the 3rd of November, and consequently it had been delayed there for four weeks, all but one day, and the report was not brought up until every opportunity of bringing the Bill forward had been taken away from him. He considered, notwithstanding what the Speaker had said, that a great injustice had been done to himself and also to the country. The Government had brought in their Land Bill in the meantime, and there was no opportunity of comparing the two Bills together. When the debate was taking place on the Land Bill he ought to have had an opportunity of contrasting the Government Bill with his own measure. It appeared to him that it was a very wrong principle that members' Bills should be taken from them in that way and detained in a hostile Committee for such a length of time. He thought that, under the circumstances, some effort should be made by the Government to do justice to himself and the country in this matter.

Mr. FULTON wished to say, on behalf of the Committee of which he was Chairman, that the Committee had gone through the Bill with all necessary expedition—in fact, with unusual expedition in some respects, because the Committee had sat, on days on which it was not usual to sit, in order to consider the Bill. It was a Bill which required great consideration, as its principles were of large importance, and there was not the slightest attempt to stop the Bill or even to delay it. Other members of the Committee would bear him out in saying that he had urged the Committee to push on with the Bill in order that the honourable gentleman might have an opportunity of bringing it before the House; but still the Committee felt, and properly felt, he thought, that the clauses of the measure were such as to require the greatest care and consideration. The Bill would have been reported on the previous day but for his

own oversight. He had forgotten that the interpretation clause had not been considered when the Committee adjourned on the previous day, so the Committee had had again to revert to it that morning; otherwise the report and the Bill would have been before the House on the previous day. He must himself take the blame for that one day's delay. The Committee had used every possible exertion to get the Bill reported on as early as possible, and it must be remembered that it was a Committee which had a very large number of petitions and other subjects to deal with.

Mr. SEDDON would point out that, unless the Bill was set down for committal in the ordinary course, the amendments would not be printed so that honourable members could see them. He therefore moved, That the Bill be set down for committal next day. The Government had given a promise that they would consider certain Bills introduced by private members that should have facilities for being passed; and possibly this might be one of them.

Sir G. GREY had had no intention of casting reproaches upon the activity of the Committee, but he thought it a very wrong system which permitted a Bill of this importance to be taken out of a member's hands and delayed for one month. He simply objected to the general principle, which he thought was quite contrary to the general spirit of legislation. It was quite certain that in a short session, if a Bill remained a month with a Committee, an honourable member would have no chance of getting his measure brought before the House and the country.

Mr. BARRON would remind the honourable member for Auckland Central that he would have a full opportunity of testing the opinion of the House on the proposals of this Bill when the Government Land Bill was being considered in Committee. He could then move that any or all of the clauses contained in his own Bill should be transferred to the Government Bill.

Sir G. GREY said there would be a difficulty in taking the course recommended by the honourable member for Caversham, because he intended to try to put two other Bills — of great importance to deferred-payment settlers and village settlers — into the Land Bill of the Government when that was brought forward.

Mr. WALKER said a very important measure had been referred to the Waste Lands Committee last night. Would it take the Committee a month to peruse that and bring down a report to the House?

Mr. FULTON presumed the Committee would answer the question of the honourable member for Ashburton when he (Mr. Fulton) brought down their report on the Bill.

Sir J. VOGEL would like to say a few words upon what seemed to be a growing evil. These sessional Committees appeared to him to be gradually claiming powers which would sap the power and lessen the responsibility of the House. When a Bill had passed its second reading it was understood that its policy was approved by the House. In a case like this,

however, it went to a Select Committee, and they might alter the Bill entirely, so that it might not be in accord with the decision of the House as to the policy of the measure. The Bill came back again, and there was really often no chance of members seeing the alterations in time to study them as they were able to study Bills before they went to a second reading. In this way alterations crept into Bills which honourable members generally, he believed, were not aware of until the session was over. If we were to have a system of Grand Committees it should be well understood, and the number of members of the Committees should be made larger, and the proceedings very different. As it was now, the responsibility of Parliament in regard to Committee Bills was lessened. A Bill came in, and was fully discussed and its policy assented to on the second reading; but it might come back from the Committee to which it was then referred in an entirely altered state, and embodying quite a different policy and principle, quite different from those which the Bill contained when it passed its second reading. He was not speaking only of Bills referring to land: it was the same with Mining Bills and Native Bills. These measures were fully discussed on the second reading when their provisions were well understood, and then they came back from Committees quite altered, and with provisions that were not generally understood; and between the two — the House and the Committee — members, who wished to do their duty, and to be influenced by what they considered desirable, lost their hold on the measures passed through the House. He thought some understanding should be arrived at as to these measures. If the Select Committees were to have the power of Grand Committees in regard to them, measures should be referred to those Committees before their second reading; or, if a Bill had passed its second reading when it was referred to a Committee, it should not be competent for the Committee to alter the policy of the measure. He could not help thinking that the present system was a growing evil, and one that members should take notice of — one, in fact, which was insidiously introducing a system of parliamentary procedure quite at variance with what was understood to be the true principle.

Mr. MOSS said this was a very important Bill on which some members had strong feelings, and he would ask the Chairman of the Committee whether the Committee were unanimous in their opinion on every point in their report.

Mr. FULTON would be happy to show the honourable member for Parnell the minutes of the Committee.

Mr. MOSS did not seek a privilege which other members could not enjoy. Standing Order 183 read, —

"In the event of any division taking place in any Select Committee, the question proposed, the name of the proposer, and the respective votes thereupon of each member present, are to be entered on the minutes of evidence, or on

the minutes of the proceedings of the Committee (as the case may be), and reported to the House on the report of such Committee."

He therefore asked for a ruling as to whether it was not the duty of the Committee, in presenting their report on this Bill, to submit with it a report of all the proceedings in regard to it. It was only fair to the House that it should be so. The Standing Order he had read was very explicit, and, unless the report had been agreed to unanimously by the Committee, it must be complied with.

MR. SPEAKER said the rule was that all reports from Select Committees must be accompanied by minutes of proceedings and evidence.

MR. FULTON said the minutes of this Committee, like those of other Committees, were kept in a book. The Committee sat from day to day, and he thought it would be improper to lay on the table a book that he would have to take away next day when the Committee sat. He had no objection, of course, to laying the minutes on the table.

MR. SMITH had understood that the Premier had supported the principle of this Bill when it passed its second reading.

MR. MOSS hoped other honourable members would be guided by the Standing Order he had referred to and the ruling given by Mr. Speaker. It would be an absurdity to have such a Standing Order if it was not complied with. It would really be useful for the House to know the proceedings on a Bill from day to day as it passed through a Committee.

MR. ALLEN asked if it was imperative that the minutes of Committees should be laid on the table with their reports.

MR. SPEAKER said that was the rule.

MR. ALLEN would ask, why, then in that case, had there been an objection to laying the minutes of the Midland Railway Committee on the table?

MR. SPEAKER said the House could, as it did then, overrule the Standing Order, by ordering there should not be laid on the table anything it was deemed inexpedient to lay on the table.

MR. ALLEN asked if that was not done in opposition to the Standing Order.

MR. SPEAKER said it was for the House to say whether the minutes should lie on the table or not, and the House said "No."

MR. SEDDON asked whether, when there had been a division, the minutes must be presented with the report.

MR. SPEAKER.—Whether there has been a division or not, the House should know what took place.

MR. ALLEN asked if it was the rule that the minutes must be laid on the table.

MR. SPEAKER.—Yes.

MR. O'CONOR would like to know whether a resolution of the House could override a Standing Order. It appeared to have done so in the case mentioned.

MR. SPEAKER said that when the question was put, "That the minutes do lie on the table," it was for the House to say "Yes" or "No."

MR. SMITH would point out that the Govern-

*Mr. Moss*

ment supported the principle of this Bill when it was before the House, and, as the delay was caused to a considerable extent in the Committee by the many amendments proposed by the Minister of Lands, he thought that the least the Government could do would be to give a day for the consideration of the Bill. It must have been known to the Government, when they took private members' days last week, that they virtually killed the Bill, unless an opportunity was to be given for its consideration.

Major STEWARD would go a little farther and suggest that, if the Government should not find it possible for the Bill to receive consideration this session, they should, under the circumstances of the case, the Bill having been to the Waste Lands Committee and having received great attention there, make arrangements to have the Bill proceeded with next session from the point at which it had now arrived. That would save time, and insure the honourable member for Auckland Central getting the verdict of the House upon it.

MR. COWAN desired to remove any misapprehension which might have been caused by the remarks of the honourable member for Woodville. The delay in reporting upon the Bill had not been caused by any action on the part of the Minister of Lands. Having been a regular attendant at the Committee, he could say that no such allegation could fairly be made against the honourable gentleman. He had taken great interest in the Bill, but had in no way delayed it. The fact was, that the subject was a very important one; the Bill had been a heavy one to consider, and that was why it had taken so long.

Mr. Fulton's motion agreed to.

#### PORT CHALMERS DOCK TRUST.

MR. ALLEN desired to know if the Premier could give him a reply to his question, put on the previous day, with regard to the Government giving facilities for bringing on the motion of the Select Committee to inquire into the proceedings of the Port Chalmers Dock Trust.

Major ATKINSON said this matter had been under consideration. He felt there was very great difficulty in the House directly interfering with the expenditure of money by local bodies; but, under the circumstances, the Government would not feel justified in opposing an obstacle to the honourable member making the proposal to the House, and it would rest with the House whether, under the circumstances, the request should be granted. As to facilities, he was unable to say anything further than that the Government would not raise any opposition to the proposal.

#### NEWTON FLOGGING CASE.

Sir J. VOGEL asked the Minister of Education, What course he has decided to take with regard to the case of flogging the girl at the school at Newton? He would remind the honourable gentleman to whom he put the question that he had put a similar question before, and that gentleman had told him that

they were, considering the matter, and had lent him a copy of the report which had been made on the subject. He would like now to ask the honourable member to tell him what course, if any, the Government proposed to take with regard to this matter.

Mr. FISHER said the Government proposed to take no further action in the matter. The charge—if charge it could be called—had been formally and officially investigated by the Newton East School Committee, and, by a majority of the Committee, the master had been acquitted of having severely or unduly caned the child. He wished to call attention to the reiterated use of the word “flogged,” which was used in the honourable gentleman’s question. There was no flogging in the matter; and the case had been greatly exaggerated. The master of the school himself did not either cane or flog the child: the child merely received two slaps with a cane upon each hand. He had explained to the honourable gentleman, when he formerly put the question, that the Government did not consider that the master had the right either himself to flog or cane the child or to give instructions that the child should be flogged or caned because of the unwillingness or inability of the parents to send a note. If there had been anything in the nature of a flogging, anything to justify the use of that term, no doubt a more searching investigation would have been made. He had written to the Auckland Education Board, and they had taken no action whatever in the matter. He did not know whether it would be fair to assume that they also believed that the so-called flogging, and the circumstances connected with it, had been greatly exaggerated. At all events, the short answer to the honourable gentleman’s question was, that the Government did not propose to take any further action in the matter.

Sir J. VOGEL might say at once that he thought the force of public opinion, and of the opinion of the House, would compel the Government to take some action, or that some action must be taken outside the Government. He did not understand the distinction which the honourable gentleman drew between flogging and caning; he did not know whether it was the instrument or the part of the person to which it was applied that constituted the difference in his mind. It was well known that the child had been caned on the hand, and, consequently, she had received a flogging. He would ask the House to allow him to give a correct statement of the case, which the Hon. the Minister of Education had not done, and would say that, in his opinion, the defence of the person who ordered the flogging made the matter worse. If he rightly interpreted the remarks of the Minister of Education he considered that the master’s having only ordered the administration of the punishment and not administered it himself was a justification. He did not think it was, nor did he believe the House would. The facts of the case were these: This poor child was frequently asked to bring

a shilling or a written note from her mother; and at least once—and, her mother thought, more often—she had requested her mother to give her the letter. The mother did not give her the letter, and for this reason: that, on a previous occasion, the brother of this poor girl had been dismissed from the school—dismissed in defiance of the law which obtains in New Zealand to enable all children to obtain a free education; this boy had been dismissed from the school because he had not brought a shilling for the stationery materials. Well, the girl was ordered to be caned because she did not bring a letter. It was not very clear whether or not the girl said she had asked for a letter on that day; but, certainly, the girl asserted that she had asked for a letter on some occasions. In cases like this, it was very rare that instances of brutal treatment of helpless children came to light; abuses might go on for years before the force of public opinion was brought to bear upon them, and when they did hear of such cases those who had experience in matters of the kind would readily surmise that the one first heard of was not the first occurrence of the kind. At the hearing before the Committee a gentleman named Cook came forward. He would quote from the *Auckland Star*:—

“At this stage a gentleman who had been listening quietly to the evidence rose to his feet, and said that if it was the proper time he wished to lay a complaint.—The Chairman asked him to put it in writing.—The man gave his name as James Cook, of South Street. He said that he preferred to speak to the Committee, as he could lay his complaint better that way than in writing. He wished to lay a complaint to show the scandalous way children were beaten at that school. Mr. Jeune had seen his child. It was shameful, and just for peeping on another girl’s slate. After expressing himself very strongly on the subject Mr. Cook withdrew.—The Chairman asked the Press not to notice that matter, as it was not the business before the meeting.”

Very properly, he thought, the Press refused to be muzzled, and this report had seen the light, and had shown what they might have expected—namely, that the poor girl’s was not a solitary instance. He would state the circumstances of the case as they had come out. This poor woman appeared to be a very deserving one. In a letter from Mr. J. Graham the family was spoken of as follows:—

“Having known the Sheard family for some considerable time, they having been tenants of mine for about two years, I have to state that I have always found them ready and willing to pay to the last farthing when they had the wherewith to do so. Mr. Sheard is a sober, industrious labourer, and willing to accept any kind of employment whereby he can obtain an honest livelihood; but during the last twelve months he has been very unfortunate in obtaining employment, though he has, to my knowledge, left no stone unturned to seek it. As a last resort he left home five weeks ago for Coromandel to endeavour to obtain employment as

a prospector, since which period he has not been able to send any remittance for the support of his wife and children; and how the poor woman has provided for herself and five helpless children the bare necessities of life I am at a loss to understand. As to Mrs. Sheard knowing or thinking about the legal or illegal payment of the quarter's fees, I do not believe for one moment that she knew that such a question had ever been raised, but if she had the money it would have been paid without a second asking-for."

He would read another letter directly, which would show honourable members that this was a case which if one read in a novel one would say, What a sad and pathetic story! Here was this poor woman, without her husband, without means of livelihood, and in bad health. This child had household duties to perform, and, if her mother had not money in the house, it was all the more to her credit that, instead of worrying her mother on the subject, she kept it to herself. Could any honourable gentleman think that a girl in that position should be subjected to such a cruel punishment as this girl was subjected to? Here was the letter from Dr. Lewis on the subject:—

"Now, I happen to have seen this said Kate Sheard compelled to do the whole of the housework of the Sheard family, cooking, washing, and nursing, while the mother was confined to bed through illness. Suppose that on the afternoon of the caning—and I must say, judging by the results obtained, the lady pupil-teacher is no mean wielder of the rod—the whole of the household duties devolved on the said Kate Sheard, you must agree with me, Mr. Editor, that the housework would come very heavily on the child. Such work would be quite enough to set up inflammation in the palm and sheaths of the tendons, and result probably in a long illness and a stiff finger or two."

That was the opinion of the doctor with regard to punishment which the Minister of Education told the House was but a light one, and one that had been exaggerated. To his mind it was a terrible thing to allow girls to be subjected to any personal punishment of the kind, even if the offence had been of a much more serious character. He believed that the greatest protection to young women when they grew up was, that they had been taught throughout their lives to regard as inviolable the sanctity of their persons. There was only one being in the world—the mother, or the person who occupied that position—who should ever chastise a girl, if even she should do it, which he strongly denied. If whipping girls was to be done in full school before a lot of boys it would be teaching those boys to grow up to join the ranks of the brutes who beat their wives. That was what would happen if such a course as this were adopted towards young girls in schools. He could not help recalling to his mind what happened many years ago, when all Europe was convulsed with horror at the treatment of women by a great and important person. This great and important person, Mar-

*Sir J. Vogel*

shal Haynau, went to London, and paid a visit to Barclay and Perkins's brewery and condescended to go over it; but the brewers' men there had read that Marshal Haynau had ordered women to be flogged, and they very soon made him hasten away from the brewery as quickly as possible. Were there no brewers' men in Auckland, one was inclined to ask, that this case had been allowed to slumber? This, however, he might say: that one gentleman, Mr. Jeune, a member of the School Committee, at once resigned his position in consequence of the decision that no further notice should be taken of the matter—which was, in fact, a decision justifying the master. So much for the question of flogging girls at school. He would not enter into the question raised by the doctor, as to which was the proper part of the body on which to inflict punishment of the kind. In the interest of the future women of New Zealand they should decide that no punishment of the kind should be administered to girls in public schools, and he hoped public opinion would secure such determination and force it on the Minister of Education, no matter what that honourable gentleman's own feelings might be on the subject. And now he would say a word or two as to the audacity of violating the spirit and intention of our Education Act in this case. We had a system which was said to be free; and when the question had been put, "Why should the parents of children who can afford to pay not be made to pay something towards the education of their children?" the answer had always been, "If you allow the parents of some children to pay, and others not, on account of their not being well off, you will draw a marked distinction between the two, and make some of the children very unhappy." That was the reason why the children of parents who could afford to pay were educated free. But what was done in this case? One child was sent away from the school altogether, and another was placed in the painful position of having to acknowledge, before the whole school, the poverty of her parents. And this was not a solitary case; for it appeared that it had been the practice in this school to make the children dun their parents for the shilling which was illegally required of them. While the colony was paying enormous sums to enable education to be free, so that there should be no distinction between children, no matter what the means of their parents might be, here a charge like this was being made to establish ranks in schools as between the children of parents who had not the shilling to pay and those whose parents could afford it. This was a most illegal demand to be made on them by the schoolmaster. He would not detain the House further than to say that, if the Government would not do anything in the matter, he had made up his mind that want of means should not prevent this poor woman from prosecuting the case. He moved the adjournment of the House.

Mr. W. P. REEVES seconded the motion for adjournment, and would like to say that this was not a matter of such trifling importance as



a good many honourable members appeared to think. The distinction sought to be drawn by the Minister of Education between caning and flogging seemed to be specious and, altogether, not proved. He thought it a most terrible thing that masters, who were prevented by the regulations from administering the cruel punishment of flogging, should be permitted to administer the punishment of caning. The Minister of Education said it was a less painful punishment to be caned than to be flogged; but he could assure the honourable gentleman that it was not. No doubt the honourable gentleman had not had any experience in the matter, and they now saw in the House the terrible result of sparing the rod in the honourable gentleman's case. But no doubt nineteen out of twenty of the honourable members present, who had had experience of the physical suffering, would bear him out in saying that in many cases it was a more severe punishment to be caned than to be flogged. He protested against masters endeavouring to evade the regulations under the trivial and peculiar pretext laid down by the Minister of Education.

Mr. FISHER said that, after the statement of the honourable member for Christchurch North, he was sure the House would permit him to answer some of the remarks of the honourable gentleman. Any man of impartial mind must admit that he had plainly stated on a former occasion, when the honourable gentleman brought the matter up, that he entirely disapproved of caning. He made that statement in such plain and simple language that there was no room for any misconception as to what he had said. But he wished to say now that he conceived it to be the primary duty of the Auckland Education Board to interfere in this matter, if any interference were necessary. The Board did interfere, and had called upon the Committee to report to the Board. The Committee inquired into all the circumstances of the caning, and forwarded the report of that inquiry, which disclosed certain perfectly plain facts; but, in the hands of such a superb champion of exaggeration as the House knew the honourable member for Christchurch North to be, those facts were perverted in a way that was not at all justifiable. What were the facts? He (Mr. Fisher) confessed that, on reading the statements contained in Dr. Lewis's letter, he came to the conclusion that a most unwarrantable punishment had been inflicted upon the girl. He really thought she had been subjected to a "brutal outrage," to quote the words of the honourable gentleman—that she had been beaten to within an inch of her life, and that the schoolmaster, Mr. Coates, had dropped on the ground from sheer exhaustion after inflicting the punishment. But, after investigation, it turned out that the caning had been inflicted by a female teacher in another room, and that the girl was not flogged by the master before the whole school. Dr. Lewis, who had published the sensational version of the punishment, was brought before the Committee for examination; and what did he say? In the official report of

his evidence, as taken down by a shorthand writer, he said this: Dr. Lewis was asked, "You said in your letter, from which a great many think your impression was that the child was half murdered—you said you were astonished when you heard the reason of the caning. Was it at the caning or the reason you were astonished?" Answer: "At the reason, not at the caning." Then this further question was put to him: "If this girl had been taken into a room and punished in the way you think right, and a mark like the one you saw left, would you think that the child was unduly punished?" "Certainly not." That was the answer of Dr. Lewis, who put into an Auckland newspaper the letter which led every candid person to believe that the child had been cruelly flogged. And what was his statement as to the actual punishment? "You remember the child Kate Sheard going to your house on the 21st October?" "Yes." "You examined her hands?" "Yes." "You found nothing on one hand?" "Nothing." "And on the other a small weal common to boys, which you thought had been caused by a little catching in the end of the cane?" "Yes. The weal was caused by a split in the end of the cane catching in the hand." This was the "brutal assault" which the honourable gentleman had magnified into such elaborate proportions; and he (Mr. Fisher) would ask the House whether, upon this plain statement of the medical man himself, there was any justification for the harrowing version which the honourable gentleman had given to the House that day. Then, the honourable gentleman raised the question as to the right of any person connected with the school to demand from this or any other child a fee of a shilling; and he (Mr. Fisher) granted that, technically speaking, there was no right whatever to exact or demand any fee from any pupil attending the public schools. The Act itself was mandatory upon the point that no fee should be charged. But what was the shilling for? He wished the House to understand that, in giving an explanation on this point, he was not defending the action of the Committee. But his own boys attended the State schools, and he had to provide school material for them. The Committees were bound by the Act to provide all necessary school apparatus, but there was nothing in the Act which compelled the School Committees to provide school material for the children. He (Mr. Fisher) had to find three and four shillings for each boy every quarter for the necessary school material, and he should be very glad, speaking his own personal views, if the School Committee of his district would consent to provide his children with all necessary school material at the rate of one shilling a quarter. He did not think that any member of the House who looked into the matter would deem it exorbitant to pay one penny a week for school material.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—Supposing they have not got it?

Mr. FISHER.—Can it be possible that in

the Colony of New Zealand there are people who cannot afford to pay one shilling in thirteen weeks?

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Yes, there are.

Mr. FISHER said he did not in any sense defend the demand for the shilling. He only expressed a wish that in his own case the School Committee of the Thorndon district would accept one shilling per quarter, and provide his children with necessary school material. Now, these were the facts relating to the payment of the shilling. The shilling was not demanded. Here is the regulation or rule under which the shilling was paid:—

“All below Standard I., 8d., for which they shall have the use of slates and slate-pencils. For Standards I. to VI., 1s., for which they shall have the use of slates, slate-pencils, ink, pens, and penholders, and be supplied with copy-books, blotting-paper and glass-paper, with muriatic acid for desk cleaning, and foolscap paper for examination purposes.”

He thought that the Committee, instead of being blamed for asking a shilling a quarter, were rather to be commended. However, as he had already stated, he was not there to defend the Committee upon that point. Well, these were the facts relating to this now celebrated flogging case. He had shown that the sensational statements made concerning it were altogether unwarranted and unjustifiable, that the Committee itself made an ample and exhaustive inquiry, and that the sensational version which the honourable gentleman had given to the House that afternoon was in no way justified. He was sure that if the Board of Education, who, so to speak, were on the spot, had seen anything to justify their interference, they would have interfered, for they were the persons to interfere. The only way in which the Government could interfere was by the appointment of a Royal Commission; and he would ask the honourable gentleman whether he thought the Government ought to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the circumstances of this case.

Sir G. GREY said he was interested in the district in which this circumstance occurred, and he thought this should be laid down as a rule by that House: that, so far as they could prevent corporal punishment being inflicted on girls who attended public schools, they would prevent its being done. He thought they had all come to that conclusion, and he really did not think that a case of wrongful punishment was so trifling a thing as persons believed. He was certain that an innocent child unjustly punished and struck, as he believed was the case in this instance, had a sort of hopelessness of justice in the world, and a kind of depression and grief and sense of wrong impressed upon its mind, that perhaps people could hardly understand unless they had suffered when they were children themselves. He thought the persons concerned would, on reflection, regret what had occurred, and he wished the House, on every possible occasion, to protest against corporal punishment being inflicted upon girls who attended

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their schools. He thought corporal punishment an improper proceeding altogether.

Major ATKINSON was only going to say that he entirely agreed with what had fallen from the honourable member for Auckland Central. It appeared to him (Major Atkinson) that the House should discourage in every possible way corporal punishment in schools, especially of girls. He objected to it himself, even in the case of boys. He felt quite certain, in regard to a school in which corporal punishment was necessary, that the master of that school was incompetent for his business. That he felt very strongly about. The Government considered this case with a great deal of care to see whether they could properly interfere: but seeing that the evidence of the doctor had entirely broken down; seeing that he had retracted everything he said, and made out that the punishment was only moderate and reasonable—if corporal punishment could be said to be reasonable, but he was not prepared to say that it was, however—the School Committee having made an inquiry, and the Education Board being there to take action, as it was its duty to do if it thought necessary, the Government, not being charged with any function at all, and having no authority, would not have been justified, under these circumstances, in treating this as a case of brutal assault. But had there been any brutal assault, and had neither the Committee nor the Board of Education interfered, then the Government would have been bound, and he would have done his utmost, to have the case thoroughly investigated; but it did not seem to the Government that they were justified in departing from that rule, especially as they had no function in the matter. He had no doubt this would be a warning to all schoolmasters generally; and he ventured to think that, if this was not put down by Education Boards and School Committees, the House would have to step in and say that it should not take place. He confessed that, upon reading the report and the evidence adduced, as he did carefully, it did not seem to him that the punishment was justified. He thought there was a reasonable doubt that the child had done what she ought to have done—asked her mother for the money. Honourable members would note that the child was not punished for not bringing the shilling, although that was not clearly brought out—she was punished, partly, because she did not ask her mother again, as she had been directed to do, for the money. He could hardly call that a disobedience of orders calling for punishment, but he thought that any further action on the part of the Government would not have been justifiable under the circumstances. But he repeated again that he looked upon it as an exceedingly wrong thing to punish a girl. He believed it showed incompetency on the part of the masters when they had to punish; and if the practice grew to any extent in their schools, and the School Committees and Education Boards did not see to it, the House would have to step in and say, “You shall not do it.”

Mr. E. RICHARDSON would like to know if the Government had received any intimation that this practice had been persisted in, of demanding money from pupils.

Mr. ATKINSON thought that nearly all the Committees did it all over the colony. As he understood it the difficulty was this: that there was no provision made by the public to provide the schools with copybooks, slates, pens, and ink. That was considered outside the Act, and children were supposed to provide themselves with these necessities. That was what had, apparently, been the administration of the late Government in that direction, and no one could be said to be more anxious in the matter of education than Sir Robert Stout. If it was considered necessary by the State that children should be supplied with these articles free, no doubt some proposal would have been made on the subject by the late Minister of Education. The general experience was, that it was very much cheaper for the children to buy what they wanted by this small general contribution than that each child should bring his own slate, pen, ink, &c.

Mr. LEVESTAM must confess that he was much pleased with the honourable member for Christchurch North for having brought this matter before the House, and he was surprised at Ministers trying to find excuses. The Minister of Education told the House that it was a weal caused by a split in the cane.

Mr. FISHER.—It was not I who told you that; it was the medical man.

Mr. LEVESTAM said the honourable gentleman stated the punishment was not severe, but merely a weal caused by a split at the end of the cane. But why was this child chastised at all? The honourable gentleman told the House that there was nothing in the Act which empowered him to step in. He (Mr. Levestam) took it that it was the duty of the Minister of Education to see that the Act was carried out. What was he for?

Mr. FISHER said he was there for what Sir Robert Stout had been there for, and the honourable gentleman had never found fault with anything Sir Robert Stout did in connection with education.

Mr. LEVESTAM had heard no complaint whatever that Sir Robert Stout did not carry out the Act. What was the Minister of Education there for? Simply to see that the Act was carried out. If not, what was the use of him? The honourable gentleman went on to tell the House that if he had found that some very severe punishment had been inflicted, and the Committee and the Board did not take it up, then he would. How could he have done it?

Major ATKINSON.—By no clause at all; outside the Act.

Mr. LEVESTAM might almost say that a crime had been committed. A child was punished without rhyme or reason, and he held that it was the duty of the Government to step in. They were told that the evidence broke down completely—that was, the doctor's evidence. That seemed to him to be a secondary consideration altogether. The punishment was

severe. Why had the teacher the right to punish at all? An unjustifiable assault had been committed, for which the teacher ought to have been brought to account. He might be told that the parents might institute proceedings; but, if they were too poor to pay a shilling, then they were too poor to take legal proceedings; and it was the duty of the Government to protect all their subjects, even the very poorest of them. That he took to be one of the fundamental functions of a Government. He thought the Government had failed in this instance. However, he believed this discussion had done and would do good, because he hoped that it would never occur again. The Premier told them that if these things continued the House should step in. It appeared that the House had stepped in already. As to the assertion of the Minister of Education that there is no power of intervention by the Government in the matter of charging fees, that was the most extraordinary excuse he had ever heard about anything.

Mr. MILLS was sure the expression of opinion by the House that afternoon would have a very good effect, and would act as a warning to teachers and Committees throughout the country, and put a stop to the corporal punishment of girls, which could not be too much reprobated. It would also have the effect of causing the Minister of Education to give his attention to this question of pen-and-ink money. The aggregate amount collected in that way must be very large, and, in some cases, it was to be feared, the system was abused. He was perfectly certain that if the matter were investigated it would be found that the amount collected, instead of merely covering the outlay for school requisites, yielded in many cases a considerable revenue besides to the teachers. He would like to call the attention of the honourable gentleman to the hardship inflicted on parents of children attending school by the want of uniformity in school-books. He had heard complaints very generally expressed by parents that, as each child came on, fresh books had to be obtained for it. The books used by a child which had passed into a higher standard or left the school were very often useless to the younger children coming on afterwards, as meantime, through a change of teachers, or from some other cause, new books had been adopted. He thought there should be some uniform system of books throughout the public schools, as it would lead to a great saving to the parents of children attending school.

Sir J. VOGEL said honourable members had witnessed the spirit in which the honourable member at the head of the department had replied to him—it seemed almost impossible for the honourable gentleman to be commonly courteous to him. The honourable gentleman had described him as the champion of exaggeration, because he had spoken of the outrage being a brutal one, though the child had not been beaten within an inch of her life. That was the language used by persons who were in the habit of ill-treating women—they said a poor

woman could be given black eyes, or anything of that kind, but, so long as her life was not endangered, the outrage was not a brutal one. He contended that, whether the caning had been done with great severity or not, the outrage was a brutal outrage, and against the right and justice to which the girl was entitled. This caning of the girl in the sight of her school-fellows because her mother had not a shilling to spare was an outrage. The honourable gentleman treated the case with levity, and brought in a worn-out old joke about "weal and woe;" but it was not a case at all for levity. It was true that the doctor had contradicted himself; but, as against the evidence which had been read by the honourable gentleman, he would read an extract from a letter written by Dr. Lewis at an earlier period:—

"Now, I happen to have seen this said Kate Sheard compelled to do the whole of the housework of the Sheard family, cooking, washing, and nursing, while the mother was confined to bed through illness. Suppose that on the afternoon of the caning—and I must say, judging by the results obtained, the lady pupil-teacher is no mean wielder of the rod—the whole of the household duties devolved on the said Kate Sheard, you must agree with me, Mr. Editor, that the housework would come very heavily on the child. Such work would be quite enough to set up inflammation in the palm and sheaths of the tendons, and result probably in a long illness and a stiff finger or two."

That was written by the doctor at an earlier period. The honourable gentleman considered a caning, which might give the child a stiff finger or two, or lay her up with illness, was not sufficiently severe to be called a brutal outrage. At any rate the fact remained that there was a statement by the doctor that if the poor girl had to do household work there would be a chance of her being laid up with illness, and of her having a stiff finger or two for life.

MR. FISHER.—What did he afterwards say when subject to the test of examination?

SIR J. VOGEL said Dr. Lewis appeared to believe in the discipline prescribed by King Solomon in the line, "Who hateth the child spareth the rod." But our modern practice and experience were quite averse from that teaching, and, however such a system might be necessary in a household like Solomon's, where there were hundreds of wives and a still larger number of children, it was not necessary in our time to pursue that treatment. The modern view was that stated by the Premier, and one which he hoped would have effect given to it—that was, to discourage corporal punishment in schools; and, above all, the punishment of girls in that way ought to be discouraged. In a warm climate like that of Auckland the period of puberty was reached exceedingly early, often as early as twelve years of age, and nothing could be more scandalous, or more calculated to encourage future vice, than to single out a girl for punishment before a large school: it was a scandal on our school-system. As regards this fee question, the

Minister of Education had told them that he was charged the same on account of his children; but he could not have the same feelings for the honourable gentleman as he had for Mrs. Sheard, because in the one case it was not a hardship and in the other it was. He should have admired the honourable gentleman if he had said that, the matter having been represented to him, he would take measures to protect parents from having this charge made on them, and their children being punished when the charge could not be met on account of poverty. He thought this charge was illegal. It was an absurdity to boast of our system of "free" education if this charge was allowed to be levied upon the parents for the benefit of the schoolmasters, and if they were allowed to cane children who could not bring the money and did not bring what they might consider to be sufficient excuses, or to send the children from the school. The Minister of Education asked what he (Sir J. Vogel) wanted the Government to do. He thought the Government should prevent such charges being made on parents. Whatever the cost might be the House should provide the necessary means for the supply of school materials, and not allow the masters to obtain these shillings from children. Three shillings a year per child was a large payment, and, though he did not know if, as stated, some schoolmasters made a profit out of it, the charge should not be allowed. We boasted that our system of education was free, but that boast was an empty one if fees were allowed to be charged by a sidewind: it would be better to charge direct fees at once than to allow that. He fully agreed with the Premier that where the discipline of a school could not be maintained without corporal punishment it showed that the teachers were inefficient. It was not by punishments of that kind that teachers of schools, no matter what their size, should maintain their power. Within the memory of the living generation the University College School of London had been established on the principle that under no consideration whatever should the masters be allowed to corporally punish the scholars; and on that system the school had been a huge success, and now was attended, he believed, by over one thousand boys. This proved that even in regard to boys it was not necessary to administer corporal punishment in schools. In the great public schools of England, where corporal punishment had not yet altogether ceased, such punishment was now very rarely administered, and he thought it was a stain upon our boasted system of education that such punishment should be allowed to be administered, at any rate to girls, in the public schools of this colony. As to the decision of the Committee, it was not a unanimous decision, as two members voted one way, four the other, and one gentleman abstained from voting. Now, what he said was this: that the Government should set at rest this question as to the legality of levying this three shillings a year as fees for stationery, and should ask the House to provide the neces-

*Sir J. Vogel*

sary means so that such charges on the parents should not be necessary. If that were not done we could no longer call our system of education a free one. Then, he said there should be a power to prevent the administration of corporal punishment, and especially to girls, in the public schools of the colony. He could not help thinking that the time which had been devoted to discussing this question had not been wasted. He had no power to force the Government in the matter, but he should see that Mrs. Sheard did not want for the means of instituting a prosecution should she desire to do so.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

#### WELLINGTON COLLEGE AND GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL BILLS.

Mr. KERR asked the Minister of Education, Whether the Wellington Girls' High School and the Wellington College and Girls' High School Bills are Government Bills, or whether they are introduced by him in his capacity as a private member of this House?

Mr. FISHER said there was only one Wellington College Bill on the Order Paper, and that and the Auckland Girls' High School Amendment Bill were introduced to carry out an undertaking given by his predecessor in office to pass these Bills in order to give certain powers to these bodies to prevent their making a charge for building purposes on the Consolidated Fund. That was the object for which the Bills were introduced; and they were introduced by him in his capacity as Minister of Education.

#### RECIPROCITY WITH AUSTRALIA.

Mr. RHODES asked the Premier, Whether, if he attends the Postal Congress in Melbourne, he will, in connection with the proposed revision of the tariff, endeavour to make some arrangement with the Governments of the Australian Colonies by which the duties on our farmers' produce might be reduced, or, at any rate, a pledge made that they shall not be increased; we on our side making some concession in our tariff which will suit the Australian Governments? As it seemed certain there would be a revision of the tariff next session, he hoped the Premier would be able to do something in the direction that the question indicated, for the benefit of the farmers of this country.

Major ATKINSON was afraid the Government would not be able to send a Minister to the Postal Conference to represent this colony: he did not think the public business would admit of it. But the Government would use every opportunity to move in the direction the honourable gentleman indicated.

#### CHATELS SECURITIES ACTS.

Mr. RHODES asked the Premier, Whether the Government will introduce a Bill next session to consolidate and simplify the Chattels Securities Acts, and include a simple form of security by providing a schedule of implied covenants, powers, &c.? He asked this ques-

tion because anything that would tend to cheapen the cost of drawing these securities would tend to cheapen the rate of interest.

Major ATKINSON said the Government had such a Bill under consideration; and if they could not deal with the matter this session they would do so next session.

#### LAND TRANSFER ACT.

Mr. RHODES asked the Minister of Lands, Whether there are any survey difficulties in the way of bringing all land under the Land Transfer Act by compulsory legislation?

Major ATKINSON was sorry to say that there were considerable difficulties in the way.

#### GREYMOUTH HARBOUR.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Government,—(1.) If they are aware that £9,500 out of the proceeds of loan guaranteed by the Government for the improvement of the Greymouth Harbour has been devoted by the Harbour Board to the purchase of a tug? (2.) If they will cause an inquiry to be made into the circumstances of the purchase? He understood that £9,500 was paid away for the purchase of a tug, though he believed that it was possible to get a more efficient and useful boat for less money, and that the expenditure was quite unwarranted.

Mr. FISHER said it was true that the Greymouth Harbour Board had spent £9,500 in the purchase of a tug, but he understood it was not charged against loan expenditure. He would make further inquiry into the matter, and would furnish the honourable gentleman with full information if he would call at his office.

Mr. GUINNESS might suggest that the honourable gentleman should postpone answering questions if he had not the necessary information. The information he had given was all wrong.

Mr. FISHER asked, in what way?

Mr. GUINNESS said that not a shilling had been paid. The Board dared not pay the money out of loan, for if they did it would be surcharged against the members of the Board.

Mr. FISHER did not wish to speak with great particularity. He understood that £5,000 of the purchase-money had been paid, and that the balance was standing over.

Mr. MILLS thought the explanation given by the honourable member for Greymouth was slightly misleading. The mere fact of whether the tug had been paid for did not affect the question.

#### EDUCATION BOARDS.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Minister of Education, If he intends this session to bring in a Bill to amalgamate the Education Boards, with the object of reducing the cost of education in the colony? Seeing that there were such frequent means of communication between various parts of the colony, it seemed to him that so many Boards were unnecessary, and that it would be advisable for the Minister of Education to introduce a Bill to amalgamate the smaller districts.

Mr. FISHER replied that it was not the intention of the Government to introduce such a

Bill this session, but next session a Bill might be introduced to effect certain reforms which the Government considered advisable, and it would probably contain a clause going in this direction. He thought the Act of 1882 went too far in creating so many education districts, and, if amendments were made, that suggested by the honourable gentleman would probably be one of them.

#### PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Mr. SMITH asked the Government, If they will place a sum of money on the estimates to be used for the purpose of granting subsidies to public libraries? He had received several communications asking if the usual subsidies were to be granted, and, as the subsidies had conferred great advantage on the smaller libraries, he hoped that a vote of the kind would be taken this year.

Major ATKINSON was sorry to say that the Government did not propose, this year, considering the present state of the revenue, to put a vote on the estimates for this purpose. They thought that this was one of those things for which the people might put their hands into their pockets.

#### TAX ON BONDHOLDERS.

Sir G. GREY asked the Government, What is the contract under which they are bound not to levy any tax upon holders of New Zealand bonds who do not reside in the colony, or who, residing within the colony, keep their bonds outside the colony, whilst those bondholders who reside in the colony, and retain their bonds within the colony, are compelled to pay the tax?

Major ATKINSON said the honourable gentleman appeared to be under some misapprehension. There was no such contract affecting persons holding bonds, whether they resided in the colony or out of the colony. The whole difficulty, so far as he understood what the honourable gentleman pointed to, was this: If a person held bonds the principal and interest of which were payable at the Treasury or at the Bank of New Zealand in the colony, they would be liable to taxation wherever he lived. If a person held bonds the principal and interest of which were payable in London, and if he resided in New Zealand or in London, he would not be taxable for that. But if a person resided in New Zealand, and held bonds in New Zealand payable in New Zealand, he was liable to taxation. The whole difficulty, as he understood the honourable gentleman's request for explanation, arose from the fact that in one case the colony had jurisdiction over the money after it had been paid, and that in the other case it had not. If the colony made a payment of £5 interest to a bondholder holding a £100-bond payable at the Treasury or at the Bank of New Zealand in the colony, that money was within the jurisdiction or authority of the colony, and therefore the colony could demand taxation in respect of that money. But with regard to the English bondholder the case was different. The colony

had made an undertaking to lodge on a particular date a particular sum of money in London to meet the demands of the bondholder, and when it had so lodged this money it lost all power over it. It could not tax it, therefore, because before the bargain was completed the money was beyond the jurisdiction of the colony. That was the difficulty. The only way in which the colony could get at the bondholders would be by reducing the interest which the colony had agreed to pay them, and, if the colony did that, his belief was that the bondholders could proceed against the colony in the English Courts, and recover whatever was paid short.

Sir G. GREY said that really was not an answer to his question.

Major ATKINSON said, if the honourable gentleman could explain in what way it was no answer, he should be pleased to reply further, if he could.

Sir G. GREY said the honourable gentleman had not explained what contract compelled the colony to pay a certain amount in London.

Major ATKINSON said the Loan Acts compelled the colony to do that. The Loan Acts authorised the Government to borrow money, and authorised the Governor in Council to fix the place at which the principal and interest were made payable. That was fixed before the loan was floated. So that the agreement with the lender of the money was that the principal and interest should be payable in London at some particular place. Most of the interest was made payable at the Bank of New Zealand, some at the offices of the Crown Agents. It was agreed to pay that money at those places at certain times. Usually the interest was paid half-yearly, at a fixed rate, according to the length of time the loan had to run. The agreement was to have the money there to pay the interest due. That was the contract.

Sir G. GREY submitted that that was not the contract. It was still no answer.

Major ATKINSON would be glad to know what the honourable gentleman did want.

Sir G. GREY said loans were raised on the security of the taxes paid by the people—the Consolidated Fund—and the agreement was to pay a certain sum to be remitted to England. The money was taken from the Consolidated Fund, and paid to the Treasurer to be remitted to England, and the moment the money was paid into the Treasury for that purpose it was property within the colony, which was taxable. The taxation could be deducted in the colony from the amount paid; and it ought to be so deducted. It was what other States which owed money to the English bondholder now did, and there was no difficulty in the way. It was done in the case of loans raised by foreign nations in London exactly as we did—nations that paid their interest in London exactly as we did. That the bondholders who lived outside the colony should be in exactly the same position as to taxation as those who lived in the colony was a perfectly fair transaction. The only thing that could be considered unfair would be to tax people who

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held the bonds out of the colony and not to tax those who lived in the colony; but to tax those who lived in the colony and not those who lived out of the colony was equally unfair. What he proposed was quite fair and proper, and he believed that if the honourable gentleman would take the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown on this subject he would find that he had been acting unlawfully for a long period of time, and that the people of this colony had paid taxes in excess of what they ought to have paid, inasmuch as it was the bounden duty of the Government to have deducted the taxation from the money paid to all bondholders.

Major ATKINSON said that the honourable gentleman was clearly under a misapprehension of a grave nature. The money was not paid over to anybody in the colony except to be remitted to the Agents of the Government in London. It was the colony's money while it was going Home, and if it were lost the colony would have to send Home fresh money to take its place. Of course, if the money was paid away in the colony, as the honourable gentleman seemed to think, then clearly the Government would have a right to tax it. But it was not. It remained the money of the colony while it was going Home, and until the person to whom it was due went to the offices to draw it.

Mr. GUINNESS.—Who pays exchange?

Major ATKINSON said the colony did. And when the money arrived in London the colony lost its power over it for taxation purposes. The bondholder went to the office and said, "Here is your Order in Council in which you say that on production of my coupon you will pay me £5. Here is the coupon. Pay me my money." It was of no use for the colony to say that there was so much taxation to pay. There could be no reduction. The honourable gentleman had asserted many times that this was the custom of other countries; but he (Major Atkinson) knew of no country in which it was the custom, and he should be very happy if the honourable gentleman could show him any without at the same time also showing that the loans had been issued subject to taxation. It was possible that loans had been issued subject to taxation, but, if so, that was not a case in point. He did not think that the honourable gentleman could show a case in which loans had been issued unaccompanied with that condition and that then they had been made subject to taxation. It meant paying less than had been agreed to be paid. Turkey had done that, he was aware, and the practice was known as repudiation. Turkey did not pay any interest sometimes, and at other times only 2 per cent., when 4 per cent. was agreed to be paid. Spain had also done something of the same sort, and so had Pennsylvania and some of the other States, and the House knew what trouble there had been in consequence. With us, however, the question was, whether we could levy a tax upon the interest we paid, and, as the money had to be paid in a country to which the colony's juris-

diction in the matter of taxation did not extend, we could not do it.

Sir G. GREY wished to point out that Austria had done it.

Major ATKINSON said that Austria had tried to do it, but gave the attempt up.

Sir G. GREY said that Austria had done it, and still did it. Italy had done it, and still did it. Russia had done it, and still did it. He hoped the honourable gentleman would take a legal opinion on the subject. If he did he would find that he needed an Act of indemnity to justify him in what he was doing.

Major ATKINSON.—I will, Sir, take a legal opinion.

Mr. FISH.—Will the honourable gentleman supply it to the House?

Major ATKINSON.—Certainly not.

#### NATIVE LANDS.

Mr. LAWRY asked the Native Minister,—(1.) If the Government will use every effort this session to complete the titles of those persons who have legitimate claims to Native lands? (2.) Are the Government aware that, in consequence of the present insecurity of those persons whose claims to Native lands are believed to be indisputable, settlement of such land is retarded, and also that those who have large sums of money available for the purpose of improving those lands are afraid to use such money for the purpose indicated? In asking this important question, he desired briefly to say that he had not consulted the Government or any individual in the matter, but had brought the question before the House entirely on his own responsibility. Perhaps in so doing he had acted somewhat indiscreetly, but he thought the question was of sufficient importance to commend itself to the earnest consideration of the Government and of the House, and he hoped the Government would deal with it upon its merits. He desired further to say that for a number of years he had been looked upon in the North Island as an invincible opponent of land-monopoly. He had declared that the Government of the day had made a great mistake when they withdrew their pre-emptive right to purchase Native lands; but, when they had done so and allowed private individuals to purchase Native lands, he thought it became the duty of the Government to ratify every purchase made under the altered law. In the interests of settlement, and in the interests of the Government, he hoped to receive a favourable reply to the question. He might state that he had had some communications, since the notice had been placed on the Order Paper, with honourable members who were more directly interested in the question than he was,—the honourable members for New Plymouth and Taranaki, and some others,—and they agreed that it was the imperative duty of the Government to deal with this matter promptly and effectually, and to endeavour to render to persons who had invested large sums in Native lands such assistance that they could proceed with confidence in placing settlement on these lands.

Major ATKINSON replied that the Government proposed to bring down a Bill to get over the difficulty that the decision of the Supreme Court had made with regard to the Native Lands Administration Act of last session, and he hoped this would enable purchasers to complete their titles. With regard to the second question, he might say at once, generally, that the Government would do what it could, but if the titles were indisputable there would be no necessity whatever to interfere. The whole difficulty arose from the fact that the titles were being disputed, and very effectually disputed. However, generally the Government had entire sympathy with the spirit of the question, and intended to do what they could during the present session to give effect to it.

#### SOUTH ISLAND NATIVE LAND PURCHASES.

On the motion of Mr. PARATA, it was ordered, That there be laid before the House the report of Mr. Commissioner Mackay upon the South Island Native land purchases.

#### TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK.

On the motion of Mr. GRAHAM, it was ordered, That there be laid before the House a return, with tracing attached, showing the acreage now owned by Government, as freehold or otherwise, in Tongariro National Park; what it has cost from first to last; and if there be any conditions, and, if so, what, attached to the land now said to belong to the Government.

#### ADMINISTRATION BILL.

Mr. HISLOP, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said the object of the Bill was twofold. The 2nd section dealt with a matter which had been brought before Parliament on account of a case heard in Christchurch. The executor or administrator of an estate had, up to the present time, a right of priority over other creditors to retain money which might come into his hands in liquidation of a debt due to him. He believed it was intended by the last Administration Act to do away with this right; but it had been held, in the case referred to, that that right still existed. He thought this amendment of the law would probably recommend itself to the House, and therefore he did not intend to say anything further on that part of the Bill. The other part of the Bill introduced somewhat of an innovation in regard to the principle and practice of the Courts with respect to the administration of estates. He had to admit, in bringing forward this Bill, that there had scarcely been time for full consideration of the subject, and he had not been able to introduce a complete system of practice with regard to the matters dealt with. Full powers had therefore been taken under the 13th clause to further provide the system it was intended to inaugurate, by means of the Governor in Council making rules. At the present time, if an estate was not sufficient to pay twenty shillings in the pound it was necessary for the creditors to institute an administration suit, and that was

so expensive a process that it was almost useless to revert to it unless the estate was of considerable size. Under this Bill it was proposed to give power to the executor or administrator to file a declaration in the Court, stating he was unable to pay the creditors twenty shillings in the pound. A right was also given to any creditor in such case to petition to have the estate administered under the bankruptcy rules, and for this purpose to have an order made under the Bill. If either of these courses were pursued, the Court had power to grant an order declaring that the estate should be administered by the executor or administrator as if the matter were in bankruptcy. The estate was then to be sold and distributed according to the rules in bankruptcy. The same priorities as were given under the Bankruptcy Act would hold, and the estate would finally be distributed under rules to be made by the Governor in Council. There were two matters in which the Bill was at present deficient, and in Committee he would amend it. He thought that power should be given to remove the proceedings from one Court to another, and also that there should be power to appoint new trustees instead of the executor and administrator, if necessary. With these alterations he thought the Bill would be very workable, and would be a great improvement on the system at present in vogue. At the same time he admitted, as he had said before, that it was an innovation, inasmuch as it converted the proceedings under the probate law into proceedings under the bankruptcy law; but, as the proceedings in probate and in bankruptcy were administered by the same Judge, he did not think that was an objection which should have much weight with the House. The House might not be aware that somewhat similar provisions with regard to actions by creditors were in the Act at Home, except that the Commissioner in Bankruptcy administered the estate. There were many cases where it would be presumed that the administration of the estate should be left in the hands of the executor or administrator, who were presumed to have the greatest interest in administering it well, and therefore it would be more advantageous that the executor or administrator should administer it than the Official Assignee in Bankruptcy. With the amendment he proposed, it would rest with the Court, on proper affidavits being filed, to say with whom the administration should rest. He would not pursue the subject further; but, if any great objections were made which could not be overcome, he would be willing to let the matter stand over till next session, when it could receive more consideration by the Bar generally. He would, however, ask the House to pass the 2nd section.

Mr. SAMUEL agreed with the Colonial Secretary that this was a very important measure, and that it did introduce an innovation in practice. He agreed also that section 2 was very necessary; but he would point out that, as it was at present framed, it would have retrospective action. It should be made to apply



only to estates of persons who died after the Act came into force, and he would therefore propose in Committee an amendment to that effect. With regard to the rest of the Bill, he confessed that, at first sight, he was rather disappointed to find that it did not follow the lines of the English Act, which really made the law of bankruptcy apply to estates of deceased persons proved to be insolvent; but, on further consideration, it appeared to him that there might be good reasons for not adopting those lines, seeing that the bankruptcy law dealt necessarily with honest and dishonest bankrupts, and imposed penalties on conduct not in accordance with proper commercial rules. Therefore the provisions with regard to bankruptcy might perhaps not properly apply in the case of a person who died before the administration of his estate took place. Moreover, a great deal might be said in respect to the very cumbrous machinery necessary in the case of administration in bankruptcy by the Official Assignee of the estate of a person who had died under those circumstances. Again, as pointed out, it was very desirable that the person nominated by the testator should be administrator, and not the Official Assignee. The clauses in the Bill, with the exception of the 2nd, seemed to him to be rather involved, and would require some amplification in Committee. For instance, the 6th section stated,—

“Any creditor or creditors of a deceased debtor, whose debt or debts would have been sufficient to support a bankruptcy petition against such debtor had he been alive, may, at the prescribed time and in the prescribed form, present to the Court a petition praying for an order for the administration of the estate of the deceased debtor according to the law of bankruptcy.”

That seemed to imply that, upon the order being granted, the whole of the law of bankruptcy would apply to the estate; and other parts of the Bill appeared to bear the same interpretation, as, for example, clause 12, which said,—

“Every Court shall have all such jurisdiction and authority as may be necessary to give effect to this Act and any rules made thereunder, and shall have full power to decide all questions of priorities, and all other questions whatsoever, whether of law or fact, which may arise in any case coming within the cognisance of the Court, or which the Court may deem it expedient or necessary to decide for the purpose of doing complete justice or making a complete distribution of property in any case coming within the scope of this Act; and an appeal shall lie from the order or decree of any such Court in like manner as the same would lie from any order or decree made in any matter within the ordinary jurisdiction of such Court.”

But he gathered from the Colonial Secretary that it was intended only to apply the same mode of procedure, and not to deal with the estate as if it were in bankruptcy. It would therefore be desirable that clause 6 should be amplified so as to show exactly the number of creditors, and the value of the debts they repre-

sented, without reference to the Bankruptcy Act. Also, clauses 11 and 12 would have to be altered in a similar manner to show the principle by which the Court should be guided in exercising the powers conferred on it by this Bill. There was one part of the 11th section which would be required to be altered—namely, that relating to the distribution of the surplus. If there was a will, the surplus should be distributed as provided by the will, and not as specified in the section. Facilities should be given to carry out the wishes of the testator, as shown by his will. Subject to these remarks, he agreed that this would be a very useful measure; and, considering the difficulty of the question with which it dealt, it was sufficiently clearly expressed to be a valuable addition to the Statute Book.

Mr. IZARD hoped the Colonial Secretary would press this measure through this session, and not postpone any portion of it. There were two special cases in which amendment in the present law was to be made—namely, the right of the executor to retain his own debt out of the funds, and the administration of the estate in a cheaper way. The right which the executor had under the present law to retain the funds of the estate was a great anomaly. It arose, no doubt, under the old notion that the executor must be protected because some other creditor might prove his debt against the estate, and might gain thereby some priority by his diligence, and, getting judgment against the estate, by that means sweep up all the assets. But, inasmuch as estates were administered by direction of the Supreme Court, the reason for that no longer existed, and the injustice of allowing one creditor, merely because he was appointed executor, to sweep up the estate, to the detriment of the other creditors, was very great. Cases had occurred where one creditor, through being appointed executor, had been able to appropriate the whole of the assets to himself and leave the rest of the creditors in the cold shade. Therefore this was a great improvement. The other portions of the Bill proposed to deal with the administration of the estates of persons who died insolvent, and provided a better and cheaper procedure for the purpose. At the present time the costly process pursued in the Supreme Court must be gone through before the estate could be administered. This Bill proposed that the practical result, without the formality of the Supreme Court process, should be obtained in a cheap way. There was a point he should like to call the attention of the House to in regard to this part of the Bill. He thought there was a little ambiguity with regard to section 6. He could not quite make out what was intended by this section, which said,—

“Any creditor or creditors of a deceased debtor, whose debt or debts would have been sufficient to support a bankruptcy petition against such debtor had he been alive, may, at the prescribed time and in the prescribed form, present to the Court a petition praying for an order for the administration of the estate of the

deceased debtor according to the law of bankruptcy."

Two observations arose on this point. First of all, he saw no reason why it should be limited to persons whose debt would have been sufficient to support a bankruptcy petition. He failed to see any just reason for making the distinction here set up. Another point he would ask the Colonial Secretary to consider was as to what was exactly meant by saying that the estate should be administered according to the law of bankruptcy. Now, there was a difference in the administration as to the assets. In the Court of Bankruptcy the Court could go into questions of voluntary settlements, preferential payments, and matters of that sort. Ordinarily, in the administration of the Supreme Court, these questions were not gone into. He should like to know whether there was included in this Bill a power for the Judge to whose Court the case might be attached to go into questions of voluntary settlements and preferential payments. It might be that was the case; but, if it was, it should be expressed in plainer and clearer language. In cases before the Court of Bankruptcy these questions were gone into, evidence was taken, and the matters were decided on their merits. If they were to have this amended procedure, and it was to be applied under this measure, he thought it only right that it should be clear what the Legislature intended should be done in the matter. Under subsection (7) of clause 18, power was given by such rules to adopt, in whole or in part, the practice and procedure of the Supreme Court, or of any Superior Court of Bankruptcy, whether given under statute or rules, for all or any of the purposes of this Act. But he thought the Colonial Secretary would agree with him that mere reference to the procedure of the Supreme Court was not sufficient to give the Supreme Court jurisdiction in the case he had mentioned. He should support the Bill with very great pleasure, and hoped the Government would press it on, and not be satisfied with merely reading it a second time, but would bring it to a successful issue during the present session.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said they were now considering a revised edition of the Administration Bill. He did not exactly know what the first revision was like, but the second edition required considerable improvement. The Colonial Secretary had stated that this was an innovation. He (Mr. Stewart) did not object to an innovation so long as it was an improvement; but there were objections to this Bill, which tended to confuse the present state of things. The general purport of this Bill was of a very desirable character; but it was one of those hand-to-mouth pieces of legislation which did a great deal of mischief unless very carefully guarded. For example, there was one very important branch of the law relating to the administration of estates, which was the right of preference that the executor had—the right of paying one creditor in preference to another. That was a power which was more frequently abused than

the right of retainer. At present an executor could not only retain to meet his own claim, but if he had a thousand pounds' worth of assets, and there were creditors to the amount of £1,500, he could select any two of the creditors and pay the £1,000 among them, leaving the third to go unpaid. He thought that was a state of the law that required more pressingly an amendment than did the right of retainer by an executor. These were questions which had received consideration in England during the last quarter of a century to a very large extent; and he should have liked the House to be able to devote itself to the consolidation of those important alterations that had been made in the English law during the last quarter of a century and were not in force in this colony. Here they were adopting the improvements made at Home piecemeal. He should like to see a comprehensive and well-considered measure carried which would place them on the same level as the English Courts were on. He found also that in the State of New York certain modifications had been made of the common-law of England which were of a somewhat important character, and he ventured to say that this House would ultimately adopt these modifications to a partial extent. This question did not arise on the present Bill, but he referred to them as indicating the necessity for an exhaustive and comprehensive measure on this important and very delicate branch of the law. The large question which arose under section 2 of this Bill was this: It said that an executor should not have the right of retainer. Was it intended that the executor of an executor should be deprived of his right of retainer? He had a right of retainer equal to that of the executor. He thought the Colonial Secretary should direct his attention to that other suggestion he (Mr. Stewart) had made as to depriving an executor of the power of preferring one creditor to another. He might do this before he was made a bankrupt, and do it quite legally. The other questions which might receive consideration were, whether the period which an executor had to distribute assets should not be limited in some way. There was no doubt whatever that in many instances it was quite unnecessary. If he distributed the assets before that time he ran certain risks. The other question was, whether section 2 was to apply to an executor *de son tort*, an executor of his own wrong, because such an executor did incur liabilities which he might get rid of by this Act. The Colonial Secretary said he did not think so. He (Mr. Stewart) did not know that that settled the question. An executor of that sort had no right of retainer, but had certain liabilities which an ordinary executor had not, by intermeddling unnecessarily with an estate before he was constituted executor. It would be advisable to know what the position of such a person was under this Bill. Coming to the second branch of the Bill, namely, the administration of estates as in bankruptcy, the first point he should like to direct attention to was this: that it was a very vicious thing to legislate by rules. He submitted that the

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proper course was to incorporate in the Acts all the substantive provisions of any proposed alterations of the law. He quite agreed that such rules were necessary; but a great many things which were proposed to be done by rules ought to be done by the Act itself. He had protested against legislation by rules framed by the Governor in Council. They were in many instances framed without proper consideration, and produced confusion and litigation. He thought it better that they should be incorporated in detail in the Act. The other consideration in the second branch of the Bill was this: Was the executor to administer an estate in bankruptcy, or was it to be administered by order of the Assignee in Bankruptcy? He thought that very important. The Colonial Secretary stated that he did not consider it a matter of very great importance, seeing that one Court had jurisdiction in both instances. That was not so. Unfortunately, the House made the mistake in 1883—and he knew he was supported by the opinion of one of the Judges—to constitute a Superior Court in Bankruptcy. The mischief of that was that that Court, being the creation of a statute, had none of those common-law privileges and rights which ordinarily a common-law Court had, and which were given it by the Act here. Therefore he thought it was important that the Bankruptcy Court should be not a Supreme Court, but a distinct and separate Court exercising independent jurisdiction. They knew that a Bankruptcy Court might be presided over by a District Judge as well as a Supreme Court Judge. He thought the Colonial Secretary ought to direct his attention to the probable confusion that would arise through the conflict of jurisdiction between the Supreme Court, which dealt with questions of probate, and a Bankruptcy Court, which dealt with questions of pure bankruptcy. He thought also it was very desirable that, instead of an insolvent estate being administered by the executor, it should be administered by the Official Assignee in Bankruptcy. The honourable gentleman had told them he would introduce a clause giving the Judge power to order that a bankrupt estate of a deceased person should be administered by the Official Assignee. He thought that was desirable, because, if an executor was able to show that the estate was hopelessly insolvent, it would be very unfair to cast on him the burden of administering it in bankruptcy under a law with which he would not be familiar; as it was to be hoped executors would not be persons familiar with the bankruptcy law. The Official Assignee was intimately acquainted with every point of that law and its administration, and would therefore be able to avoid the pitfalls which a private person, even with the assistance of a solicitor, would not be always able to escape. Now, he thought, further, that an executor should have the right, as soon as an order in bankruptcy was made, to retire from the estate altogether and get relieved. It should not be at the option of the Court to relieve him or not; but, when insolvency had been declared, he should be free to retire on

his own motion, and allow the estate to be administered by the Official Assignee. That provision should be made clear. All provisions relating to the administration of the insolvent estates of deceased persons could more properly be included with the Bankruptcy Act as in England. Why such provisions should be incorporated in the Administration Act did not seem clear. He thought the bankruptcy law, and all provisions relating to insolvency, should be kept quite distinct from other statutes. There was also this point, which was worthy of consideration: If an executor filed a declaration, *quod* executor, that an estate was insolvent, it might cause some misconception, and in the newspapers it would probably be merely stated that Mr. So-and-so had filed a declaration of insolvency; and many persons would not understand that he had done so in his representative or fiduciary capacity, but would think it was a case of his own personal insolvency. He doubted very much the expediency of calling such declarations filing at all. He thought it would be much better done simply by a petition setting forth the grounds on which the intervention of the Court was asked, and the Judge should, on that statement of facts, decide whether the estate should be administered in bankruptcy or not. A simple petition, followed by an order declaring the estate to be bankrupt, and that it should be wound up as such, would be all that would be required. He did not know whether it was intended in the second branch of this Bill to deal with the question of bills of sale as it arose in bankruptcy—that was to say, where a bill of sale had been given for proper consideration and so forth. And there was also the question of fraudulent preference. A number of these important questions were constantly arising under the Bankruptcy Act—for instance, the question of the landlord's right to distrain and his right to preferential payment. The law on these points should be made so emphatic and so clear that any one reading the Act would understand what the law on the subject was. There was, further, the question of the Sheriff holding money for a certain time, and it should be made clear as to whether that was to apply to the estate of a deceased person to be administered in bankruptcy. Another matter that he should like to refer to was this: It was often found that a testator had taken leases of property involving the payment of rent for a number of years, and it had always been a subject of difficulty how to get rid of such liabilities in order to wind up the estate, because it was a continuing liability. In the English Act there was a certain mode provided for dealing with such cases; but the subject was more complicated in New Zealand. It seemed to be undesirable that an executor should be unable to distribute an estate on account of such continuous and recurring liabilities under covenants and agreements made by the testator, which, of course, also bound his executors. There were a number of other questions which required consideration, but, as the honourable gentleman had very properly said, it would be impossible to

deal with all of them this session. To show the complicated and difficult nature of these questions he might mention that a case had recently occurred in Dunedin in which a person died a bankrupt who, before death, had given an agreement to execute a bill of sale over, practically, all the available assets, and it was held that the estate could not be made bankrupt; and the person who held the agreement got paid in full, while the other creditors had not yet been paid in full, and were never likely to be. That was a case which had actually occurred, and for that reason he thought it was most necessary that there should be power to administer the estates of deceased persons in bankruptcy. The concluding words of clause 11 were, "Such surplus shall be distributed under the law in force relating to the distribution of the assets of deceased persons." It seemed to him that that would put every estate in the position of an intestate estate, quite irrespective of the character of the will. Now, while it was desirable that the debts of the deceased should be paid, it was not desirable that the legatees should be robbed; and he thought there should be such a provision as would insure all the debts and legacies being equally paid as far as the estate would go. The question was an extremely important and very difficult one, and he could quite appreciate the sense of responsibility the honourable gentleman felt in attempting to deal with subjects of so much difficulty. That amendments were required in the present law all who knew anything of the subject could not but readily admit, and the few suggestions he had made had been made simply with a view of making this measure somewhat more perfect than it was now.

Mr. HISLOP was very thankful to the honourable member for Wellington South and Suburbs, the honourable member for New Plymouth, and the honourable member for Dunedin West for the suggestions they had made, which had great force in them, and he was obliged to all the honourable gentlemen for the spirit in which they had made their suggestions. It was impossible, of course, in a measure of this sort, at once to remove all the difficulties which had arisen; the matter required to be dealt with very carefully and deliberately to prevent the raising of greater difficulties than were removed. The Bill as it stood was a matter of evolution; it began with one clause, as honourable members knew, and had been gradually developed into the measure as it was before them. With regard to the last point touched upon by the honourable member for Dunedin West,—the construction of the last words of clause 11,—although he was willing to alter the words as the honourable gentleman suggested, he did not admit that the present words would have the effect the honourable gentleman stated, because the law as to distribution was laid down in clause 10 of the Administration Act of 1879. The two sections would be read together, and the estate distributed among the persons to whom it was left. As to the amendments suggested by the

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honourable gentleman, in reference to leases and so on, the intention of the Bill was certainly that fraudulent preferences should be prevented in the case of estates being administered in bankruptcy: if the words in clause 10 were not sufficiently full, he would have the clause redrafted, with a view to giving effect to what the honourable member for Dunedin West and the honourable member for Wellington South and Suburbs had indicated. He need not say more, and trusted the Bill would now be read a second time.

Bill read a second time.

#### PARLIAMENTARY HONORARIUM AND PRIVILEGES BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—The object of this Bill is to give effect to what I believe to be the general wish of the country, looking at the statements of honourable gentlemen who have been elected to this House; and it is a Bill which will require very little explanation from me. But I may point out that the general scope of the Bill is this: It proposes to reduce the honorarium of members of this House from two hundred guineas to £150, and this amount is divided into two parts, £50 for general expenses and £100 for the particular expense of attending the sessions of the House. At present honourable members are allowed a hundred guineas for attending a second session in a year, and under this Bill it is proposed that they shall receive £100. With regard to the Legislative Council, it is proposed to reduce the honorarium paid to members of that body from two hundred guineas to £100, but those honourable members who reside within three miles of Parliament House are to receive nothing; those who reside beyond that radius are to receive £100 for a session, and £50 for attendance at a second session in the same year. These are the main provisions of the Bill, of which I now move the second reading.

Mr. FISH.—I shall not detain the House long in speaking upon this Bill, because I expressed my opinion on the subject during the financial debate. I am extremely sorry that the Government have thought it necessary to bring down this Bill, because I think it is striking a blow at democracy, from which it will not recover for a considerable length of time. When we consider the expenses which honourable members are put to, the cost of elections, and the numberless items of expense that they have to meet, not only during the session but also during the recess, I think that any fair-minded man will say that the sum at present paid is, if anything, too little—certainly not too much; and I think it must also be admitted that, if we reduce the honorarium of members of this House to the extent here proposed, the result will be that the legislation of the country will be restricted to the wealthy men of the country, and to them alone. If that is a desirable thing, this Bill is a step in the right direction; but, if it is not, then this Bill is against the interests of the people. The aim of the Government seems to be to abolish the payment of members altogether, because this

Bill simply means merely reimbursing them, and hardly that, the expenses which they are out of pocket. I believe that if the country were polled on this question it would be found that the people generally are in favour of payment of members; and I believe also that, if the finances were in a better condition, the amount now paid should be increased to £300 per annum, and that the people of the country would, in such a case, uphold our decision to do that. I do not like the form of this Bill at all. I am surprised that the Premier should have brought down such a Bill, but I have no doubt he has felt impelled to do so owing to the fact that retrenchment has been asked for. We know that he has dealt with the question of Ministerial salaries in a somewhat drastic way; and upon that I shall have something to say on a future occasion, going in the same direction as I am going in connection with this Bill. Now, members of this House are to be paid £100, and an additional £50 for extra expenses. I do not like that at all. If the sum of £150 is thought sufficient, why not make the payment one sum of £150? And if £100 is considered sufficient honorarium for us, I think that the amount proposed to be paid to the members of the Council is too great a sum, and should be reduced to £50. If it is to be a mere matter of paying expenses, I think the sum to be paid to the Council should be reduced to £50, because they are, presumably, men of wealth, and have no election expenses, and none of the other expenses that members of this House have to pay. In fact, I will go further and say that, if £150 is considered sufficient for members of this House, then, relatively, the members of the Legislative Council should receive nothing, for neither their work nor their expenses are to be compared with ours. Sir, I feel so strongly upon this matter that I shall deem it my duty, in the interests of democracy and the people themselves, to oppose this Bill at every stage and in every form that I can. So far as I am concerned, I told my constituents that I should vote for the sum paid remaining at what it was during last Parliament; and I also told them that, if the finances of the country were in a better condition, I should decidedly advocate raising the sum to be paid to members of this House to £300; and I did not find at any of my meetings—and I represent an extremely democratic constituency—a single voice dissenting from that. I pointed out to the working-men that, if they desired to have men representing them who were somewhat in unison with their feelings, and had sympathy with their aspirations, and had also the ability and intelligence to represent those feelings and aspirations, they must pay the men they wished to represent them. I pointed out that, if they did not do that, the representation would fall almost entirely into the hands of the rich, and, as a necessary consequence, the legislation of the country would be in the direction of favouring the rich, and not in the direction of caring for the interests of the bulk of the community. To that there was one universal response of approval of the

sentiments I expressed. Now, I have to say this, further, and I do so without any desire to be disrespectful to the members of this House: that those who will feel compelled to vote for this Bill, or many of them, will do so because in their election contests their opponents played this particular item of payment of members against them, and, in order not to be outdone, they felt compelled to say that they would vote for the reduction also. I am sure that in a majority of cases that will be the real reason why honourable members will vote for this, though their consciences will tell them that it is not in the interests of their constituents that this Bill should be passed. It may be said, and no doubt will be said, that any one who advocates the retention of the honorarium at the present rate does so simply to put the money in his pocket. That is absolute nonsense, and will not affect me or any man who has the courage of his convictions. The difference in the amounts is a mere nothing, and the question is not simply a question of to-day. Many of us may not see another Parliament, and we are advocating a liberal payment of members in the interests of the country and of those who may succeed us in the representation of the country. Therefore I feel sure that, whatever views we may express, we shall not be chargeable with any selfish or interested or sordid motives. I very sincerely hope that the House will not carry this Bill. It is not, I feel persuaded, the retrenchment that the country wants. No doubt the country may be desirous of decreasing the number of members; but I am perfectly certain that, were the constituencies polled to-morrow upon the question as to whether the payment should be £210 or £150, the response would be in favour of the higher sum. Therefore I hope that those who have not pledged themselves beyond hope of redemption in this matter will vote for the amendment which I have now to move. That this Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I do not propose to take up any time in speaking to this measure. The honourable member who has just sat down has told the House that when before his constituents he expressed himself as opposed to a reduction of the honorarium, and that there was nothing but commendation of what he said when he told them that he should uphold the payment of members at the rate fixed by the Act now in force. I have simply to say that in my constituency the very reverse was the case, and that the proposal to reduce the members' honorarium was received with universal approval whenever it was advocated. I shall give my vote in favour of the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. WALKER.—I feel some difficulty in discussing this question to-night, because I think the Premier has brought it before us in the wrong way. In the first place, he has proposed to alter the Representation Bill; and I think, if he seriously wished this matter to be discussed, he should have brought that Bill down in the first place, because, to me, the

most important question in the whole thing is how we are going to reduce the number of members in this House. I maintain that a reduction in the number of members would be a most vicious and retrograde step, and I should oppose it at every stage to the utmost of my ability. If this House consents to the reduction of the number of members to sixty or seventy or seventy-five, or whatever the honourable member proposes, I, for one, will not consent to reduce by one sixpence the honorarium, because the reduced number would effect a saving, and if they do their duty they will be worth the present honorarium to the country. On the other hand, I have pledged myself to my constituents that, under the present circumstances of the country, I should, in the same way as Ministers have sacrificed themselves on the altar of their country—in spite of the Act which gives £210 per annum to members—be content that 25 per cent. reduction should be made from that amount. Therefore I should have thought it better if the honourable member, instead of altering the whole of the present position, had brought down a suspensory Act, and given us a fair opportunity of showing the country that we were in earnest in our professions of economy, and that economy should be exercised from the highest to the lowest, from the Legislative and the Executive down to the lower stages in the social scale. Had the honourable member done that, I should have had no difficulty in supporting him; but, in the present position, unless the head of the Government will first bring down his Representation Bill, and tell us what he means to do as to the number of members, I feel absolutely unable to say what I shall do in this matter.

Major ATKINSON.—I will relieve the honourable gentleman at once. The Government propose to bring down a Bill—I do not know whether it is now distributed—in which the number of members will be reduced to seventy, including Native members.

Mr. WALKER.—That is satisfactory; but will he also give a pledge to carry the Representation Bill through first? I say the honourable gentleman is putting the cart before the horse. He ought to bring down his Bill and say what are the districts. Is he going to reduce the power of the democracy in both ways? I say he should not reduce the power of the democracy by putting power into the hands of the rich by enabling only rich men to stand for the greatly enlarged constituencies. That is the whole point. Reducing the number of members means putting the power into the hands of the rich. That is wrong. Where do we find our most promising members of Parliament at the present time? Why, among the members of the Young New Zealand party. I am not afraid of the laughter—I say that is so; and where would they have been at the last general elections if there had been larger districts?

An Hon. MEMBER.—At the head of the poll.

Mr. WALKER.—The honourable gentleman knows a good deal, but I think he claims to know too much sometimes. I am positive that

*Mr. Walker*

this "move" in the direction of reducing the number of members is entirely in the direction of preventing young men coming forward. The honourable gentleman has got his triumph; I do not begrudge it to him; but I venture to say that if his constituency had been increased only one-third we should not have had the pleasure of his company here this session. I opposed the Bill that was carried into law last session, and did everything in my power to prevent—

Mr. FULTON.—Is the honourable gentleman discussing the Payment of Members Bill or the Representation Bill?

Mr. WALKER.—If the honourable gentleman is afraid of the question I am sorry for him.

Mr. FULTON.—Wasting time.

Mr. WALKER.—"Wasting time," Sir! What does the honourable gentleman mean? He is afraid of looking at it. He is one of those honourable gentlemen who acquire popularity at the hustings by saying they do not want money for serving Parliament. I wish simply to put the matter straight before the House and before the people, and I say it will be a bad day indeed for New Zealand if we go back from the principle of payment of members. That is the whole root of the matter. Under the present circumstances I am prepared to vote for a fair reduction; and I say that if the Premier had been honest and straight in this matter he would have been content to say to this Parliament, "You have been elected under peculiar circumstances, elected under pledges of strict economy, and you may do for yourselves what you like; you may sacrifice your honorarium; but do not touch the privileges of the people, do not touch the privileges of the future; let the Act remain on the Statute Book, preserving the rights of the people; but, as for ourselves, who have been elected just now, we will voluntarily abandon 25 per cent. of the honorarium." That would have been a patriotic and fair thing to propose to the House; but for the Premier to bring down a Bill proposing to alter for the future this which is the fundamental basis of democracy, I say, is a bad and a mischievous thing, and I cannot vote for the Bill in its present form, unless the Premier will give an absolute pledge that he will first introduce and carry his Representation Bill. I do not think he will get this House to consent to the reduction of the number of members, and I sincerely hope he will not, because that is just as much a vicious attack on the principles of true representation as this. If he does carry that Bill, I will certainly not vote for the reduction of the honorarium; but if the Bill goes through with the number of members as it is at present, I pledge him to vote for his present proposal. That, I think, is a fair way of putting the question, and that is looking at it from a self-sacrificing and patriotic point of view, and a view which, I consider, will carry out to the full my pledges to my constituents and my duty to the country.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I agree with almost every

word that has fallen from the honourable member for Ashburton. I consider that the Bill which we have been told by the Premier will shortly be introduced is intimately connected with this one; and I have been put into some difficulty by the announcement he has made. I am one of those who hold that the present honorarium is not one pound too much for the services which are rendered by members of this House, and I do believe that the country generally holds the same opinion. But, notwithstanding that, I was prepared to vote for this Bill for one reason and for one reason alone, and that is that we have proposed to retrench all branches of the Service, and I consider that we ought to set a good example ourselves. That is the only reason for which I am prepared to vote for this Bill. But, when it is proposed to cut down the number of members of this House so considerably, the answer at once is, that that will effect the reduction to an equal amount without cutting down the honorarium. The question then arises, Which is the more detrimental to the interests of the country—for I do believe that both things are detrimental—which is the more detrimental, to reduce the number of members or to reduce the honorarium? In my opinion, it is less detrimental to reduce the honorarium than the number of members, not only for those reasons which have been so well stated by the honourable member for Ashburton, but for another and, to my mind, equally forcible one. From one end of the colony to the other we have now increased taxation; we have the certainty of a very large increase in the local taxation in the future; gradually upon local bodies throughout the colony greater burdens are being cast, with the view of relieving the General Government from the odium cast upon it by the necessity of increasing general taxation; and the one solace that is left to the ratepayer of the colony is that he sends a representative here to represent his wants and his wishes; and that will be in many instances virtually taken away by so large a reduction in the number of members as is proposed. There are many parts of New Zealand, that have come to look upon themselves as returning a member to Parliament, that would be virtually disfranchised by such a reduction; and I consider that from one end of the colony to the other there would be nothing but dissatisfaction, and well-grounded dissatisfaction, if the numbers were so largely reduced. I have no expectation that the Government will be able to carry the Bill reducing the number of members, otherwise I should vote against this Bill without the slightest hesitation. As I said before, there is nothing that makes me vote for the Bill but a sense of fairness, that we, who cut down the salaries, in so many cases, of poorly-paid clerks and labourers, should not cut them down unless we are prepared to act in the same way with our honorarium. When we cut those salaries down we do not say that they are too high for the services rendered: we simply say that the colony cannot afford to

pay so high a rate of wages. And with regard to ourselves we should say the same thing—not that our services are not worth the amount we receive, but that the colony cannot afford to pay us so large a sum. But when we propose also to cut down the number of representatives, that becomes not a sufficient answer. I hope this Bill will be carried, because it will to some extent console those who are being reduced almost to penury; those who are receiving for their labour in many cases scarcely sufficient to support themselves and their families; and I look upon it as a great thing that we should admit at once that we are prepared to cut down our own remuneration in the same way as we cut down theirs. But, when I say that, I hope that when the other Bill comes before the House it will meet with a prompt dismissal. I agree with what has been said about changing the form of the payment of members. It is now proposed to give £100, and £50 additional as expenses. I cannot see any reason for dividing the two sums. Why should it not now, instead of being, as formerly, two hundred guineas, be £150, and £100 in the case of a second session? I am aware that under our Standing Orders I am precluded from moving a motion now, as an amendment has been moved; but I think it would be well for the House and the Government that they should postpone the second reading of this Bill until Ministers have brought down the Representation Bill of which they have told us, so that many honourable members who are in the same position as the honourable member for Ashburton and myself may be able to give a free vote on this question, and not be placed in a false position by having one Bill introduced before we know what the other is.

Mr. MOSS.—It would be well, before we go any further, that we should consider what reductions are going to be made under this Bill. There is a large majority of this House—some sixty members—who are to receive a hundred guineas if this Bill do not pass; while those who have been recently elected for the first time will receive the full "honorarium," as it is called, though I heartily wish that term were got rid of. What, then, is the great sacrifice of which the honourable member who has just sat down, and other honourable members, have spoken in such high terms that we are going to make? Just £5 each.

Mr. SAMUEL.—But, then, next session the reduction will be £60.

Mr. MOSS.—Let us wait till next session. I shall not be at all astonished if we find another alteration made then. The fact remains, we receive a hundred guineas under the present Act, and we shall receive £100 if this Bill passes: that is to say, some sixty or seventy of us will present that enormous amount of self-sacrifice which is represented by the sum of £5 each. The new members will, of course, self-sacrifice a little more; and then next year we shall probably be raised again, if we are to

judge by past experience. The members of the Upper House will draw half the honorarium this year if the present law remains in force—that is, a hundred guineas—and under this Bill they will draw £50. But, then, it must also be remembered that a great number of them have not attended at all this session, and they will receive no honorarium. When we talk of fifty members of the Council, it must not be forgotten that in every session there are a large number who do not come here at all, and they draw no honorarium. So that to speak of this reduction as a great self-sacrifice is using a wrong term. Our duty is to fix a fair and reasonable sum for the payment of members. If we think that members have been paid an excessive sum in the past, let us feel ashamed of ourselves that we took it and defrauded the country by taking sums to which we were not entitled. The Premier has told us that £1,750 was too much to give to the Premier—it really amounted to £2,000—and I quite agree with him, and have always held that it was too much; but Premiers have taken it in the past, although we have now rightly come to the conclusion that a less sum is sufficient. But will any one say for a moment that members have been paid too highly in the past?

Captain RUSSELL.—Yes.

Mr. MOSS.—The honourable gentleman objects to payment altogether, and therefore is sure to think that it has been too high. The honourable gentleman would perhaps like a property qualification, and I can quite understand an honourable gentleman holding those views objecting to the present payment of members as too large. I have no hesitation in giving my own views, delicate as the position undoubtedly must be. The question was brought up during the elections by my opponents, not by my friends, and it was pressed upon me very closely on several occasions. I stated distinctly that I thought the sum now paid to members was fair and reasonable, and as low as it ought to be. Therefore I am perfectly free to vote as I think right on this measure. When we remember the trouble we had to get payment of members fixed—how, year after year, the principle was rejected by members who now as strongly support a reduction—I cannot help thinking that this reduction is an insidious attempt to get us back into the difficulties we had so much trouble in clearing away. I was in that struggle, and always contended that the amount should be called “payment of members,” and not “honorarium;” but we had to submit to its being called by that misleading term. It is absurd to talk of £50 being paid for expenses. Men who are able to accept the position without payment ought to be ashamed to send in their little bills and ask for their expenses. I heard it said just now that the proper thing was to pay the expenses of members, and, with reference to the Council, that, if they were allowed their expenses, that ought to be sufficient. The honourable member for the Taieri objected to the debate as being a waste of time. I think the honourable gentleman was per-

fectly right, although not in the way he intended. The fault is in the manner in which this has been introduced. It is a most important part of our Constitution, this payment of members. We had great difficulty in getting it fixed, and now, having got that stone into the foundation, we are to remove it and shake the whole building. And why? In the name of economy and retrenchment. I have shown that the saving will be small as far as this year is concerned; and we are dwarfing a large constitutional question down to a mere question of administration. There is no self-sacrifice in it. I think we should be ashamed of ourselves if we reduce the salaries of Government officers in the name of self-sacrifice. Why should we call upon them to submit to that? We are saving the wealthy people of the colony from a property-tax. I am anxious to see them saved by all fair means. Let those who have been and are still too highly paid be reduced, but do not call it self-sacrifice in their case or in any other. We are taking a step towards altering the Constitution of the country. Let us look at the thing fairly. Those who think that two hundred guineas is not too large a sum for the payment of members, and that with a less sum the people cannot secure a free choice of representatives, will vote for the continuance of the present system. Those who think it is not desirable the people at large should have a free choice, and who would prefer to see this House revert to its former position as a very pleasant club instead of a House representing the people, will, of course, say that two hundred guineas is too much—that ten guineas is too much; they would gladly come here and work for nothing. Then, we must not lose sight of the disqualification attached to the position. A member cannot take a contract from Government, or any position under the Government, until he has ceased to be a member for twelve months. If a member serves on a Commission he cannot get paid more than his actual travelling-expenses. There are many other disqualifications attached to the position, and properly so; but I would beg honourable members to bear in mind that these did not exist in former days. Gentlemen were taken direct from this House and put into high official positions; they were made Resident Magistrates, and put in other lucrative offices. That was, very properly, put a stop to. It is quite easy to retrench without this reduction, if the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government will only face the question. He knows in his own mind what the remedy is. Let us simplify our form of government. He took a most active part in destroying the old system: let him devise a simpler than our present costly and cumbersome one. Let the honourable member get rid of local affairs from this House; he knows that three Ministers could then do the work, and fifty members would be sufficient to represent the country in this House. The honourable member knows that.

Major ATKINSON.—Will the honourable

*Mr. Moss*



gentleman be good enough to speak for himself? I will speak for myself presently.

Mr. MOSS.—The honourable member knows I am right.

Major ATKINSON.—I know exactly the contrary. I do not believe in any of the statements of the honourable member.

Mr. MOSS.—I made no statements.

Major ATKINSON.—You stated what my belief was.

Mr. MOSS.—I have made only one statement. I stated that "the honourable gentleman knows."

Major ATKINSON.—But I say I do not. I do not know anything about it.

Mr. MOSS.—Let me repeat it. The honourable member, I am sure, knows perfectly well that three Ministers could govern this country and fifty members would be sufficient in this House if we had not all these local affairs to attend to.

Major ATKINSON.—I do not know it.

Mr. MOSS.—Then I can assure the honourable gentleman he ought to know it. There are many other things which he does know which are not so likely to be understood as that great fact. Why not devote ourselves to simplifying the form of government, and cut our coat according to our cloth, suit our institutions to the country, and not attempt to force the country to suit its institutions to us? I do not like to say distasteful things in the House; but I would ask members to look at the House at the present moment. What is the dominating idea in the minds of honourable members—in my mind, as well as in the minds of others? We are bent on being home at Christmas, whatever business may be left undone or half-done here. Members say, "Whether the business of the colony can be done by Christmas or not, we are going home, and we are not coming back again." That is a great fact. Our business is to deliberate calmly and consider these matters and take a large view of these questions, not to rush them through as fast as possible. That in itself is a condemnation of our whole system. I hope the House will not talk about self-sacrifice, but will look upon this as part of a great question, whether the sum paid to honourable members for their services is too large or not. I believe it is not too large, and therefore I shall vote against the Bill. The question concerns us personally in only a minor degree. It will concern the power of the people in having a full and free choice of representatives long after others fill the places we now hold. I shall be glad also if the honourable member will withdraw his amendment, so that the vote may be taken directly on the Bill.

Mr. FISH.—I shall be happy to withdraw the amendment, if the House will allow me.

Amendment withdrawn.

Mr. PEACOCK.—Sir, I rise to say that I shall support this Bill very cordially. Indeed, I shall be prepared to go further than the Bill goes, and do as I have done on former occasions when the question of the honorarium

has been before the House, and vote for £100 being the amount of honorarium. I think it would be a sham on our part to go into any policy of retrenchment without any attempt to reduce our own salaries in the way of honorarium. And I believe the country expects it of us. From one end of the colony to the other there was a cry, during the late elections, that members coming to this House ought to be willing to accept an amount of honorarium smaller than they are getting. The only reason I can see for the payment of honorarium is to enable any man who is poor, and has the ability to take part in legislative duties, to come to this House, and not be put to any loss by giving his time and services to the country. If he will get such an amount as will enable him to pay his expenses when here, and be free from loss through his legislative duties preventing him from supporting his family by his wages as a working-man, that amount ought to be sufficient for the purpose. I wish the House to bear this in mind: that £100 was paid for many years in this House; and I think those who recollect the character of the House at that time will be willing to admit that the ability displayed and the manner in which the business was carried out at that time would certainly compare very favourably with what it is at the present time. I should also ask the House to bear in mind, in considering this question as to the amount which is to be decided upon as the honorarium of members of this House, that it is only for a fourth part of the year. It does not at all interfere with a member devoting his time to other business during three-fourths of the year; and, if that is taken into account, it will be seen that the amount paid hitherto has been unnecessarily large for the purpose. There are other points to which I might call attention, but which are probably Committee objections. One of those points is in regard to the Wellington members, or members resident within a certain radius of Wellington. Under the Act they receive £140, but under this Bill it is evident that they will receive an increase, as they are to get £150; and the members who were here last session will get £30 more. There is also a question in regard to the payment of Legislative Councillors, and as to the small area within which payment will not apply. These are Committee matters; but, should I have an opportunity of introducing an amendment to reduce still further the honorarium, I shall do so, and thereby meet the views of the honourable member for Parnell, who hints that the sacrifice to be made this year is not enough to speak about.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, I do not agree that there is any fault to be found with the Government for bringing down this Bill. Quite sufficient cause appeared during the late elections to make it necessary to bring down a Bill of this kind. Whether or not its terms are wisely decided I shall leave for consideration to a future time. And I do not agree with any remarks which may go in the direction of insinuating that the Government have not shown

disinterestedness in the matter as regards themselves. On the contrary, I think it is only right and doing justice to the Government to say that not only in the Bill which affects their own salaries do they propose that large reductions should be made, but they, unnecessarily, and unfairly to themselves, I think, propose that the reductions should take place from the commencement of the session instead of from the time when the Bill becomes law. I think they are fairly entitled to draw the salaries which the law gives to them until there is an alteration; and there is no right on the part of the House to make the Bill which affects their salaries retrospective in its character. Therefore I cannot agree in any indication which attributes to the Government a want of generosity and consideration, after their treatment of themselves. In regard to honourable members, the nature of the Bill is simply this: The sixty old members will get exactly what they would receive under the present Act for this session; Wellington members will receive somewhat more than they would under the existing law; and all the new members—my honourable friend behind me terms them “Young New Zealand”—will be the only losers this session by the Bill. The gentlemen who reside in Wellington—and I am one of them, and therefore I shall be speaking disinterestedly—would have more than they would have under the existing Act; the remainder of the old members will get the same; and the young members will have considerably less than they would be entitled to. This is a strange way of altering the law. As regards the expectations of the country, I am inclined to agree with the honourable member who spoke last, that there was a general impression throughout the colony that the new members intended to consent to a considerable reduction in the honorarium. Any members who have pledged themselves to that effect must necessarily act up to their pledges; but the point I contend for, and do so strongly, is this: Those who made no such pledges should consider the question upon its merits; but those who did make such pledges should not allow themselves to be governed by more than the duration of the present Parliament, and should make this Bill of a temporary character.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Well, I am convinced the time has come to end this sham of honorarium, and to say that members ought to be paid, for the honorarium is not a fair one, nor fair to the country. Take the case at the present time. We have an enormous amount of important business to attend to, while honourable members have made up their minds that nothing shall induce them to stay after Christmas. These are some of the measures that have to be attended to, or else to be neglected, or to be hurriedly passed, and some of them are measures which, in ordinary times, would take up the whole of the time between now and Christmas in discussing them; and yet we are asked to pass them hurriedly, although they are admittedly of the greatest importance. I

*Sir J. Vogel*

am only giving some of these measures. There is a measure for relinquishing the pre-emptive right to purchase Native lands, and the right that these lands should be only sold through the Government. That is an important measure. Another is one which was hurried through the House last night, a measure for making a very large reduction in the selling-price of the waste lands of the Crown. Then, Sir, there is another measure of great importance—a Bill for handing over the management of the railways to a comparatively irresponsible Board. Then, we have before us the contingency of changes being made in the Education Department, which we are not even certain we shall have an opportunity of discussing, since those changes, it appears, can be made by an Order in Council, without further legislation. Then, there is a Bill—I am at a loss for adjectives with which to describe the importance of these Bills, for they are all of such large importance—to alter the representation of the country, and to enlarge the size of the districts, which my honourable friend the member for Ashburton rightly says is of enormous importance. Then, there is a Bill relating to the Otago Central Railway, which, if not a Government measure, in my opinion ought to be one. There is the Bill relating to the acquisition of land, which is in the hands of a private member; but, judging from the remarks of the head of the Government, it should have been a Government measure. Then, there is the question relating to the increase of the property-tax, and as to whether or not there should be a variation in the incidence of that tax. Then, we find that there is the question of retrenchment, of which we have only touched the very fringe of the discussion in the form of the Bills relating to the salaries of the Governor and of the Ministers and members. And there are other questions relating to retrenchment which either we shall have to leave to the Government to deal with without a discussion in the House, or else there will be no dealing with that question, which was the one most prominently brought before electors during the late elections. Now, Sir, I have pointed out these, but there are other measures, and I have not exhausted the list. And yet, notwithstanding that, honourable members are thoroughly determined nothing shall induce them to stay longer than three weeks—till Christmas-time. I do not for a moment say that honourable members, in coming to that conclusion, are actuated by the question of the honorarium; but I do say this: that if the Government were to ask the members to come back after Christmas they would be inflicting considerable hardship upon honourable members, because the allowance which we hitherto considered should be made to honourable members by way of covering their expenses would fall short of doing anything of the kind if there were to be a session after Christmas. The conclusion I have come to is this—not the one that the honourable member for Ponsonby has come to, that he is only engaged here temporarily on

his legislative duties, and for the other part of the year is free to do what he likes. I say the time has come when the duties of Parliament are of so important a nature that a member should place the whole of his time and abilities at the disposal of the State from one year's end to the other, whenever they are required. Now, Sir, according to what the honourable member for Ponsonby said, we are coming to a different conclusion—we are to say that so many days' expenses of a reasonable character amount to so much, and that honourable members should only be asked for that number of days' attendance during the year. I think it is a false principle to go upon; and, moreover, seeing many things which I should rather not allude to this evening, but all in the direction, to my mind, of giving larger powers to what are called "the privileged classes," I cannot think that it is a measure of a liberal character which reduces the range of selection on the part of the selectors, which a measure of this kind is calculated to do. It is clearly the case that if you reduce the amount which you place at the disposal of members you lower the range of selection of the electors, because we know there are many men to whom no exception could be taken in point of ability or fitness who will find that they cannot afford to place their services at the disposal of the electors. And therefore you are reducing the range of selection, and you are saying to the electors, "It is desirable that you should select only men of means as your representatives." In this country we have to deal with a different class of men from those in Great Britain. The number of men in this colony who have no business pursuits are comparatively few. Therefore when we speak of the privileged classes here we do not speak of men free to take to politics as an occupation for their leisure, but we speak of men who are willing to give up a certain time from whatever occupation they follow in order to represent the people in Parliament; and, if you lower the rate of payment to members, you will reduce the number who will find that they are able to respond to the call made upon them. And I think, with the uncertainty hanging over us as to what time the session will occupy, and the strain it puts on the Government in the way of asking members to remain, the principle should at once be done away with, at any rate, after the present Parliament, of paying by honorarium, and that members should receive the same amount that is paid in other places. I believe the amount generally accepted is £300. Now, as regards the present Parliament, members must be judged by their own pledges, and I have not followed the election speeches closely enough to know what they are. I was told it was during a former election that a candidate rather boasted before his constituents that he was in favour of reducing the honorarium. "And," said one very plain and frank elector, "do you mean to say that, when the question arose as to whether or not you should be paid a certain sum, you voted for the lower sum?" "Yes," said the

candidate, with a great deal of self-consciousness of having done a good deed. "Well," replied the elector—and he was loudly cheered—"if you are not able to look after your own interests, what chance is there of your looking well after ours?" I do not know how far there may be a change in the matter; but, in my opinion, the electors throughout the country will not take the view that they have a right to ask gentleman to represent them who are not to receive a fair amount of payment in consequence. I am not quite able to follow the point made by the honourable member for Ashburton. If I understood him rightly, he objects to payment of members.—(No.)—It appears to me that we are now paying according to the duration of the session, and therefore, if the new Representation Bill passes and the number of members is reduced, then, it seems to me, the session should be shorter, because there will be fewer members to talk; and, consequently, under the new Representation Bill instead of the payment to members being larger it should be smaller. That seems to me to be the case, if we regard the honorarium point of view of paying members for their attendance here. Then comes the question, Are members' expenses during election to be taken into account? I do not know what the honourable gentleman's view on that subject is; but, if I am able to judge correctly the view of the Government, that is an element that should be taken into account in the amount to be paid. There is an allowance of £50 to the members of this House, and there is no allowance of the same kind made to the Upper House. They have not to go before their constituents at the end of each Parliament. The members of this House have; and I presume, then, that this £50 is for the purpose of recouping the cost of elections. Well, if that is the principle, I should like to know how the £50 is arrived at. I see honourable gentlemen before me who have paid hundreds, perhaps a thousand and more, over the election; and I see an honourable gentleman on this side of the House who has spent very few pounds over the election. And if the principle is to prevail of recouping the expenses of elections, then I think that, instead of making a uniform payment, a Select Committee should be appointed to appraise the cost of elections, and pay the members accordingly. I do not know how the Premier would escape from that dilemma, if he is prepared to justify the provisions of his Bill. Then, I should simply say this, in conclusion: that I feel myself at liberty to vote against this measure, and, if it passes its second reading, I shall strongly support any amendment which will go in the direction of limiting the reductions which we make to the duration of the present Parliament, and not extending them beyond that time. Those members who have made no pledges, it appears to me, are quite at liberty to vote as they think fit, and I do not think that any member—putting on one side the question of self-sacrifice—that any member who looks at the broad principle of throwing open to the electors of the colony the largest possible

freedom of selection can consider that it is desirable, for the comparatively small saving this Bill proposes to make, to so limit the freedom of choice which the electors at present possess, and which, in my opinion, is not even now sufficiently large.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, in order, I rise to move the following amendment: That, after the word "That," the following words be inserted: "whilst this House admits that, in the present depressed state of the colony, it may be expedient that there should be a reduction in the amount of honorarium to the extent of 25 per cent., yet it is unwise that legislation on the subject should be introduced, and that it is undesirable that the Parliamentary Honorarium and Privileges Act 1884 Amendment Bill should be proceeded with further this session." The amendment that I propose is, to my mind, what I think a majority of this House would be in favour of seeing carried. I believe it is what the people of the colony would wish, in the existing state of affairs. There is no doubt that, owing to the depressed state of affairs in the colony, each one is called upon to make a sacrifice, and I believe that it is only right and just that members of this House should lead the van and make a sacrifice. And, Sir, I am not one of those who are speaking to the House now on election pledges to have a reduction. During my election tour I told the electors I was not in favour of a reduction in the honorarium, as experience told me that there was no advantage in such a course. I told them I was not bound to make a sacrifice of my time in devoting my services to the country and at the same time not be remunerated. I hold that to be a clear and sound doctrine in any democratic country. We have no right to be called upon to offer up ourselves at the shrine of the country; and, if sacrifices are made, profits will be made indirectly, and we shall find that the country will suffer accordingly. I shall prove that, I think, by the past history of New Zealand. We have very few members now in the House who were here in 1870; but we have those here who represented certain interests during those years. I heard an honourable member refer to this matter, and say that the legislation of New Zealand was as perfect, that its administration was as perfect, when the honorarium was set down at £100 a year, as it is now. But what happened to my honourable friend Sir Julius Vogel when he introduced the public-works policy in 1870? The cardinal point of that policy was that the land along the railways should be rated according to the improved value the railways gave it, and that a portion of the improved value should be given to the State. But we know this: Those who represented the landed interests in the House at that time—who received this £100 a year—what did they do? They took out the cardinal point of the policy. The land was increased in value from £1 to £20 per acre, the poorly-paid legislators indirectly benefited themselves and became wealthy, and the State has not received one penny-piece directly from these lands on ac-

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count of the expenditure of that money. And so it will be again. If class interests are to be represented in this Parliament wholly and solely, it means this: that, indirectly, this class will profit, to the detriment of the people generally. The great mass of the people of this country do not expect members to come here and do their duty and serve them faithfully and be losers thereby. There is no man that can come at less than is now fixed, and do his duty fairly, and hold the position he should hold, without making a large sacrifice. — (Oh!) — The honourable member for Ponsonby, I think it is, says, "Oh!" but I would ask whether the amount he has received in the shape of honorarium since he came here will equal the amount he would have been in pocket if he had not been returned as a member. If he balances both sides of the account I am certain he will find himself on the wrong side of the ledger. But, if his position is such that he has a business which can be carried on during his absence and does not require his own supervision, no loss is entailed on him. And if he is a man of means, which I believe he is, the result of course is that in his case he may consider it desirable and profitable to come here for less. I have always seen the honourable member voting with the Conservative side in this House, and I say it is purely in the Conservative interest, and in the interest of the wealthy classes in New Zealand, that the attempt is now being made to reduce the honorarium. And where comes in the consistency? For years it was contended that it should be laid down we should have the principle of payment of members. The present leader of the Government, who is introducing this measure, is one who declared, when the present Act was brought in, that we should not have the bickering, session after session, in passing on the estimates the amount honourable members should receive. It was clearly understood in the session of 1884, when we passed the Parliamentary Honorarium and Privileges Act, that, once and for all, this question should be definitely settled; and, now, before the present Act has been in force three years, a Bill to amend it is brought down, and we are put in the same position as we should have been in had we been passing the amount of the honorarium on the estimates, as was usual previous to the passing of the present Act. I do not think the interests of the colony require that we should alter the law; but, as a matter of expediency, seeing that this crisis has arisen, we might make the sacrifice that I have proposed in this amendment. Now, comparing the position of New Zealand with what is taking place in the other colonies, we find that in Victoria payment of members has existed for some years, and that the colony has progressed to such an extent that, whilst New South Wales last year had a deficit of a million, and whilst New Zealand had a deficit of £300,000, Victoria had a surplus of over half a million. We find that as far as legislation necessary for the masses, as far as

settlement of the land, and as far as the social and moral progress of the people are concerned Victoria leads the van; and I say that, to my mind, the progress and prosperity of its people arise mainly from the fact that there they had fair representation, paid members, and Protection. And who have carried Protection and caused the prosperity? Who have conserved the rights of the people? Who have said the land shall be for the people? The men who have been paid a fair amount for their services, who have been honest and true to their principles, and well earned their money; and the colony has progressed. I say, let the Parliament of New Zealand follow this example and do what is right and just, and then New Zealand will follow in the wake of Victoria, and be what it should have been years ago. There is a complete answer to the allegation made that in the past those who represented the people of New Zealand on small pay have provided the colony with the advantages that New Zealand enjoys. With the large expenditure of loans and public moneys New Zealand has had, it says very little for those who, on small pay, were legislating and administering for the Colony of New Zealand. There is another phase of the question: I have often heard it said in this House that we should not have retrospective legislation. But I say this is retrospective legislation. When the present members of this House were elected the law was that each new member should receive £210 for the session, and £105, this being the second session, as far as old members were concerned. There was a contract in existence, and on that contract the electors returned members. I ask the House plainly if, when the electors were voting for members, they were voting that those members should vote for an alteration of the law; and I say it is no reason, because any member in this House might have given a pledge of individual action, that he should be a party to retrospective legislation, and do wrong to those who are in this Parliament, and who were clearly within their rights under the law as it existed. I bring this to the recollection of the House: Previously when a reduction was made, in 1880, when the salaries of the Civil servants were reduced by 10 per cent., the honorarium was reduced to the same extent, and soon afterwards, when prosperity had again dawned, and even, I believe, before it had fairly dawned, the result was that the 10-per-cent. reduction was made good to the Civil servants; but nothing was made good to members of this House. Now, whilst we are going in for retrenchment blindfold in the rest of the service—for the Government ask us to leave it in their hands, and we do not know to what extent it may be carried, or even if any reduction will be made—we are making this certain sacrifice of the amount payable to ourselves. To my mind, that is not a businesslike way of proceeding; but I say this in support of the amendment: that by it we are placing ourselves in the same position as we are placing our Civil servants in, because I am certain that as soon as the colony recovers its financial position, so surely shall

we find whatever we now take from the Civil servants restored, or more than restored. That has always been the case. I recollect when the same thing occurred in Victoria, when, after their Black Wednesday, when a large part of the Civil Service was discharged, in two or three years, when prosperity returned, the expenditure went up again. So it will be here;—I am as positive of it as I am that I am addressing the House at this moment. Under these circumstances I can see no reason why we should alter the law. What I think would meet the case would be the tentative measure I propose, to reduce the honorarium this year; and next year, if we find the depression is not removed, and the circumstances of the colony demand a still further sacrifice, then let us make it. As compared with the £210 paid here, take the amounts paid in Victoria and in Queensland; and I would ask honourable members to compare the position of members here with the position of members in Victoria. In Melbourne nearly every member can return to his home after each sitting, because all the railways in the colony converge on one point; the few, representing the most distant electorates, who cannot return to their homes daily, can do so two or three times a week. But here honourable members are absent from their homes on an average at least three months in the year—this year they will be away nearly seven months for the two sessions; and, taking all the expenses directly and indirectly incurred, I undertake to say there is no member of the House who is not a heavy loser. If, in the face of the heavy present loss, honourable members are prepared, as I believe they are, to make a still further tentative sacrifice such as that mentioned in the amendment, it is as much as the country can expect of them. I am not one who believe in cheap services. There is not a single honourable member here who, having a servant or a workman or an employé of any sort who was doing his duty faithfully and fearlessly, and proving himself capable in doing it, would go in and reduce his salary: it is the last thing any one who had any knowledge of employment or labour in any capacity would think of doing. And do you mean to tell me that the electors of New Zealand are devoid of intelligence, and that they do not know full well that they get good value? If you put it as a test question at the ballot-box, they would tell you, the thing being fairly and clearly explained, that £210—the amount now fixed by law—is not too much. There may be some parts of the colony where you could find candidates offering to serve the electors in Parliament for nothing—offering to discharge all the duties of a representative, and charge the colony nothing for their services. But there are parts of the colony where, if such an offer were made, the intelligence of the electors would say, “We certainly believe you would, but that, while we should not directly have to pay you, we should indirectly have to pay you double money.” If such a person were to proffer his services on the West Coast to any

of the intelligent electors of that part of the colony I am positive the answer would be, "You are too cheap at the price. We will not have you."

Mr. MONK.—Too honest for them.

Mr. SEDDON.—I am afraid I should not look northward for honesty, particularly to Waitemata. Honesty is sold to party in that part of the country;—four honest men from that part of the country sold themselves in this House for a quarter of a million of money a few years ago. If that is honesty we on the West Coast say we will have none of it—we do not want men who can be bought for roads and bridges or personal gain. It is quite possible, and I believe it is the case, that there are parts of New Zealand, and not one hundred miles from Waitemata, which have sent to this House not representatives, but delegates, whose votes are not their own, but who must vote at their master's call. Sir, I put this to the Government: whether, in the existing state of affairs, it would not be well to accept the amendment, which I hope they will do. It must be apparent to the Premier that to force this Bill through, under existing circumstances, will be a matter of some time. I believe that there are other matters of far greater importance, and by which the colony will be a greater gainer if this Bill be postponed to allow of their becoming law. And I would put it to the Premier—and I believe his answer would be in the affirmative if he could speak conscientiously upon the subject—that, looking at his previous action in supporting the payment at £210 for years, he is now bringing it down to £150 merely as a matter of expediency. I say, as it is being done as a matter of expediency, let us allow the law to remain as it is, and then simply reduce the amount payable when the estimates are brought down.

Major ATKINSON.—It does not come down on the estimates at all.

Mr. SEDDON.—The Premier knows that that could very well be arranged. We can vote the money on the supplementary estimates, and the present law can be suspended.

Major ATKINSON.—Only by Act.

Mr. SEDDON.—I am quite willing, if the Premier will adopt that course, to have the Act suspended. That is really what the amendment is, in so many words. Let us suspend the Act until we find that the affairs of the colony are on a better footing; but let us retain the Act as it is at the present time. Going into the details of the question, some honourable members are in favour of making a distinction between members of this House and members of the Legislative Council; but I, for one, am of opinion that in that Chamber the people should be represented. If you are to have no one in that Chamber except the representatives of the wealthier classes, the result will be that any measure passed by the representatives of the people in this Chamber will be vetoed in the other Chamber. I say that there are gentlemen in that Chamber who are not men of means, but have faithfully served the country, and done their duty as colonists.

*Mr. Seddon*

Is it to be said that, because they are now in that Chamber, they are not to have that pay which will meet their expenses or enable them to maintain themselves as they should maintain themselves during the session? I will be no party to anything of the sort. This Bill makes the difference too great: £50 for a session is too small an amount. The amount now fixed by law is by no means too much. If this Bill goes into Committee and an amendment of that nature is proposed I shall object to it; and I say, in conclusion, that there is no necessity whatever for legislation on the subject. If this amendment is carried, it will be an expression of opinion on the part of the House that a reduction should be made, but that the reduction should be of a tentative kind.

Colonel FRASER.—The honourable member for Ponsonby states that he comes from a part of the colony where the electors are unanimously of the opinion that there should be a reduction in the honorarium. Well, I come from a part of the country not fifty miles from where he comes from, and my constituents have no such desire. I came to this House free and untrammelled, to vote as I pleased, but rather inclined to think that the honorarium should be retained at its present rate, because I considered that the reduction of the honorarium would, in a great measure, reduce the selection offered to the people. But I did come to this House pledged to assist in the reduction of the number of members of the House, and that pledge I shall keep in every possible way. However, as Ministers have shown that they are in earnest by making the reduction in their own salaries, I do not think it would be wise on the part of the House not to follow their example, and therefore I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, more particularly on account of the present depression; and I must say that there is nothing in the measures at present introduced by Ministers at all likely to ameliorate the distress now prevailing. I fear, therefore, that the reduction which we are now making will not be of a temporary character, but of a permanent character, unless some better measures than those before us are brought forward. I shall therefore support the Bill.

Major STEWARD.—I only wish to say a few words in explanation of the vote that I shall give on this Bill. I agree with those honourable gentlemen who have expressed the view that the amount of honorarium at present authorised to be paid by statute is, from the broad, liberal, and democratic point of view, not by any means too high; but, Sir, we have to recognise that the colony has fallen upon evil times, and that the circumstances at present do not enable us to carry out all things we think desirable; and, as retrenchment is to be carried out in all the departments of the public service, I conceive that we cannot consistently or with any good grace put in force such retrenchment measures as are necessary without ourselves submitting to come under this unpleasant operation. Though, therefore, I entirely concur with those honourable gentlemen who,

speaking from the liberal standpoint, think there ought to be a substantial sum paid to members of this House, still I recognise that the circumstances at the present time are such that what we desire cannot be carried out. Therefore I shall vote with Ministers in favour of the Bill they have brought down. But I am still of the opinion which I expressed in the discussion on the Financial Statement, that a better course would have been to have brought down a Bill suspending the operation of the Parliamentary Honourarium and Privileges Act during the period of the present Parliament. Then we should not have interfered with the operation of the Act as regards our successors, and those who are to be elected at next election would have the same option and right that we have as regards the honorarium.

An Hon. MEMBER.—So they will have, whatever we do.

Major STEWARD.—But, necessarily, they will have to pass a Bill; whereas if the course I recommend were adopted there would be no necessity for passing any Bill at all. I think that if the honourable member for Kumara were to move an amendment in that direction in Committee he would be more likely to be successful than he is in bringing down this resolution, which will be taken, whatever it may mean, as traversing the proposals of the Government. I am glad to hear that the honourable gentleman who leads the opposition will support a clause in Committee limiting the duration of the Bill to the present Parliament. If he moves a clause of that kind I shall certainly vote for it, and if he does not I shall be disposed to move such an amendment myself. It is quite sufficient to legislate for ourselves in this matter, without attempting to bind other Parliaments.

Captain RUSSELL.—Sir, it is possible for a man to have too much of a good thing, even of the honourable member for Kumara, who is "a very good thing," but it was with unexpected pleasure that I listened to him to night. He has a scheme for rescuing the colony from the depression into which it has fallen, a scheme better, I venture to believe, than even that scheme which the honourable member for Christchurch North has bottled up and will not produce to the House. The honourable gentleman tells us how grandly Victoria has progressed in the past because honourable members were paid £300 a year. Well, Sir, if we are to argue from his text we may fairly believe that we have but to quadruple the honorarium now, and, instead of having a deficiency—as he tells us we have—of £300,000, we should probably find at the end of this financial year that we had a very large surplus indeed. Now, it seems to me that the whole question resolves itself into this: Could we, for the honorarium proposed in the Bill, get as good members as we have at the present time? If so, why should we not reduce the honorarium? There is, of course, but one member for Kumara; and I venture to say that they will never get such another if Kumara is represented in this House for a thousand years. I do not venture

to compare him with other members of this House. I have no doubt he is worth double any honorarium that will ever be paid to him. But, as for myself and other humble members of this House, it would be, I can quite believe, easy to get our places filled by men just as good as ourselves if the honorarium were immediately reduced. With regard to the honourable member for Parnell, he ventured just now to tell us what the Premier thinks and what the Premier knows. He also ventured to tell the House that I was in favour of abolishing the honorarium and restricting the qualification to a property vote. Well, it seems to me that the honourable gentleman, judging by the numerous speeches he inflicts upon you, knows everything except how to discreetly hold his tongue. I, Sir, have never been in favour of abolishing the honorarium, nor have I ever been in favour of restricting the votes to a property qualification; but I do believe that a system of payment of large sums of money to members of this House is a fatal and radical mistake, and that it is not in the interests of, nor would promote, true democracy: I believe, if anything, it would do rather the reverse. I may be told that unless we had payment of members the poorer men could never come up to this House. That theory is correct, and for that reason I should be the last to say, Do not pay a man such a sum as would enable him to come here. But, if you argue that it is the poorest class that are to come up, and that the honorarium is to be sufficient to enable them to do so, then I contend that the sum of £100 is amply sufficient for all purposes. We are engaged here year after year for, in round numbers, about three months. One hundred days, I believe, would be found to be in excess of the number of the days of the session; and will any person contend that for the sum of £100 you cannot be amply provided for in the best hotels, and have plenty of pocket-money for the little et-ceteras which are found necessary?

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Captain RUSSELL.—Well, then, the honourable gentleman must be more extravagant than most people. I do not see how it is possible for any one, for the fair necessities of life, to spend more than that. Of course you may spend more than that: you may buy diamond-rings or any other luxuries; but I do say that for all that is absolutely essential for one's comfort a pound a day is more than sufficient. The honourable member for Christchurch North said that this duration-principle was false,—that if you give payment by the day it would be a false principle. I admit that; but surely any practical, common-sense business-man ought to look back upon the parliamentary history of the country and see how many days Parliament has ordinarily been in session, and, if he finds that, during a period of twenty years, Parliament has not sat for more than a hundred days a year, we have a right, surely, to assume that our duties will not exceed a hundred days in future. I hope and believe that our duties will not exceed a hundred

days: and under those circumstances £100 is ample. Reverting again, for an instant, to the question of the poor man, the honourable member for Ashburton was perfectly right when he said it was a question of payment of members. People may draw fine distinctions between an honorarium and payment, but, as a matter of fact, the honorarium is actually payment. With the honourable member for Christchurch North, I do not think we should place all power in the hands of privileged classes; and, on the other hand, I do not think we should pay men such sums of money as would create a professional politician class, and I believe that by increasing the honoraria we should induce a professional politician class to come here. It is all very well to say that you must pay men for coming to Parliament; but I contend, however conservative people may deem it, that unless a man has a certain degree of independence he has no right to come up to Parliament; and I will state why. Every man owes his duty first of all to his wife and family; and if he, being an artisan, comes up to Parliament and sits many years in Parliament he thereby ceases to be an artisan. He cannot return at the end of six, seven, or ten years and take his place amongst his fellow-artisans; he has been unfitted for it, because he has disused his trade for many years. Very well. Then, this would happen: After such a man had been a member for some years, some great wave of popular feeling would come, which very likely might be prejudicial, and is directly contrary to his convictions. What, in such a case, is he to do? He knows that at home he has a wife and family, and that if he is turned out of his seat in Parliament they will be absolutely penniless. Will not the inducement to that man to sacrifice conscience and to vote contrary to what he believes to be for the good of the country be almost an imperative necessity? It will be so; and almost every man, when he is placed in such a position, having to judge between the material comforts of his family and the good of the country, would let the country go to the dogs, and see that his family is properly provided for. I say, therefore, that we have no right to induce men to abandon their handicraft by offering two or three hundred pounds a year, when we know that the day will come—as it will come to every one of us here sooner or later—when, perhaps, for having done our duty, but at the same time having run contrary to popular opinion, we shall be rejected by our constituencies; for such men, it seems to me, if they have nothing else to live upon, must then become pensioners upon the State, or see those who are dependent upon them going without the necessities of life. To induce men who have not an independence, or men without a profession to which they can return, to become members of Parliament is a great mistake indeed, and is not in the interests of themselves or of true democracy. It has been said, and said, it seems to me, with good reason, that we should

*Captain Russell*

reduce the honorarium before we reduce the payment of, or discharge, Civil servants; that it would be very unjust to those men who make their living by serving the country to reduce their salaries or discharge them whilst we here do not reduce our honorarium, but receive the full amount that we received before. I believe that it is of great importance that we should reduce the honorarium, because the feeling does exist in the breasts of many honourable members that it would be unjust to endeavour to bring about serious reductions in the Government service so long as they do not touch their own honorarium; and if we do not reduce our honorarium we shall not go in for true retrenchment: but the instant we feel we have done our duty to the country in that respect we shall be able to take up a standpoint from which we shall be able to do to others what we have already done for ourselves. I disapprove of that portion of the Bill which makes a difference between members of the Legislative Council and members of the House of Representatives. As was said by the honourable member for Kumara, we do not want the Legislative Council to represent wealth any more than we want it to consist of pensioners. There are many men in this colony who are more deserving of seats in the Legislative Council than are many of the members who are elected by the people to the House of Representatives, and these people would never be elected, because they have not the popular knack of addressing large audiences, or going round, hat in hand, and making love to their constituents. For all that, many of these men have great deliberative power, though they have not the gift of popular oratory, and those are the men I should like to see put into the Council—men of science, perchance, who have not been seeking popular favour. We want such men there, but I do not want to see rich men there. Therefore the members of the Legislative Council should have exactly the same remuneration as members of the Lower House. What I fear in this clause of the Bill is that, after reducing the honorarium of the Legislative Councillors, in a short time the question would come up again, and their honorarium would be reduced still further; and the day would soon come when—as I have heard many honourable gentlemen outside urge—payment of the Legislative Councillors would be withdrawn altogether; and that, I believe, would be absolutely fatal to the Legislative Council, and injurious in the last degree to the colony. I can imagine that such leaders of the popular party as I have known in the past would get upon the platforms throughout the colony, and inveigh in most eloquent and brilliant language against the monopoly of power conferred upon those irresponsible gentlemen who sit in the Legislative Council; and it would be said that, as they sat absolutely without any pay at all, they did so, as it has already been suggested the richer men would do in this House, to serve their own selfish interests only. I can imagine large audiences in all parts of



the colony would be told that; and this would be the first step towards the destruction of our Constitution. I hope that in Committee that part of the Bill will be materially altered; and I should also like to see the sum of £150 to be paid to members of the House of Representatives reduced to £100, because I can see no reason why the £50 should be paid as expenses. Everybody must admit that there is a considerable amount of money spent at elections; but that is no argument which can be brought forward in this House. We have the most stringent Corrupt Practices Act, and that was prepared with the idea of diminishing the election expenses; and, if any honourable member contests an election absolutely within the four corners of that Act, I am convinced that this £50 for expenses will not be necessary to him at all.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Captain RUSSELL.—The honourable member may say "No," but I maintain that that is so; and that in many instances this hiring of halls and various other things that members do is an indirect if not a direct form of bribery.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about advertisements?

Captain RUSSELL.—Well, it is a very dangerous thing to say a word against the Press; but if ever there was an engine of extortion and an engine of bribery, commend me to the Press of New Zealand. I believe that the amount extracted by the newspapers in the shape of election advertisements is four or five times their worth. I have now said all I had to say in favour of the Bill. I have no hesitation in saying that some payment of members is just and reasonable; but to pay such a sum as would induce people to come to Parliament and make a living of it to the prejudice of the ordinary vocations they followed before would be a fatal mistake, and one that would not be in the interests of true democracy.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I have spoken before the honourable gentleman who spoke last, and I shall leave it to other gentlemen who follow to criticize his speech. I fairly congratulate him upon the courage with which he has expressed his opinions—opinions so contrary, I believe, to the opinions which prevail throughout the country. If I understood the honourable gentleman rightly, it nearly all comes back to this: that his idea is that representatives are most likely to be good in proportion to their not having the knack of making themselves popular. If that is so, I think we should put an end at once to the representative system of Government. I do not wish to detain the House, but I would say that I cannot support the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara; but if the honourable gentleman will move an amendment to this effect: That it is not desirable to proceed with the Bill this session, as the economy which it will effect falls entirely upon the new members and the members of the Legislative Council, and that it will therefore be better to propose next session a measure fairly affecting all members, I should support such an

amendment. Clearly, we are not entitled to single out the new members for economical purposes only; and, if it were, we should not stop short of doing the thing entirely, simply saying that new members should receive no honorarium at all. If there is any principle in singling them out for deduction, I do not see why it should stop short half-way. It appears to me that, in singling out the new members, this Bill is unjust, and that otherwise the measure effects no economy whatever. I think it would be better to postpone legislation till next session, when we should be able to deal with all members on an equal footing. There will be great difficulty in dealing with the question this session, because of there being new and old members. There is one nut you will have to crack, and a very hard one. I think it will give you many a headache before you come to a conclusion on it; and that is, there is one gentleman who was a member for a Middle Island constituency, but who is now a member for a Wellington district, and you will have to cut him into pieces. I am at a loss to understand how it can be done; it will be a very difficult process. I think it would be better to deal with this question next session. I will not move an amendment; but if the honourable member for Kumara feels inclined to do this I will support it.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I look upon the proposal now made to us as involving a great constitutional question, one which cannot be shut up in one sheet of paper in the manner in which it is here. This appears to me to be part of a proceeding to which I cannot apply the name of policy. It seems to me to be nibbling all round at everything upon no plan whatever. There is no greatness of design visible in any part of the measures now brought before us. If there is one plan at all, it appears to me that the plan is this: to destroy every portion of liberty that has been gained within the past few years, to abolish everything that has been done in the direction of freedom, and to set up a state of things which I believe none of us wish to see restored. In the first place we gained a great deal in reference to the lands of the colony. Some effort has been made to obtain land for the people—I admit, not very well or very wisely, or upon a broad scale. In fact, I cannot approve of it as a general measure at all; but the effort has been made to obtain land for the people, and yet we have before us now a Land Bill which I look upon as perfectly retrogressive. I can look upon it in no other way. There we are about, I think, to retreat from what we have done, and to go back to what I regard as a vicious system. Then, again, a very strange proposal in point of fact is made to us. All democratic bodies have had this in view: that payment should be made to the representatives of the people—and in most cases representatives of the people are in both Chambers, and both are elected: in fact, in every instance, so that they may represent the people, an effort has been made to determine that actual payment shall be made to each of such Chambers: not in the form of an honorarium to

be given for the session, which naturally induces honourable members to hurry through the session as quickly as possible in order to get home with as much honorarium in their pockets as they can; but it is payment made throughout the year, whether Parliament be sitting or not. That is the plan on which payment is made in such bodies. Now, here we have still the honorarium put before us: nothing else. Then, what proportion does that honorarium bear to the salary paid to the Governor? In the United States, that the President may bear no very elevated position as compared with the representatives of the people, the honorarium paid to the Senate and the House of Representatives is made equal, and justly so. They all represent the people, and the amount paid to the members of each House is one-tenth of the income given to the President. But here what are you going to do? You have determined that you will not have an elected Governor, but that a man shall be brought from another country, and you at once elevate him far above all our fellow-citizens by giving him £5,000 a year, which I think too much. If you gave your members one-tenth of his income, as is done in the United States, you would have to give them £400 or £500 a year; but, instead of doing that, you put them in a very low position as compared with him. That is wrong. I say you should regulate all this on some fixed principle, and not as it is done in this Bill. I regard the proposal here as one in a very retrograde direction. I perfectly admit that at the present time every one should make some sacrifice to meet the necessities of the country. Let us all therefore, who desire to make that sacrifice, do so, but let us only do it for this Parliament, and do not let us pass a permanent measure of a retrograde character, simply to get rid of difficulty and trouble, simply that you may not embarrass your minds with conceptions which appear to be beyond the grasp of the present Government. Therefore, so far as it depends on me, I shall try to confine this Bill to the present time—I will not say this session, but this Parliament. Let us, if we do bring in a general measure, do it on some fixed principle. I say we are taking a retrograde step altogether. We have before us a Bill to restore Parliaments to five years' duration. That is brought in by a friend and supporter of the Government, with what assistance from them I cannot tell. That I know not; but that Bill is before us, and it is one which goes in a totally retrograde direction. Then, Sir, what further have we determined? One would imagine, from the speeches made from the Government benches on this measure, that all the steps we were taking were in a democratic direction. Is it going in that direction that we are giving millions of acres of land for the construction of a railway, and bringing foreign companies into the country under circumstances which must impoverish its inhabitants for all time? Is it a march in a forward direction to say this? You have a large number of men out of employment, unable to obtain work—in fact, reduced to

a state I can hardly contemplate with patience; men who want work; for I have personal knowledge that even in this town a man has been recently seeking work, a man blest with health and strength, and ready and anxious to do work, and yet obliged to abandon this place because he could get no chance of work. Well, when you have your population in that state, is it fair to say to them, "We are going to make over two and a quarter millions of acres of land to a company who care nothing whatever for you, in order that they may construct a railway, and we intend to march you up to the district where that is to be constructed, without choice; you shall go and get work there or you shall have no work at all, and unless you consent to that you must starve; and you are to construct that railway from your own land, which is to cease to be your own land from the time you get there; you shall have to work there for those who are foreigners, and for whom you will render the land of four or five times the value it is now; and when the railway is completed it is to be the property of that body, and the land shall be taken away from you and your children for ever; and unless you go there and work for these people you must starve"? Is that a march in a retrograde direction or not? I say it is part of the same principle that the measure now proposed by the Government is founded on. Then I go a degree further. I say that everything is retrograde now. I take the case of a measure lately introduced into the House which was to have thrown open a learned profession to your youth at large, to have given them a chance of a footing in it; and when such a large number of members—fifty-eight I think it was—voted in favour of the second reading and were anxious to have it considered in Committee, what took place? Virtually, some three or four men, by their opposition, were allowed to prevent it going on at all; and have the Government made any attempt to get any redress for that wrong? Before that Bill came on for consideration in Committee I besought them to get rid of the rule which prevented new business from being taken after half-past twelve; and that was not done. And now what efforts are being made in these times of depression, when men can get no employment, and when your youths, many of them highly educated, have no prospect before them? What effort is made to throw open the portals of that great profession to them? They are shut out from any hope of being able to embark in the legal profession, and I say no justice is done to them by the Government unless they insist upon that measure being considered by the House. It is their duty to let the House have an opportunity of doing that which it was its intention to do. I say, in every instance, our march is from a liberal direction. This question of a grant of land I say is absolutely a return to the system of government by great companies. We all know that the Premier was really always an advocate of those great companies; that no other man has ever perhaps

*Sir G. Grey*

considered so much their interest, and has so neglected the interest of the people at large in comparison with that of companies, as the present Premier has done; and, undoubtedly, the policy of the present time is likely to do the same thing, and to continue the course in the future which was so disastrous to us in the past. Why, therefore, I ask, should we now be asked to do this great injustice to the people of New Zealand that it is to be a permanent law that representatives shall not be paid sufficient for ordinary times? Why should we be asked to pass a law which will say that the representatives shall not be paid in a somewhat fair proportion to the salary of the Governor of this country? Why be asked to depart from rules which other nations have laid down as proper rules for their guidance? There was no necessity for the introduction of this Bill; nor ought it to have been introduced until we first had settled what the number of members of this House should be. I leave it to honourable members to say whether, strictly speaking, justice did not require that, before we were called upon to vote what sum should be paid to members for all time—that is, as far as our power goes in making a permanent law—we should have considered what the number of members should be and what their proportion to the population of the country. It is only with that knowledge we can properly decide this question. Clearly, in bringing it forward in the manner it has been done the same line of procedure has been adopted as in regard to other measures this session: that is, it is some temporary subterfuge, with the object of making a paring here and a paring there, without considering what the effect of these changes would be on the Constitution of the colony at large. I therefore will be no party to legislation of the kind on this subject, or on the subject of the public lands, or on the subject of the constitution of the Legislative Council—on that especially, because I am sure there is no honourable member here who does not feel that if we enact that the number of members of the Council is to be fixed without any power of increasing them, and they are to be nominated by the Ministry of the day, all freedom and liberty of legislation is gone. No enemy to popular freedom could devise a more deadly measure to injure the interests of the country at large than the measure proposed to us for that purpose really is. I feel certain that that is the case; and, until we know whether the Council is to be a representative Council or is to be a nominated Council, I say we ought not to be required to vote what payment is, by a new permanent law, to be made to its members. I therefore do hope honourable gentlemen will not consent to the Bill passing in its present form; but, if we are—as I think we ought to do—to make a self-sacrifice commensurate with the difficulties of the position and the present impoverished state of the country, and if it is to be a sacrifice by ourselves, and to the times, we should simply pass a temporary measure to last so long as this Parliament lasts, and without try-

ing to bind future Parliaments; and in doing that I think we shall be best doing our duty to the people of New Zealand and to ourselves. I hope honourable gentlemen will follow that course, and I shall do my best to see it carried out in every possible way.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—It was said of a Roman Emperor who succeeded Nero that it was very easy to be a good Emperor after Nero. I would use the converse of the simile and say it is not easy to speak well after the honourable member for Auckland Central. I have not only the misfortune to have to gain the ear of the House after him, but I have to follow two such speakers as the honourable member for Christchurch North and the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. I can only plead that I shall trespass on the indulgence of the House as briefly as possible, and shall compress my remarks into less compass than the remarks of any of those three honourable gentlemen. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay has brought me to my feet by some remarks he made on the Press of the colony. He was good enough to say that the Press was a gigantic instrument of extortion, and that it weighed especially heavily upon public men at elections. But he appears to have forgotten that there are two sides to every question. Who is there to lift up his voice for a Press staggering and reeling under the intolerable weight of the speeches made at the general elections? Is there none to say a word for the non-political reader upon whom these columns upon columns of speeches are inflicted every day? Who is there who suffers by that but the newspapers? May I not say a word for the unfortunate editor and for the unhappy reporter? May I not say a word for the widows and orphans of the reporters—reporters who fall victims to the effort to assimilate these intolerable outpourings? Even as a commercial matter, a newspaper more often loses money than makes it at general elections. If the honourable gentleman does not believe me, let him try and run a newspaper during an election, and if he does not repent of his bargain he is a very fortunate man. The honourable gentleman made a very excellent speech, but he rather "let the cat out of the bag" when he said that a man ought not to come here unless he is a man of independent means. He did not say that straight out. He hinted it delicately. He inferred it. That may be his opinion, but it is not mine, and it is not, I think, the opinion of the majority of the people of this country. It is a very unpleasant and delicate task to take part in this discussion, and it is particularly so to us who may be poor men. However, as the rich men have not scrupled to support the Bill, I take it that the poor men will be justified also in opposing it. My position is this: I am not able to come to this House and take part in politics if I am to lose money by it. I calculate that if the honorarium should be reduced below £200 I must lose money. I am, however, prepared to make a sacrifice, because I think this is one of those

cases in which we should unite in setting an example to the people of the colony. But I do not think the Premier is doing a fair thing by a certain number of members in this House. I refer to the new members. Why should I be fined £60, while the honourable member for Napier, by whose side I usually sit, is to be fined only £5? I think it most monstrously unfair that the new members should be taxed to such an extent, while the older members escape, as far as the present session is concerned. It is all very well to say that we are legislating for many sessions, but I believe we are only legislating for a very short time. I think the people do not want the honorarium permanently reduced; and I believe that directly times improve up will go the honorarium to the old figure. The honourable member for the Thames said he was afraid the reduction would last for a long time, because he was afraid the Ministry would remain on those benches for a long time, and he did not think they would introduce measures which would restore prosperity. I agree with him that if those honourable gentlemen remain on those benches prosperity will be delayed; but I do not think those honourable gentlemen will stay there so long, if they go on as they have been going on. If I may read between the lines, I do not think the Premier is going to continue as he has been proceeding. I think that before many months pass he will—even at the risk of a breach with many of his present friends—come down with some remedial measure to restore prosperity to the colony. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay said payment of members was not in the true interests of democracy. I ask him, does he represent the democratic side of his constituency, or does he represent the anti-democratic side? Each man must speak in this matter for his own constituency. I speak for mine. In the late election I had to struggle against a gentleman of considerable ability and high position. He told the constituency he was in favour of reducing the honorarium to £100 a year, and, as he had sat in Parliament the previous session, he was ready to do the work for £50. I was not ready to do it for £50; certainly not for less than £150. That, of course, was pointed out to the electors; but the electors preferred taking me at £150 or £200 to taking my opponent at the less figure, not because it was a question of ability or position, or perchance I might not have been here, but because they knew that I was a poor man, and that my interests were theirs, and because they did not wish to throw the government of this country into the hands of the property-owning classes. That is why the democracy does not grudge a sufficient honorarium. I do not intend to waste time by protesting against the course which is about to be adopted by the Premier. I know the honourable gentleman too well to imagine that appeals and protests from this side of the House will avail with him. I know that I might protest, or forty members might protest, but so long as the honourable gentleman had forty-four supporters at his back we should be treated with

*Mr. W. P. Reeves*

what has been called the "hobnailed boot" policy. I do think we are sent here to protest against what we believe to be mistaken and wrong, and therefore I have taken the liberty to lift up my voice this evening against what I consider to be inimical to the interests of democracy.

Mr. BUXTON.—I intend to oppose the second reading of this Bill, and I shall give a few reasons why I intend to do so. I consider this one of the schemes of retrenchment. I have said a great deal about retrenchment on various occasions in the past, and I differ from many people on this subject. It has been said by a great many that we should retrench from the highest to the lowest. I differ from that. I have always spoken against interfering with the salary of the Governor; not because I know so much about it as to be a proper judge, but because I think it is not in the interests of the colony to do so. I have been very bold in speaking against retrenchment in the lowest grades of the Civil Service. The very lowest I knew anything of was my own salary. I was opposed to a reduction in that. I was a Civil servant for a few years, and my salary was very nearly 4d. a day. I consider that is as low as we can reasonably go. I had to suffer in the reduction some years ago at the rate of 10 per cent., which made me speak about it. I consider that to retrench at the lowest is wrong. I have always stated that, in the interests of the country and reason, no man who is receiving below 10s. a day ought to be interfered with. Sir, I have stated that I considered that whatever Ministry were in power they would reduce their own salaries, because I consider these excessive. Then, coming to the honorarium, I always stated, wherever I spoke, that I should be dead against any reduction in the honorarium. I state to-night, fearlessly, that I consider it is unjust to reduce the present amount of the honorarium. My impression is that the country does not demand it—that we are not expected to do so; or, at least, when I speak of the country I speak of that part of the country from which I come. I stated from the first to the last of the meetings which I addressed that if I were sent to Wellington I should speak against the reduction of the honorarium. I considered it should remain as it was, for various reasons. One reason was that it would enable men who were not in an independent position to be returned to the House; and I use the term "independent" as it has been used by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay; but I scarcely know where those gentlemen are to be found who are in an independent position. According to my idea of independence the rich are as dependent on the poor as the poor are on the rich. The poor need the rich and the rich need the poor. But I consider it is nothing but just that the honorarium should be fixed at such a rate that the working-classes, so to speak, should have an opportunity of being represented in this House by one of their own individual class. I believe there are a great number of men behind our forges and our merchants' counters, and in our stores, who

are capable of representing a constituency in this House. There are a great many reasons why I think this honorarium should not be reduced. In the first place, because there are great deductions to be taken from it. We have, first, to reduce our honorarium before we can get it at all. We have to take an amount from it when contesting the elections—we have to mortgage it, so to speak, before we have it in our possession. I was informed, when considering whether I should contest a seat with my opponent or not, what amount it would be likely to cost to enable me to do so, and I was not able to come to a proper decision on the subject. I therefore inquired of two friends of mine—honest and respectable merchants whom I met in Ashburton—and asked their opinion. These gentlemen said, “Well, you had better be careful.” Now, I said, “If you are friends of mine give me your opinion.” They replied, “Well, if you have got £200 or £300 to spare, try it.” Then I thought to myself, “Where is the honorarium? If I have to mortgage it at that rate I had better stand still and say no more.” However, I looked the matter over and over again, and I came to this decision: “If I am not too charitable it need not cost me anything like that amount.” But I have found that a good many gentlemen are very charitable once in three years, and it is that kind of cold charity which stings afterwards for a long time. Charity suffereth long, and I think honourable members very often, when offering for a constituency, are exceedingly charitable, though they do not commit themselves as regards the Corrupt Practices Act. However, I could not afford to be so charitable as that. Taking the line of retrenchment, which was the feeling of the district I come from, I considered I could manage the affair for £50, and I find it is quite reasonable to expect that £50 will be taken on mortgage before one enters the contest. Then, Sir, I know very well, from what I have experienced in Wellington already, if we follow the lines of retrenchment it will take another £50 before we leave Wellington. Therefore, if we have only £200 it is our duty to give our whole time if required to the service of the country, and we have a right to be honestly paid for our services. I hold, with the honourable member for St. Albans, that the district from which I come is not at all opposed to the amount of honorarium now paid, and I promised above everything else I would oppose the reduction of the honorarium, and I do not think that my district will complain of what I am stating, because I know very well that I have left behind me on the banks of the Rangitata a very superior gentleman to myself who was in favour of reducing the salary of the Governor right down to I do not know how far. But I was opposed to this, I still oppose it, and I shall oppose it to the bitter end.

Mr. WITHEY.—I intend to support the second reading of this Bill, but reserve to myself full liberty to vote for certain amendments when it goes into Committee. I cannot agree with those honourable members who have spoken of this measure as being contrary to any great

constitutional principle. I do not think it is anything of the kind. It is a mere question of detail—at what amount we shall fix our remuneration. When I came out in the late election it appeared to me perfectly clear that the first thing we had to do was to reduce the expenses of the country; and it seemed to me to follow, as a necessary consequence, that the men who voted for these reductions must themselves set the example by reducing the honorarium. While I thoroughly agree with the democratic principle of payment of members, I do not see why we should be paid a salary; but I think we should be paid a liberal sum for expenses. We are not accustomed to find the members of public bodies receiving salaries; but Chairmen are sometimes paid, because they are practically executive officers, and have to give a large amount of time to the work. The expenses out of pocket should, I think, be met liberally. I hold that wealth is no qualification for the Legislature; I am thoroughly democratic in that. I always objected at Home to the impossibility of any but a rich man being able to take a seat in the House of Commons. Until the last Corrupt Practices Act was passed in England it was an exceedingly costly matter to get into the House, and, seeing that the session lasted for six months in the expensive capital of England, it was hard for a man who could not afford to throw away some £500 or £1,000 a year to sit in the House. I hold that the honorarium should be no inducement to people to come to this House; and, on the other hand, it should be fixed at such an amount that it would prevent no citizen of the country, if his fellow-citizens thought he was a competent man, from sitting in the House. I hold that an honorarium of £210 is an inducement to a considerable number. I know it is a considerable inducement.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. WITHEY.—I am not alluding to any gentleman in this House; but it is quite clear that if a *bona fide* working-man has to come to this House £210 would probably be the best income he had ever had in his life in one year. I do not think we should look merely at the expenses a member is put to while he is fulfilling his duties in Wellington. Many men—working-men, certainly—would lose their pay during the time they were here, and yet their families must be sustained at home; therefore they should have a sufficient sum to enable them to pay their expenses here and meet their home expenses whilst they are foregoing their wages. I stated several times during the election that it appeared to me that if £1 a day were given during our attendance here, with expenses to and fro, and the payment limited to £100 however long the session lasted, so that there could be no inducement to prolong the session in order to get more pay, that should be sufficient payment. The honourable member for Ashburton coupled two things that appeared to me to be quite incongruous. He said if the number of members were to be reduced that would be sufficient. But he overlooked the fact that the reduction of the number of members is not to

take place until after this Parliament, whereas the reduction of the honorarium is proposed to take place at once. I should very much prefer a Bill being passed as the Government propose, rather than the plan of a 25-per-cent. reduction during this Parliament. I believe we want both forms of reduction to be carried out—namely, a reduction in the number of members, and a reduction in the amount of honorarium now and during the next Parliament, and for the future. It appears to me that the country has been entirely over-governed, and that there have been too many legislators and too many officials of all kinds; and there has been a very heavy expenditure annually as compared with the revenue of the colony. After this session, when we begin to go into other matters of legislation, I hope we shall see some means of decentralising, and reducing some of the functions of Parliament, so that a smaller number of members may be able to do the work. I have long seen in England that one great curse of the Parliament there is the fact that they endeavour to do work that ought to be done locally; and I believe, though not to the same extent, that a considerable reduction of the work done here, and an increase of the work done in the localities, would be a great improvement in the direction of economy. The work would be more efficiently done in the localities, because it would be done by people on the spot, who knew the requirements better; and, further than that, it would be an exceedingly useful training for membership in the House afterwards.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I should like to make a few remarks, because, although I perfectly agree that members during the present session should make a reduction in their salaries, yet I must object to this Bill, for I doubt very much whether we shall be doing right in passing it until we know whether the Bill which has just now been circulated—the Representation Bill—is likely to be passed or not. Of course the Premier tells us very plainly that it is to be passed, and, if he says that, I have no doubt whatever he will pass it. But I think, with the honourable members for Waimate and Ashburton, that, if a Bill should be introduced at all, it should be of a suspensory nature. It is all very well to think that the Bill we pass now will be a permanent measure. I think that when we meet next session we shall have to go into very much greater retrenchment, and I do not wish to see a Bill of this nature brought down every session. I should rather see the House pass a Bill reducing the honorarium during this Parliament 25 per cent., or, rather, if it could be so ordered, that the amount might be reduced for the present session, allowing the House to see what the future will be. Members seem to have the idea that they are elected to serve their constituents just while the session lasts, and that as soon as the session is over their duties are over. In my own case the most important part of my duties arises when the House has risen. I look upon myself as the servant of my constituency for the whole year if it requires my services,

and no individual has ever come to me without having his business fully attended to. It is not for the protection of members of this House that the honorarium is paid, but for the protection of the constituencies themselves. As far as I myself am concerned, it matters very little, because my expenses were offered to be paid if the honorarium were reduced or taken away altogether. Therefore I am not speaking in a selfish manner, but in the interests of the people, when I say that no reduction of this nature should be a permanent one. Members of this House, and especially town members, have a vast amount of work to do for their constituencies with every department of the Government during the recess. I shall find myself obliged to vote against this measure, because I think it should have simply provided for a reduction of 25 per cent. I am of the same opinion as the honourable member for Auckland Central, that, if the people wish to see men from all classes called to the Legislative Council, the members of that branch of the Legislature should receive the same amount of honorarium as the members of this House. As to the reduction of members of the Legislative Council, I think the Council should be allowed to come down gradually to a certain number, beyond which it should not be raised, except in cases of great emergency, when an increase of the number was considered advisable in the interests of the country. It has been pointed out that the honorarium paid to members of the Legislative Council should not be so much as that paid to members of this House, because they have to incur no election expenses. Still, if candidates abide strictly by the provisions of the Corrupt Practices Act, the election expenses need not be very great. A great many people are under the impression that members are paid whether they attend in their places or not; but I think they should be informed that a proportionate deduction is made for every day a member of either House is absent. If the Bill goes into Committee I shall feel myself bound to vote against it, for this reason: that I think it has not taken the shape it should take. It should apply only to the present session, and be in the shape of a reduction of 25 per cent. I have a very firm conviction that the retrenchment the Government meditate will only have the effect of landing the country in still greater difficulties. It is true that the Bill introduced by the Minister of Lands will probably help the Government. I have no doubt that it will be a temporary relief; but I see no chance of its being a permanent relief. The retrenchment which the Premier intends carrying out will simply drive the adult population from the country. Young men are now leaving the country without a sigh, and look to it without regret. Until measures are taken by which the lands of the country shall be made to produce the wealth that is hidden in their bosom, so long as large tracts of land adjoining our railways are not used and their owners compelled to pay a tax equal to the loss which the State suffers from their not being profitably occupied, there will

*Mr. Wihy*

be no prosperity whatever in this country. With regard to this Bill, looking at the sacrifice which is attempted to be imposed on the Governor, and the reductions which Ministers have made in their own salaries, I think we should go the length of taking 25 per cent. off the honorarium for the present year, and let us wait and see what state the country is in when we meet next year. I am of opinion that, far from being more prosperous, the state of the country will be much more depressed than it is at the present time.

Mr. BRUCE.—It is very difficult to speak at this stage of the debate on a question of this kind without travelling over ground already well trodden; but I wish to make a very few remarks before we come to a division. I just wish to say that I intend supporting the second reading of this Bill, not cordially like the honourable member for Ponsonby, but under pressure, that pressure being the somewhat lamentable financial position of this colony to-day. Now, Sir, I do not wish to be misunderstood in reference to this question. I hold very strongly that the present salary—you may call it as you like—that our annual salary is not a penny too much; and I speak now with a little experience. But, at the same time, I am inclined to believe that, under existing circumstances, it should be reduced to £150, not because of the saving it would effect, for that is only very small; but on account of the moral weight it would give us to retrench in other directions. There is a want of stern retrenchment; but I do not wish our action on this occasion should be taken as a guide or direction to those who follow us in the next Parliament. I think it would have been very much better had the Government arranged matters so as to make this measure apply to this Parliament only, leaving the original statute untouched. It is all very well to say that it can be altered; but we know what an outcry there would be if an attempt were made to raise the honorarium, once it is reduced. There would be a great outcry against its being raised on the part of those who know little about the expenses which members are put to. There is one provision in this measure to which I am very strongly opposed; and that is, that a member of the Upper House resident in Wellington has to give his services for nothing. Is there any liberality in such a proposal as that? Does it not preclude the possibility of poor men being called to that House? Certainly it does. Members have referred to the feelings of their constituents in this matter of the reduction of the honorarium. So far as I could analyse the feelings of the people of my district, it was in favour of a reduction being made in the honorarium; and, in reference to the Upper House, there was a feeling against any salary being paid to its members. I am strongly in favour of the members of the Upper House being paid a salary of £100 a year. Does any honourable member wish wealth alone to be represented there? Supposing, for argument's sake, that a poor man has sat in this House for fifteen or twenty years, and has

qualified himself for a seat in that Chamber, why should the country not have the benefit of his ability and experience? But there would be no chance of that poor man being able to accept a seat in that Chamber if he were to receive nothing for his services. I quite agree with the arguments of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay in reference to that matter, although I cannot agree with him in reference to the salaries paid to members of this Chamber. I do not wish to repeat arguments that have already been used, but I feel bound to say that my conviction is that reducing the rate of salary goes in the direction of narrowing the field of selection. I intend to vote for the second reading of this Bill, but I hold myself quite free to vote in Committee for striking out the condition in reference to members of the Upper House resident in Wellington.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I am in the same position as the honourable member for Rangitikei, who stated that honourable members rising now cannot possibly find anything to say on this subject that has not been said already. However, I wish to say this in explanation of the vote I shall give: that I shall support the second reading of this Bill, but I think its operation should be limited to the duration of the present Parliament, and the Parliament that will follow this should be left free to act on the subject as it may choose. If the country were in a flourishing condition I should oppose this Bill; but, having arrived at a condition when retrenchment is no longer a matter of choice but is a matter of necessity, I think it is our duty to show a good example ourselves if we expect the large number of Civil servants throughout the country to accept with a good grace the reductions we must inflict. That is my reason for supporting this Bill. One argument used to-night I cannot at all agree with. It was urged that the cost of election should be taken into account when considering the honorarium. That I disagree with entirely. In some electorates there may be, and sometimes are, four or five candidates, of whom only one can possibly be elected; and why should that one have his election expenses borne by the colony, while all the rest have to pay their own? But I think fair consideration should be given to the elected member on account of his having during the recess to go about his district to address the electors and learn their requirements in that way. I think the provision made by the Government, allowing members of this House £50 more than members of the Council on that account, is a very proper provision, and I hope it will be agreed to.

Mr. KERR.—During my election this matter of payment of members was brought up among other questions of retrenchment, and I was able to state that I quite agreed with retrenchment in this as in other expenses. I think, in the present state of the country, it is plainly our duty to take a little off our salaries, as well as to reduce other people; but I am going to vote for the amendment for this reason: that it will reduce our salaries a little

more than the Bill itself will, and that it will leave the question open to be decided again next year; and then, I have no doubt, the Government will come down and ask to take a little more off. During my election it was my opponent who brought up this question, and he said he would be willing to come to the House for £150 a year. I pointed out to the electors—and they agreed with me to a certain extent—that if they wanted to send a working-men's representative he would have to be paid, in order to enable him to come to this House, more than £150 a year—£200 a year would be none too much; for I know very well that my expenses are such that, though I am not an extravagant man in any way, the honorarium does not clear me—I do not save a shilling. However, I promised to vote for reduction, and I shall vote for the reduction proposed by the amendment; but I do not think honourable members could come here for less. I think it becomes every man to do what he can for the time being to help the country, just as any of us would do on his own estate. If a man has a farm, and times are bad, he has to cut his coat according to his cloth. I am not one of those who think the colony is going to remain dormant for many years; but I am in hope that the mining industry and other things are going to revive things in the country, and put the colony on its legs again, and that it will be able to pay a fair amount to the men who come to the House. What it is proposed to reduce it to now is not a decent working-man's wages; and I do not think that is what ought to be paid if the country were in a better position. But I think we should make the reduction now; and my opinion is that in another year or two the colony will be well able to afford to restore the old rate. I shall therefore vote for the amendment to reduce by 25 per cent., and I had intended to move an amendment of that sort myself if it had not been done by another honourable member.

Mr. MARCHANT.—There being little new left to say, I will very briefly explain why I shall vote for this Bill. It has been said that £210 is not too much for a member of this House; but certainly the people of the country have an idea that it is ample, and honourable members agree with them when they are before the electors. But I notice that as soon as they get here their ideas become larger. But one thing is very certain, that, as a matter of good example, we are bound to accept this proposal, and take less than honourable members have received before. Ministers have set a very good example in that way: in fact, in one instance I think they have carried the example too far. I think, for instance, that the Premier's salary should not have been reduced below £1,250; and I regret that, owing to the forms of the House, it is not possible to restore it to that now. I think honourable members are bound to accept the £150, as proposed by this Bill; and I think £100 is enough for members of the Council to receive. I grant that the cost of election ought not to be considered when fixing the honorarium; but we undoubtedly are entitled to take

*Mr. Kerr*

into consideration the expenses honourable members are put to during the recess in going about and interviewing their constituents and addressing them, and being put to charges in various unavoidable ways. The honourable member for Ponsonby suggested that £100 a year would be sufficient for a member of this House; but I disagree with that view, more especially as we are told that the number of members is to be reduced to seventy. That alteration will not, I suppose, materially affect such seats as that held by the honourable member for Ponsonby; but it will have the effect of largely increasing the area of some country electorates, and the expenses of members for such districts will be greatly increased. Some of the districts will be made very large indeed, and it will make an enormous difference to the members for those districts, and to think that a member should get less than £150 a year for representing such districts would be absurd. I think the honorarium should be sufficient to enable men of small means to come here, and if it were only £100 a year I have not the least hesitation in saying that in many districts it would be absolutely impossible to find men of small means prepared to contest the seats; or, if they should do so, and should be elected, it would be impossible for them to do their duty as representatives and at the same time to do their duty to themselves and their families. I approve of the proposal of £150 for the House and £100 for the Council, but in Committee I shall propose a provision which will be very unpopular among honourable members, I fear—that is, to abolish the payment for a second session in one year to those honourable members who were paid for the first session. That practice has cost the country this year, I believe, about £10,000, and I cannot see any justification at all for it. I intend to move in that, but I cannot say that I am very sanguine of the result. The honourable member for Rangitikei drew attention to another matter which, I think, will require attention in Committee, and that is, as to the proposed non-payment of members of the Council who live in Wellington. I think those gentlemen should be paid a small sum, say £50, although I am afraid that the forms of the House will not allow a provision to be made to that effect when the Bill is in Committee, as no increase beyond what is proposed in the Bill itself can be entertained. I think it is unfortunate that the Representation Bill was not disposed of before this measure was brought on, for I am bound to say that I think, if the number of members is reduced to seventy, £210 per member will not be a penny too much. If the reduction in number is made, I think the next election should take place with a clear understanding that the new Parliament might restore the honorarium to £210.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I only wish to say a few words to explain the vote I intend to give on this Bill. I intend to vote for the second reading, but with the intention of supporting any amendment making the Bill only apply to the present Parliament. I entirely agree with



the honourable member for Ashburton and the last speaker that it is unfortunate that we have not had the Representation Bill down first, so as to let us know what we are about; for I am also of opinion that if the numbers are reduced to seventy there can be no question of the honorarium or payment, or whatever it may be called, at the present time certainly being not one penny too much. I should rather say that it is not enough.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—So far as I am concerned, I am not pledged in any way as to how I shall vote on this Bill. I made no pledges either on one side or on the other; but, seeing that we have been sent here to carry out a severe system of retrenchment, and knowing the state of the country at the present time, I fail to see how we can support that retrenchment unless we commence with ourselves. Of course I do not for a moment mean to say that £210 is too much to pay members, but I do not see how we can cut down other people unless we cut down our own salaries. I know the feeling of the country is that we should cut down expenses all round, and when the estimates come before the House it is my intention to do so, so far as I can; but, while £210 is not too large a sum, I do not think it is necessary that the honorarium should be fixed so as to make it an inducement to people to seek for election to this House who are not in a position to come here, who would be dependent entirely upon the honorarium. I think that gentlemen who come here should have something more than the honorarium. I know I heard stories during the late elections to this effect: that candidates not only canvassed themselves but sent round their wives and daughters, one argument used to induce persons to vote for them being that unless the candidate gained his election his living would be gone. I do not think that is the right sort of thing to be heard of in connection with our elections. At the same time, I should not cut down the sum paid to such an extent that poor men would be prevented from coming here. Everybody is not wealthy. So far as the Bill before the House goes, I may say that, though there are certain clauses in it which I do not agree with, yet, seeing the state the country is in, I shall support the second reading.

Mr. MILLS.—I think everything has been said that can be said on this Bill, both for and against, and I do not suppose that anything that has been said, or anything that can be said, will alter a single vote, for, no doubt, every honourable member has made up his mind how he will vote, having expressed himself one way or the other during the late election. As far as my experience goes, this question of payment of members formed a very prominent feature in nearly all the elections. I think, indeed, that it was a question to which people gave a great deal of attention, to the exclusion of other and perhaps more important subjects. I intend, I need not say, to support the second reading of this Bill, because I have several times expressed my opinion that the honorarium should be reduced, and also the number

of members. And here I wish to say that the Premier, in his reply to observations made by one honourable gentleman, said he would carry the Bill for reducing the number of members, if possible. I did not like the words "if possible," for it seemed to me to imply that the Premier was not sincere in his desire to reduce the number, or, at any rate, that he was not as anxious about it as some of us, who wish to see that measure carried, would like.

Major ATKINSON.—I should like to remove any misapprehension of that sort from the honourable gentleman's mind. I look upon that measure as most important; and the honourable gentleman may interpret my remarks without the "if possible."

Mr. MILLS.—I am glad to have that explanation from the Premier. I and a great many other honourable members look upon the proposal for a reduction of the number of members as a most important measure, because not only will it cause a direct saving in the cost of this House, not only is it demanded by the people, but it will be impossible, in my opinion, to bring about true economy in the government of the country until such a measure as this is carried through. I hope, therefore, that the Premier and those associated with him will press that Bill as determinedly as they did the Land Bill last night. With regard to the remark of the honourable member for Ashburton about the members of the Young New Zealand party not getting seats if there were fewer members in the House, I can only say that I have no doubt that the members of the Young New Zealand party will be as well able to take care of themselves as many of the older members of the House. This reduction of the numbers will necessarily lead to a more complete system of local government, and in the local bodies the young men will come out and show what they are fit for, and so qualify themselves for the higher position of a member of this House. I shall support the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—Sir, this is a matter on which a great deal can be said on both sides, and I am not prepared to agree with the last speaker that nothing more can be said for and against the Bill. I have listened to pretty well all the speakers, and I must say that I think the remarks made by the honourable member for Rangitikei are most in accord with my opinions on the subject. I am one of those who think that the sum now paid to honourable members is not one penny too much for the services rendered; but, at the same time, I recognise the necessity of honourable members submitting to some sacrifice at a time when we are calling on others to make a sacrifice owing to the necessities of the finances of the colony. I do not agree with those honourable members who think that this measure should have been kept back until the Representation Bill was dealt with; because, whatever may be done with regard to this Bill, I shall vote for that all the same. At the same time, I think we must carefully deal with this

question, for there is no doubt that as we reduce the honorarium so, to some extent, do we limit the choice of the electors, and I think that carrying this Bill will tend in that direction. I do not agree with the honourable member for Taranaki when he says that he will be inclined to move in the direction of not paying members for a second session. If that were carried it would still further, in a very marked degree, limit the choice of the electors. No doubt it is an evil to have two sessions in one year: still, I do not think it is wise to go so far as the honourable gentleman suggests. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, though there are some matters in it which I do not like, and hope to see amended in Committee.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—The honourable member for Port Chalmers, when speaking just now, said that everything that could be said on this Bill had been said. To show him that he was quite wrong I will mention one clause which has never been mentioned, and that is the clause which provides that members resident in Wellington shall have an increase of honorarium instead of a decrease. Under the present Act members who live within three miles of Wellington receive £140 per annum; but under the Bill before us they are to receive £150, a clear gain to them of £10. I think it is most unfair that, at a time when every one else is to make sacrifices, those who are fortunate enough to reside in Wellington are to have an increase in pay. I would ask what loss it is to those who reside in Wellington to attend Parliament. None. Most of them follow their ordinary avocations during the day-time, never showing up during the afternoon; and in the evening, having no business to do, they come here. That has been the rule, and will be, I presume. Therefore that they should have an increase of pay seems to me most extraordinary, and I do not wonder, taking that into consideration, that not one of the Wellington members has spoken upon this Bill. Now, it has been an object with members of this House for years to get this honorarium settled and fixed by Act. That has been the object, the anxiety, and the wish of honourable members and of Ministers for years. It was always considered very unseemly that honourable members should wrangle here over their own payment. We know that on various occasions amendments have been moved on the sum set down on the estimates, and there are records of instances where those who voted for the reduction took care, first of all, to see how many would be on that side, and when they saw they were safe they voted on that side. We are also told that the people in the country are very largely in favour of such reduction. Now, there is an instance on record where a gentleman, who was and is a member of this House, did not take the honorarium, but left it behind; and what was his reward? He was not returned again. That was a clear proof of how those he represented appreciated his action. I presume they thought he ought to have been the best judge of the value of his

services, and that, if they were worth so little, he ought not to be re-elected; and they acted accordingly. Many honourable gentlemen said that they had pledged themselves to their constituents to support the reduction of the honorarium. I hold that the people of New Zealand would accept, mostly, what is argued out to them. In my constituency I had two opponents, and both of them expressed themselves in favour of the reduction of the honorarium to £150, and one, at the last pinch, said he would go for £100. I said to my constituents, "Gentlemen, if I were a rich man, I should take the honorarium and give it away in charity, because I would not be a party to restricting your choice, and I should be taking away from your privileges if I did not accept the honorarium; but, seeing that I am not a rich man, I shall take the honorarium and stick to it;" and they applauded me. The gentlemen who were opposed to me also were applauded, because at that time my constituents had not heard my explanation. The people had been simply told that it was a grand thing, and would reduce the expenditure of the country; but I told them it would be a great injustice to themselves and to the country, and they saw that my explanation was the best. The honourable member for New Plymouth made a remark that I take very great exception to. He said that before we reduce others to penury we should reduce ourselves. I should be very sorry to be a party to reducing others to such an extent as he has described. I say that we should be fair to all men. If we require a man we should pay for his services. The labourer is worthy of his hire, and I should be in favour of paying it. But it is quite true that many people are employed by the colony and receive salaries far in excess of what they ought to have; but, on the other hand, I believe that, if we are to be paid for our services, we are not overpaid, and never have been. It is a very different thing reducing those who are overpaid to legitimate payment, and taking something off our salary and reducing us below legitimate payment. My honourable friend the member for Ponsonby said we had no right to reduce others unless we reduced ourselves; but I maintain that we have been paid too little for our services. It is all very well to say that it is for three months of the year; but my experience for several years has been that it is always four months. Then, it is said that a man can live for so much a week; but, if a man lives here, surely his wife and family must not be left unprovided for! Then, we are told that if a man is away so long his wages come to so much for the rest of the year, when he can be following his ordinary avocation; but it is forgotten that, if a man leaves employment to attend Parliament in Wellington, when he wants to go back he probably finds some one else in his place, and it may be a considerable time before he can find employment again. The same thing happens with tradesmen: business connections are broken during absence, and loss ensues. Then, the honourable member for Ponsonby went on to say that the ability

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displayed by former Houses before members were paid was as great as the ability displayed now. Sir, the ability may have been as great; but in what direction has that ability been displayed? I may tell him that the ability has been displayed to favour the richer classes of the community.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Who says "No"? The former Houses gave those long leases in Canterbury and Otago. They removed from the Public Works Act that portion which would have made those districts pay a fair share towards the cost of the public works. It was the former Houses that increased largely the vote for higher education. And I ask honourable gentlemen to look at the division-lists for several years when the education vote was before us. And who sold the Piako Swamp?—although I am afraid it was not a very good speculation to those who bought it. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay made use of the same arguments as the honourable member for Ponsonby used, which arguments I have already answered. Some maintain that members of the other House ought to receive no payment at all, while others think that they should receive the same payment as members of this House. I agree with neither opinion. I think that they ought to be paid, but not to the same extent as members of this House, because the duties that devolve upon them are very much less than the duties that devolve upon members of this House. A member of the Legislative Council simply attends the session if it suits him, and if he has anything that will pay him better he does not come; but a member of this House must come to represent the people by whom he has been elected. Then, members of this House have their time continually encroached upon by their constituents, and especially is that the case with those who represent town constituencies. There is hardly a week in which some of my constituents do not come to me with grievances, and some people have no idea how long a man takes to explain a grievance. Not long before I came to Wellington one of my constituents came to me to tell me of a grievance that was eighteen months old, and I listened to him patiently for three-quarters of an hour, though I could have explained the case in ten minutes; and two or three days after that he came about it again. I think it is reasonable that members of the Legislative Council should be paid something less than members of the House of Representatives. Some say that the members of the Legislative Council should not be paid at all; but that presupposes that all the members of the Legislative Council should be wealthy men, and there is no reason that I can see why a man who has earned his bread by the sweat of his brow should not be a member of the Legislative Council. If that proposal were carried into law it would debar such a man from holding a seat there, and I think everybody will see at once that that would be unfair. We have been told by several honourable members that as good men can be got

under the reduced honorarium as can be got now. It is quite possible the men might be as good, but I am not certain that we could get men to represent as acceptably the mass of the people. I hold that no man can represent a class whose interests are not identical with his own interests. I hold that it is impossible for a man who has been reared in the lap of luxury to represent the views of the working-classes. His surroundings have been so different and his tastes are so different that he has, in fact, nothing in common with them; and, even with the greatest desire to represent them fairly, I say he could not do so. A very good instance of that was supplied by the Premier when he brought forward his compulsory-insurance scheme. The honourable gentleman said on that occasion that for those people who had daughters and could afford to keep them at home, but could not afford to pay 1s. a month for them, he had no compassion; let them send the girls to service. That shows how little he understood of the feelings and requirements of the humbler classes. Supposing a woman has a daughter who has grown up to the age when the honourable gentleman wanted her to pay her quota to the insurance fund, it might well be that, though the mother was unable to pay that, she requires her help, and could not turn her out to service. The honourable gentleman forgets that the mother has perhaps reared a large family, that she is probably weak and, becoming aged, requires the help of her daughter. I have adduced that instance to show that persons who do not really understand the wants of the humbler classes cannot properly represent them, and, in proof of that, I have shown that the Premier, who does not belong to that class, has misunderstood their requirements. I would point out now, as has already been pointed out by the honourable member for Parnell, that members of this House are not in the same position as people outside: that is to say, the avenues to earning a livelihood are greatly reduced in the case of members of this House. The money which is earned by the working-classes is largely got from money expended by the Government, but members of this House are precluded by the Disqualification Act from earning any of that money. Supposing a contract for manufacturing an article or for forming a piece of road is to let, a member of this House cannot take that contract, although it might be part of his usual business. I have known persons who have had to give up contracts for that reason, and I also know of one person who resigned his seat because he thought he was slightly infringing on the Act. It has been said that the Representation Bill ought to have been placed before us before we were called upon to vote on this Bill; but I do not know that that matters very much so far as I am concerned, because I told my constituents that I would vote against both these Bills. As has been pointed out by other honourable members, the reduction of the number of members of this House would greatly increase the work thrown on members. The honourable member for St. Albans asked why

old members should be fined only £5 and new members £60. What we receive is not a payment of members, but honorarium for the duties we perform during the session, and it follows naturally that, if we perform those twice during the year through there being two Parliaments, we are entitled to two honoraria; and I ask, where is the fairness to those who have been here in a previous session that they should only get half for the second session? They have to perform the same duties as the new members, and therefore they are entitled to the same pay. If the two sessions a year were in the same Parliament, it might be just enough. I shall vote against this Bill, as I told my constituents I would do so.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—I consider this Bill is very inconsistent. I do not disapprove of the Bill in one sense; but I think it ought to be put on the same footing as the Governor's Salary and Allowances Bill: that is to say, it should apply to members coming after us, and should be reserved for the Royal assent. I consider this is obtaining members under false pretences. We have stood our elections, and, now we come here, we are to have our payment reduced from two hundred guineas to £100. I quite recognise the necessity for retrenchment, but I think the honourable gentlemen on the Government benches have gone too far in the reductions they have made in their own salaries. I dare say the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government will live to rue the day he did it. It is not this reduction of the payment of members—I like to call a spade a spade, and payment, and not "honorarium," is the proper name for it—that will bring this country into a state of prosperity. We are told, in the first place, that the Premier point-blank refuses to bring down a revision of the tariff; and, in the next place, he tells us that we are to vote the estimates *en bloc*, and he refuses to let us study them in detail, or to show where the reductions are to be made. As I say, I think the honourable gentleman is very quixotic in reducing his own salary from £1,750 to £1,000, and that he is wrong in reducing the payment of members from two hundred guineas to £100; and I ask him now whether he will bring down his estimates with a reduction of 25 per cent. on all salaries over £150. If he does that, I am sure the House will not object to it, and it will receive the approbation of the whole country. But I am convinced that when we come to revise the estimates we shall find very few salaries touched to any great extent. Had the honourable gentleman brought down a proposal for a revision of the tariff, and for introducing Protection, and for altering the incidence of taxation and putting the saddle on the right horse, there would have been no necessity whatever for this drastic measure of retrenchment that he proposes on his own salary and on that of members of this House. I contend that if the honourable gentleman had brought down measures of taxation which the country is crying out for—that is to say, if he had made property pay its fair share of taxation—there would have been no necessity for the cry of retrench-

Mr. Levestam

ment which has been raised. But we find that the great property-holders and the great moneyed institutions are those that get off scot-free under the proposals of the honourable gentleman; and we are asked to retrench ourselves, and Ministers have to reduce their own salaries, in order that those people may get off. The honourable member for Selwyn, I think, in speaking the other day, said that many people in New Zealand have obtained wealth through thrift and industry. I am proud to think that there are so many in the country who have done that; but the greater proportion of the wealthy classes in New Zealand have not obtained their wealth in that way. It has been gained by fortuitous circumstances, and by the peculiar condition of things introduced by the Immigration and Public Works Act. And, further, I may say that many have accumulated wealth by that process which has been known in Canterbury as gridironing. It is upon those persons that the burden should be placed. We saw a very interesting return laid on the table the other evening of absentees, and the amount of personal and real estate held by them in New Zealand, which it was shown came to between \$8,000,000 and \$9,000,000. I say, if the Premier, who has a greater knowledge of the finances of the colony than any other man in this House, inasmuch as he can double figures and transpose them in different directions better than any man I know, had taken a far-seeing view of the necessities of the colony, and had taken the incidence of taxation off the poorer classes and placed it on the shoulders of the richer classes, there would have been no necessity to ask that we should reduce the payment to members, and Ministers' salaries to the very paltry sum their honourable gentlemen are now asking for those services. I contend that the payment of members is one of the most vital principles of a democratic community. I have the honour to represent the largest, the wealthiest, and the most intelligent constituency in New Zealand. I stand here and say, without fear of contradiction, that I represent the largest, wealthiest, and most intelligent constituency in New Zealand. I had the honour of being returned unopposed. When I went before my constituents to seek their suffrages I told them that £210 was altogether too small, and that the honorarium should be £300 a year; and they quite agreed with me. I think that the colony at large, if it were polled to-morrow, would be only too glad, if they could only get men who would stick to their election-pledges, and act consistently, to give them £300. What do we find? We find honourable members on the platform make certain pledges. They say they will go in for reducing taxation on the working-classes, and will put it on the shoulders of those who are best able to pay it. We find that when members come into this House they are "had," and the result is, they go quite contrary to their election-pledges. If honourable members would only stick to the pledges they make on the hustings their services would be cheap at £300 a year. I trust I have made myself particularly

well understood, that I am going to vote against the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. WARD.—I do not desire to detain the House unnecessarily at this late hour, but I am anxious to say a word or two upon this measure. When I first read the clauses of this Bill I was much pleased to believe that the pledges which I had given to my constituents were about to be consummated if this Bill became law; but, upon looking into the measure, I regret to say I am somewhat disappointed; and, until I hear one or two explanations upon certain points I am now about to bring under the notice of the House, I shall feel it incumbent upon me to vote against the Bill and to support the amendment. I will endeavour to explain to the House why. What I take exception to, in the first instance, is this: The members who had the honour of representing Wellington under the present Act received £140 for a single session, and, if that Act were to continue in force now, they would receive for this, it being a second session, £70. Under this Bill, instead of receiving £70, I find that they are to receive £100, or £30 more than they would have received under the existing Act. I do not think that is right. Moreover, apart altogether from this session, those honourable gentlemen in future undoubtedly will receive £10 more per session than they did formerly. That, I also say, is wrong, and is against the spirit and intention of a proper reduction. Then, again, the old members of the House are very much better off under the proposed alterations than the new members. Half the honorarium at £210 is £105; and, so far as I can see, the new members will suffer to the extent of £60. I, for one, am quite prepared to sacrifice £60 for the whole of this Parliament, but I do think the old members should bear a fair proportion of the reduction as well as the new members. I am unable to understand why the Bill did not provide that the honorarium was to be £150 in one sum, instead of dividing it and calling honorarium £100 and expenses £50. If that were the case, there could be no doubt about it that the older members would receive £75 for this session, being half honorarium. It looks as though the amounts were divided for the specific purpose of saving the old members. If the Bill were in that direction I would give it my hearty support, because, as a matter of fact, I stated, when contesting my election, that I believed £150 was quite sufficient until the circumstances of the colony became more prosperous, for members of this House to be paid more; but I entirely disagree with the Bill as it is now, because it seems to me that the old members should receive £75 for this session and the new members £150; and I cannot get away from the fact that the old members are to be benefited to the extent of £25 this session at the expense of the new members. It may not be uninteresting to know what the total reductions will be as the Bill stands at present. There are sixty old members at £105, £6,300; thirty-three new members at £210, £6,930; total, £13,230, less the four Wellington members,

£140. Under the new Bill there will be sixty old members at £100, £6,000; thirty-three new members at £150, £4,950: that is, £10,950 under the new Bill, as against £13,090 under the existing Act. The total reductions this session only amount to some £2,000. That does not meet the ideas of the part of the colony from which I come. The directions in which I think alterations should be made may be Committee objections; but, in the meantime, I think the safest course to pursue is to vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara, which reduces the new members to £150, and also treats the old members on the same basis, and reduces their honorarium this session, which means a further saving to the colony of £1,500; while the Bill now before us does not effect any saving further than that made by taking £5 each off the old members.

Mr. TAIWHANGA.—I have no faith in this retrenchment. When I was here in 1876 I heard the cry for retrenchment; but what I saw in the papers here was all nonsense. I think that any man who is a good workman should receive good pay. I may point out that the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court receives £1,000, and the Maori assessor receives only £20. The minor Judges get £600, and the poor assessor only gets £1 a day while the Court sits. It is just the same with all other Native affairs. When I was in Auckland at the time of the elections they formed what they called a Political Reform Association. I was a member of that association, and in our debates I used to tell them it was useless for them to cry out for retrenchment of the honorarium and Ministers' salaries, because I said, If Ministers and members were worth it, why should not they have it? If they are not worth it, let the people turn them out. As to the honourable gentlemen in favour of the Bill, I have no faith in what they say. I may say I have three Bills before the House, and it seems to me there is no hope for them. Not one of them has passed its second reading. The mouths of some honourable members refuse the money, but their hearts want it and more. The Premier and the Native Minister and the other members of the Government ought to have good salaries, because they are worth them. Let them have fair and proper salaries. If they are not worth it, what are they there for? They will put other people in in order to carry out the public works. The other night we lost nearly £1,000. The public does not know that. I do not wish to detain the House any longer, but I will say a few words about the other House. I think we cannot do without an Upper House. I heard some honourable members were trying to do away with the Upper House. In England there are a House of Lords and a House of Commons; in New Zealand there are a Legislative Council and a House of Representatives. If they told me they were going to do away with the House of Lords in England I would say, Do away with the Legislative Council here. But I think both Houses work for the country equally;

they both make Bills for the good of the country, and I do not think the Upper House should be cut down.

Mr. JONES.—I wish to say in a few words that I intend to fulfil my election-pledges and to vote for the second reading of this Bill. During the course of the late election there was a universal opinion throughout the country, including my district, that great retrenchments ought to be effected, and that that had become inevitable owing to the extravagant scale of expenditure that had been followed in this country for a long time past, and that we should have to come down to something like an expenditure commensurate with our revenue. The district was of opinion that these retrenchments should be radical, and, among many things, they were strongly of opinion that the honorarium of members should share in the retrenchment. Now, for my part, I must say that I very strongly supported the views of my constituents, and certainly urged them on in their demands for these retrenchments, because I felt very much of this opinion: that, unless the country was very clear and decided in expressing its views on retrenchment, the retrenchment proposals which came before the House would fall very far short of the country's requirements; and I felt satisfied, and unexpectedly satisfied, at the views which the Government have taken in reference to retrenchment generally. They certainly have exceeded my expectations in the extent of their retrenchment proposals. I say they have a most difficult task in hand, which will try all their powers of administration to carry out successfully, and, so far as lies in my power, I shall be willing to assist them in carrying out this very difficult task. But I am certainly of opinion that the retrenchments that are about to take place are not going to enrich the country; they are not going to restore the prosperity of the country as some people seem to imagine. They will inflict a great deal of hardship on the people, and it will take all the tact and discretion and judgment of the Government to carry it out in such a way as will avoid the infliction of tremendous hardship and loss to a great many people. With regard to the business immediately before the House, if it had not been for the very peculiar and disadvantageous position of the colony I, for one, should not have been willing to consent to a reduction in the honorarium of members, because I think, if the country were in an ordinary condition, the sum is only sufficient to meet the requirements of the case. But for the sake of example it is now necessary to make a considerable reduction. I see that Ministers have taken what to my mind is a most extraordinary step in the way of setting an example. I cannot help thinking that the reduction in the salaries of Ministers is something quite unprecedented, and shows a wonderful self-abnegation on their part, especially in the case of the Premier, whose salary, I think, should be fixed at not less than £1,500, because I think a man in his position is fairly entitled to that amount. I may say I do not

*Mr. Tauwhanga*

think we are right in making this Bill apply to all time. I think the most we ought to do is to apply it to the present Parliament. I trust that the colony will soon improve its position and recover from the depression we are now suffering from. I gave a pledge to my constituency that I would support all these reductions, and therefore I consider I am only doing my duty in voting for the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I cannot agree with the last speaker in asserting that the Ministry have made any sacrifice at all; because my contention is this: that the people in this colony have been living too extravagantly for some time past, and the salaries have been altogether too high. The retrenchment should not only apply to Ministers, but to all alike; so that there is no more being sacrificed by Ministers than we have a right to expect from them. And I trust the Ministers will not be over-flattered by the praise in that direction, because I have heard it reported that some of the Ministers are rather sorry they have made this extraordinary reduction, and they think that £1,000 is little enough now. If it was simply a leap in the dark, or a bid for popularity, it is not right for Ministers to regret the action they have taken. But, as far as the question under discussion is concerned, I have no objection to the £150, but I cannot see why it should be divided. Moreover, I am not prepared to pledge those who may come after me. I believe in the payment of members; and when I hear honourable members get up and denounce the system, and say that when honourable members got paid less the government of the country was carried on better, we know that the profits made by those gentlemen in those days were something enormous. What does it matter to a gentleman coming to this House and giving his services for two or three months if by influencing the legislation of the country he can, either directly or indirectly through his friends, mop up thousands of pounds' worth of the people's lands? I think it is very unfair of gentlemen of that stamp to denounce and protest against the payment of members, and I must say I trust we shall hear no more about it, because those gentlemen who protest so much are simply a sham. What do the returns show that were laid on the table last session? That one of the richest men in the colony drew £40 or £50 because he was sick for a few days. That is a thing I would never do.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Name.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I have no right to name. If the honourable member will look into the document he can ascertain the name for himself. My contention is this: that the gentlemen who protest so much about the great deficiency, when they charge in that way for services not absolutely rendered, do that which is wrong. If they had left that sum in the Exchequer it could have been better spent in employing a few men. You will find these gentlemen taking the very last penny they are entitled to, and sometimes more; and I do

hope that in the future we shall not have so much protesting, but a little more consideration in dealing with these matters. Now, with reference to the number of members, I voted last session in the direction of reducing the number; but I say, if we are going to have a reduction, the Provincial District of Canterbury will have to have a sharper man on the Commission than we had in the past. What was the result of this last Commission? We were deprived of a member and a half simply through putting on a man whom they call non-political—a man with no political feelings. Were the other two gentlemen of non-political feelings? No. That is where we were victimised by honourable gentlemen who preached about members being non-political and unbiassed.

Mr. TAIPUA.—Mr. Speaker, I am not going to give a silent vote on this matter. I should like to say that I was not sent here by my constituents to plead for a sum of money for myself. Rather was I sent here to do what I could for the benefit of the Natives and their land. Now, however, a Bill has been brought before this House affecting the honorarium of honourable members, I have no objection to urge against this Bill, none whatever. I am all the more indifferent on account of the charges that are made by the Native people against members who come to this House. They say they are attracted here sometimes in the hope of getting their honorarium, and that they come here for that purpose. The present Government have stated very forcibly, at the commencement of the session, that there must be rigid retrenchment, general retrenchment for the sake of the colony. This is a practical test of the promises made by the Government, a step in the direction of retrenchment. I desire to express my gratification to the Government for, in the first place, having proposed such a large reduction in their own salaries; secondly, their promise to retrench generally; and, thirdly, the proposed reduction of the honorarium. The Government do not intend to spare any one. Honourable gentlemen object to the reduction on the plea that it will prevent poor men from coming to this House. I do not think this House should be made the resort for rich men or for poor men. I think this House should be composed of members who should be selected on account of their wisdom rather than on account of any other qualifications. Since I have been in this House I have heard that honourable members have obtained their seats by the liberal expenditure of money. I do not think that this means should be used in selecting members for this House; but members should be selected on account of their knowledge and other qualifications. The amount of the honorarium is a matter of perfect indifference to me. The Government propose to retrench, and I will support them in their proposals. The question of the honorarium is a very little matter to me. I am far more anxious that good laws should be passed for the Natives and their lands. I have been personally informed that it is the intention of the Government to reduce the number of Na-

tive members. Now, that is a perfectly different matter, and I regret it very much. I do not think this proposal is a wise one. I think there is not one too many of us here to carry out the necessary legislation. This is not carrying out the spirit of the Premier's speech when he said there should be one law for both races. If one Native member is taken away from this House it would be better to do away with the special Maori representation altogether. It will be too one-sided altogether. If there are only three Maori members they would be utterly lost among so many European members. I also regret that there are so few Maori members, because I feel they have no chance in carrying out the legislation they consider necessary. If good laws are passed for the Maori people I shall not at all regret if the whole of the honorarium be taken away. I shall not support the proposition for reducing the number of Maori members.

Mr. BLAKE.—I pledged myself to vote for a reduction of the honorarium to £150 per session, but two or three days ago I wrote out an amendment which I intended to propose, but I am quite sure it would be useless to put it to the House, because I feel tolerably sure that my amendment would not be carried, as it goes very much further than the one proposed by the honourable member for Kumara. Therefore I must put it by as a bad job. The amendment I intended to propose was simply that the members of Parliament should, with regard to these three sessions, have nothing, and I intended that through hearing a great number of gentlemen express their disinterestedness round this House. They were flaunting their patriotism to me, and asking me to make things as cheap as possible for the good of the country. As I said before, I know it would not be carried, because so many honourable members have objected to vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara. I do not see that there is any virtue in reducing it to £150. They are neither backing up what they say, nor reducing the honorarium as low as they should under the necessities that press upon us, and I think that many honourable gentlemen who have been speaking to-night have been speaking simply for talking's sake. I believe in a member like the honourable member for Nelson, who says he does not intend to go in for anything less than two hundred guineas. Those are his opinions, and he sticks to them, and therefore I respect him for his opinions. But I have an opinion that we ought to serve for less; but, then, it is useless for me to propose it, seeing that so many will not vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara: so I think I shall go with the majority this time, because in doing so I shall be keeping my election-pledges to the letter, and shall vote for the reduction to £150 per session. I am rather sorry I had no show of carrying my amendment. If the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara is lost I shall be very glad to see my own carried, and I am just in the position to move it, because I am one of the most impecunious members in the House.

Dr. NEWMAN.—As to the present rate of pay of members, I would rather see a Bill entitled "Payment of members." It is a better and more honest title. I think the present rate of pay is about what the country should afford; but, as we are going to make reductions all round, it would be preposterous and indecent to continue the same rate to members of this House while everybody in the country will suffer very largely. As to this oversight on the part of the Government with regard to the Wellington members, nobody would suppose that the honourable member for Te Aro, the honourable member for Wellington South and Suburbs, and myself would agree to accept an increase because of an oversight on the part of the Government. These little taunts are all very absurd, that the Government could have any purpose whatever in giving us £30 more, or that we should accept it for the mere sake of the money. I think the Bill is incomplete, because, while sixty members of this House are to suffer a reduction of £5 only, there are thirty-five who will lose £60 each.

Major ATKINSON.—They do not lose anything; they were elected on the understanding that the honorarium would be reduced.

Dr. NEWMAN.—They were under no such pledge. They were under a pledge to get what retrenchment they could. It is clear that the thirty-five new members are going to lose £60 and that the sixty old members are going to lose a five-pound note apiece. That is such an absurd anomaly that I am quite sure it will be altered in Committee. The whole of the old members ought to suffer a reduction equivalent to £60, the same as the new members. This Bill is very useful, because it will apply to other sessions. I think the Government should bring in clauses showing an equality of sacrifice by every member, and should not show favouritism to some of them. I think the arrangement for the other Chamber is, in many ways, a right one. When gentlemen are nominated to the Legislative Council they get away from the electors for the rest of their lives and get an uncommonly easy billet. But the work performed by members of this House is of a very different character. In my own case I find that scarcely a day out of the three hundred and sixty-five goes by, even a Sunday, without doing some work in my representative capacity. Therefore I think it is right that a certain extra allowance should be made to members of this House. I quite agree with an honourable gentleman who has said to-night that the number of double sessions is altogether preposterous; and, if I had my way, I would refuse a dissolution at any time, but let the three-years Parliament run its course; and, if the members of the House could not agree as to who should be Ministers, let them fight it out amongst themselves until one side wins. I think these dissolutions and double sessions put the country to an utterly useless and unnecessary expense. It has now been done time after time, and many thousands of pounds are spent merely to give half a dozen honourable gentlemen who sit on

those benches a few weeks or months more of office. They always appeal to the country, thinking Parliament is wrong in condemning them, and they always come back "slated." In fact, at each dissolution we pay some £30,000 merely to let a few defeated Ministers cling to office a little longer.

Mr. PARATA.—I think it is a mistake to reduce the honorarium. There is no use in honourable members concealing their thoughts. It is best for us to say out what we think. I do not find fault with those honourable gentlemen who pledged themselves to the electors to vote for reduction. I respect them for being consistent and keeping to their pledges. As to myself, I am quite free to vote either way, because I gave no pledge. I was sent here to do the best I could for the Native people, and also to support such measures as I thought were for the benefit of the Europeans. As to the statement that honourable gentlemen in this House receive a very large amount from the funds of the colony, I do not begrudge the amount paid in honoraria, because I think they are well entitled to what remuneration they get for coming here to do the best they can for the colony. I think all honourable members should be in the same category, no matter whether they are rich or poor. Honourable gentlemen are selected by their constituents and sent here on account of their qualifications to fill the office. I think that very large sums of public money are wasted in other ways in a far more objectionable manner than the honorarium. As an instance, there was a large sum paid recently to the Commissioners who defined the electoral districts, and now there is a Bill before the House to undo all that those Commissioners did—the Bill to reduce the number of members—and that will entail further cost. Another way in which public money is wasted is in making unprofitable railways, which can give no return whatever for the outlay. Much of the money that has been spent on making railways and roads might just as well have been thrown into the sea, for all the use it is. It is quite unjust to say that payment of members puts a burden on the colony. Honourable gentlemen sent here are fully entitled to the honorarium they receive, because a great many calls are made on them, and their services are required from one year's end to the other; they constantly have to go over their districts to visit their constituents, and are put to great expense. I am sure honourable members are not attracted here for the sake of the honorarium they get; they come here for the good of their constituents. As for the proposal to reduce the pay of Ministers, the Premier is to receive £1,000 a year and travelling and other allowances, and the other Ministers £800 each and travelling and other allowances, which will bring the total up to about £1,400 each; and I am afraid that the result will be very little saving under that head, as the allowances will make it up to as much as Ministers are entitled to draw now. I am afraid there will be very little real saving effected by reducing Ministers' salaries, as they

*Mr. Blake*



will not remain in Wellington all the time, but will travel round the colony and get a large amount as travelling-allowance. I think it is quite right that they should travel over the country and make themselves acquainted with the requirements of the people. It is far more satisfactory that Ministers themselves should go and see what is required than to trust to official communications, but I do not think there will be any real saving on account of the reduction of their salaries. I do not approve of the proposal to reduce the amount of honorarium paid to members of the Legislative Council. I think those honourable gentlemen should receive the same amount as we receive, as they have the welfare of the colony at heart as much as we have. These are the reasons why I oppose any reduction in the honorarium. My own opinion is that there should be no reduction, and that old and new members should be treated alike, because they are all on the same footing. With regard to what has been said by the honourable member for the Western Maori District as to the number of Maori members, when that measure comes before the House I will say what I think about it.

The House divided on the question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

#### AYES, 56.

Allen	Izard	Perceval
Anderson	Jackson	Rhodes
Atkinson	Jones	Richardson, E.
Beetham	Joyce	Russell
Blake	Lance	Seymour
Bruce	Lawry	Smith
Buchanan	Macarthur	Steward, W. J.
Cadman	Marchant	Stewart, W. D.
Carroll	McGregor	Taipua
Cowan	Mackenzie, J.	Taiwhanga
Dodson	Mitchelson	Tanner
Feldwick	Moat	Taylor
Fraser	Monk	Thompson, R.
Fulton	Newman	Whyte
Goldie	O'Callaghan	Wilson
Graham	O'Conor	Withy.
Hall	Ormond	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hamlin	Peacock	Mills
Hobbs	Pearson	Thompson, T.

#### NOES, 14.

Buxton	Guinness	Reeves, W. P.
Duncan	Kerr	Walker.
Fish	Levestam	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fitchett	Mackenzie, T.	Seddon
Grimmond	Reeves, R. H. J.	Ward.

#### PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Barron	Moss
Fisher	Parata
Hodgkinson	Turnbull
McKenzie, M. J. S.	Larnach
Samuel.	Kelly.

Majority for, 42.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—May I make a personal explanation? I was one of those pledged to make considerable reductions, and voted for the amendment of the honourable member for

Kumara. Of course, that having been negatived, I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past one o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 1st December, 1887.

First Readings—Second Reading—Horomona Paatu—Owhaoko Case—Midland Railway Revised Contract.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### FIRST READINGS.

Irrigation and Water Supply Bill, Sounds County Hospital Representative Bill.

### SECOND READING.

Proclamation Validation Bill.

### HOROMONA PAATU.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA, in moving the motion standing in his name, said that Horomona Paatu was a man of rank. His ancestors for some generations back had been chiefs, and for seven generations back they had lived on the Aparima Reserve. He would not say any more at present, except that he wished the report of the Committee to be adopted.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the report of the Native Affairs Committee on Petition No. 18, of Horomona Paatu, be agreed to, and that immediate effect be given by the Government to the recommendations made therein."—(*Hon. Mr. Taiaroa.*)

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said he thought that, before the Council agreed to accept the motion of the honourable gentleman, it was right he should call attention to some of the circumstances that were brought before the Select Committee. It appeared from the report of the Committee that the petitioner, in common with a number of other members of his tribe, received allotments of the land, and it was intended at the time that they should receive ten acres for each man, woman, and child who were interested. But, owing to circumstances, it was found that they could not receive more than seven acres and a half each, or thereabouts. It subsequently appeared that the petitioner received about seven acres of town land and some occupation land—in all, about twenty-eight acres. The petitioner subsequently gave to relations or friends—probably, relations—the greater portion of his land—all the town land except a quarter-acre, and some of the cultivation land—leaving himself a very small quantity. He did not think this act on the part of the petitioner would be taken in the same light as a similar act on the part of a European,—as a giving-away. But it had a bearing on the present motion. The Com-

mittee had recommended that the whole of the remainder of the Aparima Reserve, about fifty-nine acres, should be given to the petitioner as an equivalent. Therefore he thought it his duty to point out what did not appear in the report of the Committee, as he believed, and that was that there were forty-four persons interested in the unallotted residue of this reserve, and that their shares in it were proportionate. It would therefore be clear that these persons must be provided with land to satisfy the claim they would naturally have if this motion were carried and given effect to, or that the petitioner should have land, not being part of the Aparima Reserve, in order to satisfy the claim which the Committee seemed to think he had. He had scarcely known whether it would be best for the Committee to review their report, or that they should hear what was further to be said, and act accordingly. But, as at present advised, it did not seem to the Government that, on the face of the report, the motion of his honourable friend should be acceded to.

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND said that his honourable friend, in speaking of the area of land first allotted to the petitioner, had forgotten to state that this land was allotted not to him personally, but really to three sharers—himself, his wife, and his daughter; and that he was the head of the tribe, a matter that was overlooked entirely in the scarcity of land in the division of the lots. As had been said, it was not the same thing for a Maori chief to give his land as it would be for an ordinary European. Any one who had the slightest knowledge of Maori habits must know that in a great many matters the chief is the channel by which gifts pass to the tribe. In this particular case, the chief appeared not to have given away to outsiders, but to persons who had legitimate claims upon him, according even to European notions. He would direct attention to another statement of his honourable friend, to the effect that the land proposed in the report to be given to Horomona Paatu was the whole remainder of the reserve. Though it was the whole of the reserve which could be made use of, there was a good deal of sand and swamp on the land, and, as honourable gentlemen would see, the swamp was not property that could be handled by a communistic society; it must be dealt with by one person to be of any value at all. He might state what his own idea was in agreeing with the report in its present form; but he would not pledge the Committee generally to the same opinion. He thought this would be an auspicious day for impressing upon the Government the necessity of dealing more liberally, even now, at this hour, with the former owners of the southern part of the Middle Island, as the Council would be asked to-day to appropriate six or seven millions of acres to one gambling scheme. It must be admitted that the conduct of the Government had been frequently exceedingly shabby, and there were a number of claims continually arising of a similar kind. There were others that the Committee had to

report upon during the present session; and that being the case, and believing that the matter ought to be disposed of, he thought they would not be doing wrong in bringing the matter forward in this form. It was proposed to give fifty acres of swamp, which in most parts of New Zealand is not a very great gift. He himself had four hundred acres of swamp, which he would be happy to part with to anybody on easy terms. The action followed in the past in this matter had appeared to him to be that of keeping the word of promise to the ear but breaking it to the hope. He hoped the motion would be agreed to, not as approving the particular gift, but as a measure of what was due, and as a pledge of the Council and the Government to do all in their power to dispose of the whole of these cases. It was a duty which the Government owed to these people, and which they were bound to take up.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL thought no public harm could possibly be done by the adoption of this report. The Hon. Mr. Stevens appeared to have lost sight, for a time, of the alternative recommendation that had been made—that, instead of giving this to the petitioner, the unallotted portion of the block, the value of the land elsewhere should be given. It would be a source of trouble if the Government were to give the petitioner the remainder of the block, because all the co-proprietors in the reserve at Aparima had a proportionate claim to the lands. It would be much better to deal with this case separately. There was no doubt that the petitioner was now, from having been the head man and one of the most prosperous men in the place, one of the very poorest. His gifts were originally simply from friendly intentions to the people with whom he lived; but, by degrees, circumstances developed to such an extent that when the Court sat these people came forward and got the Crown grants for the land, and many of these people were half-castes and were not strictly in sympathy with the aborigines; and he thought this was extremely unfair. When the Aparima Reserve was set apart by himself it was set apart in the narrowest dimensions he could persuade the Natives to consent to, because the position of it was such that it must necessarily be acquired as town land. In the subsequent reserves he made at Oraka and at Kawakaputaputa they were apportioned not in strict proportion to the population, but because no such reason for rigid economy existed. He had heard a rumour that it had been proposed to the Government, or by the Government, to make a further reserve on the west bank of the Wainau in order to satisfy the people who were deprived of their lands. He thought the petitioners' wants might very likely be provided for there. But he would urge upon the Government the propriety, in common honesty, of dealing liberally with these people. We had acquired a tract of thirty million acres of land at an average expenditure of a penny for eight acres. In that were included the Provinces of Canterbury, Otago, and Southland—eight acres for a penny. Out of that, Lyttelton was formed, Christchurch

*Hon. Mr. Stevens*

was formed, and Dunedin was formed, also Timaru and Invercargill; and now surely the Government could afford to give a sufficient amount of space for these people to die, if not to live, upon out of the enormous profits made out of those lands. He knew that the Government considered the alternative proposal was of a grave nature. He pointed out that the adoption of this report would simply have the effect of impressing on the Government the claims of these Natives. He hoped the Government would permit the resolution to pass.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES was very glad that the Hon. Mr. Mantell had made the statement to the Council to the effect that he, as agent for the Government, had purchased a great portion of the Middle Island at the cost of eight acres per penny, and yet the Government had failed to make provision for the Natives who formerly owned it, who were now in the position of paupers. He considered this was a great shame, as it was not for the want of the means to make restitution. Whether the Natives had claims or not, their position deserved to be considered. There was a superabundance of land within a moderate distance of where these Natives resided. There was land in the valley of the Waiau to the east, and on the west side there was a good deal of land where Natives could be settled. He thought there could be no difficulty in giving them satisfaction in the shape of land, and the Government ought to take the matter into consideration.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS felt perfectly satisfied that the Government would endeavour to act justly in connection with these reserves, and he thought it would be the best course to leave them to deal with the matter; and, with this view, he would move, as an amendment, to strike out all the words of the motion after the word "be," in order to insert the following: "referred to the Government for its careful consideration." He presumed the Council could hardly pass such a motion as the present one in the face of the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Stevens. If the matter were left to the Government for their consideration, and if the petition was a just one, he had no doubt that they would give effect to it.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA wished to say a few words with regard to the proposed amendment. He hoped the honourable member who moved it would remember that if they treated the matter in this way there would be nothing done by the Government, and none of the demands of the Natives would ever be fulfilled. It must be well known to honourable members that the land referred to belonged to the Maoris, and more particularly to Horomona Paatu. When the Hon. Mr. Mantell was at Aparima, at the time of the purchase, he found Horomona Paatu there, and it was at his request that this reserve was made. He then demanded that this land should be reserved to himself and his heirs, and to his relatives who were living there with him. The difficulty in this matter had arisen from the fact that the Government had appointed a Commissioner, Mr. Commissioner Mackay, in the year 1874.

He was to go round and subdivide these lands to the persons for whom they had been reserved. Persons living at Kawakaputaputa, New River, and Oraka were admitted into these lands at Aparima; and Mr. Mackay also inserted as owners the names of half-castes who belonged to Rangiura. These half-castes had already received eight acres apiece under an Act passed for the purpose, and the other Natives had also received land in other places, but Horomona had not received any other land. Horomona was at a loss to know why these persons, who belonged to other places, had got possession of his land, and he was left with only fourteen acres. Although Horomona was the principal man there, he had only this small piece of land, and this was covered with sand, so that he could not make a living out of it. The fifty acres proposed to be given to Horomona was of no great value. It was covered with swamp and water. He hoped the honourable member would withdraw his amendment and allow Horomona to have his own land.

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND said his honourable friend had supplied an omission which he had made: the fifty acres referred to in the report was meant as a measure of what the Committee desired to see given to this unfortunate chief, who had now fallen into poverty. He had fallen from being the chief of the tribe to one of the poorest and least considered.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES must also express a hope that the Government would see its way to agree to the recommendation and carry it out. The land in question was only a small area and was of comparatively little value. The chief was now steeped to the lips in poverty. To those who remembered the early days, before the country was occupied by European settlers, no recollection could be more pleasant than that of arriving at the township of River-ton, after a weary march along the beach, to find the warm welcome from the Maoris there. They were, in his early recollection, in very comfortable circumstances. The land yielded wheat abundantly. They had cattle, wheat, and potatoes, and with the addition of fish, which they caught in the estuary, they lived very comfortably indeed. Those were days of plenty and prosperity; but, when they came to rely exclusively on the very limited portions of land which were allotted to them, their means became less abundant, until poverty came gradually upon them. He regretted to see, in the course of the various proceedings of the Land Courts in the South, and probably in other parts of the colony also, that there was a disposition to individualise these reserves, and to subdivide them to such an extent that ultimately the Natives would cease to be able to make a living from the land. He thought the colony would not show any undue generosity if it added to these reserves, and thus enabled the descendants of those who once ruled over the whole of this country to live out their days in comparative comfort.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said there was one thing which had been lost sight of, and that was, that the Native in question had ori-

ginally given to him seven or eight town allotments, and also another piece of land of twenty-eight acres. He had given all this property away to his friends or relatives with the exception of one town allotment and fourteen acres of the other land. It was a question how far it was legitimate for the petitioner to give away land in that way and then to ask for more. The whole question of reserves in the Middle Island for the Natives had been raised, and it should be considered by the Government. It was an urgent question, and one which would have to be dealt with in some form or other. He would ask the members of the Council if they were really in a position to say what the facts of the case under consideration were. He did not know whether the representations which had been made to the honourable gentleman were correct or incorrect, nor was the honourable gentleman able to say that he spoke on this case from his own knowledge. He (Sir F. Whitaker) would certainly vote for the amendment, because it remitted the matter for the consideration of the Government, and allowed them to give that consideration to it which it deserved before they were called upon to say whether the recommendation should be carried into effect. If the matter were remitted to the favourable consideration of the Government, as proposed, the present case, with all the other cases of a like kind, would have to be considered. He was quite sure there was not sufficient information before either the Committee or the Council to enable them to say that the recommendation should be given immediate effect to.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL thought, after what had been said on this subject, that the wisest course the honourable gentleman could take would be to accept the amendment on the assurance given by the Hon. the Attorney-General. The Government said it was willing to take into consideration the report of the Committee, and he therefore advised the Hon. Mr. TAIAROA to accept the amendment.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA said, if the Government would give him some assurance that they would deal with the matter, he would be prepared to accept the amendment. He wished that the matter should be dealt with as soon as possible, as Horomona was in great trouble, and it was necessary that he should have something done for him soon.

Motion negatived, and amendment agreed to.

#### OWHAOKO CASE.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—Before proceeding with the Orders of the Day, there is a question I should like to bring before the Council. It will be recollected that some time ago the Hon. Mr. Shrimski moved a resolution that certain papers should be laid on the table of the Council, being part of the proceedings of the Native Land Court, having reference to some evidence affecting Sir Walter Buller in the Owhaoko case. The papers were examined carefully to see that all that had reference to the particular question were placed before the Council. These papers

originally were selected and printed by the preceding Government, but, having been printed by them, the papers were not laid on the table, inasmuch as the Government retired from office before the Assembly sat. When the present Government took office his honourable friend opposite moved for the papers. They were laid on the table, and no doubt they contained serious reflections upon Sir Walter Buller. Sir Walter Buller is in England at the present time; therefore he had not been able to take any steps himself in reference to this matter; but Mr. Warren, who calls himself Owhaoko manager, and who seems to be a friend of Sir Walter Buller, and who states he was present when these transactions took place upon which the charge against Sir Walter Buller was based, has written a letter giving an explanation of what took place. I think, under the circumstances, I should lay this letter on the table, and perhaps it will be right, if the Council approves, that it should be printed; but all I ask now is that the letter do lie on the table and be read by the Clerk.

The CLERK read the letter as follows:—

“Owhaoko, 27th November, 1887.

“SIR,—I have just seen extracts taken from evidence in the Owhaoko-Kaimanawa case, recently laid on the table of the Legislative Council and printed, which contain grave charges against Sir Walter Buller. On behalf of that gentleman, now absent from the colony, I desire to say emphatically that these charges are absolutely untrue and without foundation. I speak with a full knowledge of the facts connected with the case, having accompanied Sir Walter Buller on his trip to Taupo, and was present most of the time at all his interviews with the Natives. He interviewed Hohepa, Paurini, Topia, and others in the hotel at Tokano. The Natives who gave evidence at the recent Taradale Court were not present. One of them, Te Aramoana, who was not present at any of Sir Walter Buller's interviews with the Natives, gave his evidence on the strength of what he had been told. Sir Walter Buller did not take spirits in his boat for the purpose of intoxicating the Natives, nor did he give the Natives drink previous to the meetings. On one occasion Hohepa asked me for a glass of spirits during an interview with him and others, and Sir Walter Buller advised me not to give it to him. Sir Walter Buller being himself a most abstemious man, it is exceedingly improbable that he would carry spirits about with him to intoxicate Natives, or that his tent—pitched, for convenience, beside one of the hot springs, and shared with him by Lady Buller—would be by him turned into a drinking resort for drunken Natives. It is worthy of remark that this evidence lately printed is mostly hearsay, the Natives themselves constantly using the words ‘I heard so.’ Such testimony would not be admitted in any other Court in the world, and it is no tribute to the ability of the presiding Judge that he allowed it to be taken down. It really appears as if such portions only have been selected as would suffice to blacken Sir Walter Buller's

*Hon. Sir F. Whitaker*

character and place his conduct in the worst possible light. It is also strange, moreover, that other evidence, more favourable to him, but bearing on the same subject, has been withheld.

"I respectfully ask you, Sir, to have the kindness to bring this letter before the House, in order that it may have the same wide publicity that has been given to the evidence above alluded to.—I have, &c.,

"R. T. WARREN,

"Owhaoko Manager.

"The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER,

"Legislative Council, Wellington."

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—The writer of the letter states that, as the charges have been printed, he thought it was only reasonable that his answer should also be printed. And, if the Council will permit me, I will move that it be printed.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—I shall have something to say on this subject next week; but, in the meantime, on this particular point I think it well to say that last week I saw a member of the House, and he tells me that he was present when the evidence given and printed was taken, and that he cross-examined the witnesses, whose evidence was merely hearsay. Two of these witnesses are spoken of as being drunk when they signed the papers, but neither of these was examined at all.

Motion agreed to.

#### MIDLAND RAILWAY REVISED CONTRACT.

##### ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL.—I wish to ask you, Sir, what course you will adopt in regard to this matter, in reference to the amendment of which a contingent notice of motion has been given to be moved by the Hon. Mr. Stevens, and appears on the Order Paper.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I would also like to know if we are to take the motion first; or are we to take the contingent notice of motion?

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—If the order, as printed on the Order Paper as No. 1, be taken and be affirmed, it would then be incompetent to enter into any alteration of the paper before the Council in relation to the proposed contract. The words are, "That this Council concurs with the House of Representatives in the draft revised contract for the construction of the Midland Railway, as reported by a Select Committee of the House." That being affirmed by the Council, it would be incompetent afterwards, without proceeding to rescind the resolution, to deal with the contingent motion notice of which stands on the Order Paper. Therefore it will be better, so as to save the contingent motion, that this order should be proceeded with first.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—As a matter of order I draw your attention, Sir, to the claim which I have of addressing the Council on the main question.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The honour-

able member is in possession of the Council, and is in order.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—Before the honourable gentleman proceeds, may I ask whether my contingent motion will come on immediately, or whether it can be intercepted by any other motion?

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—No, it cannot be intercepted by any other motion.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—Then, Sir, I have to say to the Council that I have not taken an opportunity of addressing the Council on this question. As it happens, I was absent during the session of 1884; and in the session of 1886, when the Act that was passed in that session was under consideration, I did not take an opportunity of addressing the Council. Since I have not done so, I wish to say a few words on the merits of the question now; and, although my friend the Hon. the Attorney-General told us last night that it was out of place to deal with this question, seeing that it was not the original one, it would only be fair to reply that, since it is now proposed to vary the whole agreement, that opens up the question. The Legislature has for many years had under consideration the propriety of forming a railway between the east and west coasts of the South Island. The matter was first stirred by persons in the locality. The Government took it up and sent experts to explore the whole country, which was comparatively unknown in the early days; appointed Royal Commissions to inquire into the question, assisted by experts on more than one occasion; and the almost uniform result of the reports of these experts, reporting singly or altogether as a class—Commissioners reporting more generally as laymen, assisted by experts—was to the effect that it was not at all essential to construct a railway across from sea to sea through the Provinces of Canterbury and Westland; that if such a railway was to be constructed it would not be likely to pay, and would be a very poor investment; that the time had not come to undertake such a work, and that the colony was not in a position to afford it. Now, the reports of these experts went fully into details in all particulars—the character of the country, the great engineering difficulties attending the construction of the work and the enormous expense that must be incurred, and the comparatively inferior character of the country for settlement. That the country was rich in some parts was agreed, but that it was well adapted for settlement was not contended. It was not a country that would open a field of settlement for a large number of agriculturists. Still, however, those who desired to have the work constructed pressed their views upon the Government and the colony, and the result was that after a time an Act was passed giving authority to the Government to enter into a contract. This Act was passed in 1884. Under the authority of that Act a contract was framed in 1885. Seeing that that contract did not appear to give all the necessary powers and all the necessary concessions which were required by

the contractors to enable them to carry out their undertaking, or to get some others who were willing to take up the contract under cover of theirs, a further Act was passed in 1886. Under the authority of the Act of 1886 negotiations had been going on in order to get a contract which was likely to be carried out by the contractors, and the result hitherto had been that nobody had been found—no capitalist had ever been found who would agree to undertake the work on such terms as they could arrange with the Government. On different occasions draft contracts have been sent out from Home to the Government by persons who proposed to take up the work, and agents have endeavoured to arrange matters with the Government, but we find they have been unsuccessful. One particular point cannot fail to catch the attention of any one who looks carefully over all these papers, and that is, that when the Government agreed to give certain concessions the company asked for some further concessions; and so they have gone on, until our Agent-General—in reference to whom I cannot fail to express my own appreciation of the very able and firm manner, a manner beyond all praise, in which he defended the interests of the colony—warns the Government that the time is drawing near when the Government must determine whether they should refuse any other concessions. In the course of the negotiations that have been going on, the Agent-General warns the Government that a fresh point is turned, a new point of departure; and I do not know whether I can do better than refer to his own words in regard to that. Sir Francis Dillon Bill, writing on the 23rd August, says,—

"Upon carefully examining the August draft I find that it substantially repeats the May amendments; but there are some entirely new provisions, of which the following seem the most important:—

"(1.) A recital is inserted in the preamble, declaring that the land to be granted to the company is to be 2,304,000 acres:

"(2.) The condition in the December draft for dividing the cost of survey is struck out, and that cost is to be borne entirely by the colony:

"(3.) The time for allowing interest on construction is to be extended to 1897:

"(4.) The condition in the December draft that £150,000 should be spent on the Brunner-Teremakau section is struck out, and the construction of it at all is made contingent on the necessary capital being obtained:

"(5.) The restriction in the December draft against deviating from the surveyed line is struck out, and, while the line is still to go by Arthur's Pass, the existing surveys are not to be binding:

"(6.) It is assumed that a contract containing the May amendments and the new alterations can be entered into without fresh legislation; but, if any be necessary, then it is to be obtained before the end of 1890.

"It is obvious, therefore, that the whole character of the original contract of 1885, as

well as of the arrangement between the company and myself last year, is fundamentally changed; and, of course, such a contract as is now proposed by the company is impossible without an entirely new Act."

That, Sir, opened up an entirely new phase. The Government of the colony had agreed that a certain area of land should be set apart, out of which any company which undertook to construct the work would be allowed to select an amount of land that would be of an estimated value of £2,500,000, and the minimum price was to be fixed at 10s. per acre. The company desired to have a guarantee that the land they might select would be worth the amount of money; and they desired that, if it should turn out that the land which they did select would not be worth the amount at which it was estimated, they should be paid the difference in money. That is the point in question. That is the point we have been debating the last two days. Does this particular agreement fairly guard the colony against the possibility of giving a great deal more than it has been inclined to give, and has hitherto promised to give? I was rather struck by the remarks which fell from the Hon. the Attorney-General in the course of his remarkable speech yesterday. He said, talking about the contract, we were bound by the Act to make a further contract. I suppose he meant the Act of 1886, and I looked it up to see whether this Act really contained an imperative provision that Parliament should enter into a fresh contract; but I am unable to read it in that fashion, and I will read to the Council the only clause in the Act in which I could see that any such provision could be claimed, and leave it to the Council to determine whether it is mandatory or not. The 2nd section of "The East and West Coast (Middle Island) and Nelson Railway and Railways Construction Act, 1886," says,—

"Upon the company being duly registered in New Zealand under the provisions of 'The Companies Act, 1882,' the Governor in Council may, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, enter into a contract with the company under this Act.

"In such contract the company shall undertake to carry out and be bound by all the provisions of the original contract, with such modifications thereof as are mentioned in the correspondence set out in the Second Schedule hereto; and such modified contract, and any allocation of land thereunder, shall be deemed to be a contract made and an allocation of land approved under the provisions of 'The East and West Coast (Middle Island) and Nelson Railway and Railways Construction Act, 1884,' and the principal Act therein mentioned, and shall, immediately upon the execution thereof, and without any further or other proceeding, be operative and have full force and effect, notwithstanding that the terms thereof may be repugnant to, or inconsistent with, the provisions of the said Acts, or either of them: Provided that the company shall have the right to deviate from the line of railway, as

*Hon. Mr. Menzies*

delineated on the plan marked A attached to the original contract, from Lyell to Nelson, in such direction as may be agreed upon between the Government and the company."

It says there that the company shall be registered. I suppose it is registered, but I am not aware whether it is or not, and I do not think we have heard any statement to the effect that it is registered. If not, they could not make any claims. This appears to me to be the only provision which might be said to refer to this: if there is anything further, I am unable to discover it. This does not make it imperative on the colony to go blindly into any contract. There is no desire, I apprehend, on the part of any in the colony to withdraw in any way from any honourable engagement to which it may have been committed by the action of the Legislature of the past three years, and by the contract which has already been entered into. There is only one contract, I may say in passing; but, whatever obligation may have been incurred by the Legislature of the last three years, there is no one in the colony who would desire to be freed from such obligation; and therefore it is that I refrain from endeavouring to reject altogether the proposal which is now under consideration, provided that we could modify it in such a way as to make it perfectly safe for the colony to indorse it—to make it safe for the colony to agree to it,—covering the same terms which the previous negotiations, and the previous legislation, and the previous contract led contractors to expect that the colony would be willing to grant, and which, I think, the colony should be considered in honour bound to carry out. This was one point which caught my attention when the Hon. the Attorney-General was speaking; but I am unable to see that there is any urgent necessity, that it is in any way imperative on the colony, to make a contract at all hazards. That there is an honourable obligation to enter into a contract on the terms that are fair, I admit; but that it should be imperative under any circumstances, I am unable to see. Another point that my honourable friend referred to also caught my attention. He referred to the advantage—the superiority—of the proposals contained in the present draft contract over the original contract with respect to the mining community. Now, Sir, I am not disposed to say that the late Government, although it may have entered somewhat hurriedly into the contract of 1885, was by any means neglectful of the interests of the mining community. Now, we have many Acts of the General Assembly affecting the working of the gold-mines. Under these provisions it would be quite competent for the Governor to take possession of any lands which are found to abound in gold and are fit for mining. Under the Mining Act, section 40, full power is given there, and I apprehend this clause would bring the Mining Act into operation, so far as it affected any lands granted by this contract. That section says,—

"All lands which since the twenty-ninth day of September, one thousand eight hundred and

seventy-three, have been or may hereafter be alienated or agreed to be alienated from the Crown, whether by way of absolute sale or lease or for any lesser interest, and all lands which have been so alienated at any time previous to the above-mentioned date, with the consent of the owners thereof respectively, shall be liable to be resumed for mining purposes (except lands alienated expressly for mining purposes) by Her Majesty, on paying full compensation to the licensee, lessee, or owner of the fee-simple thereof for the value, other than auriferous or argentiferous, of the lands and improvements so resumed, upon the terms and conditions hereinafter provided."

I apprehend that that gives ample power; and, if that was not enough, we have in the legislation of the year 1882 an Act providing for the resumption of land for mining purposes, and, if this Act does not cover the whole of the field, then that Act certainly does. The whole purport of that Act was to enable the Government to resume land for mining purposes whenever required. I believe the object of the colony, as well as of its Ministers, is to act fairly by those with whom they have been negotiating for some time. Many Councillors are not satisfied that the proposal which is now under consideration should be carried. If they are not, they should allow a Committee of this Council to consider the question, and leisurely revise the draft contract. In that there can be no harm. If they are satisfied that all provisions are made which are necessary, it is possible that no alteration may be made in the contract. If they are not so satisfied, then I have no doubt that the Ministers themselves would willingly accept of any alterations such as are likely to attain the desired effect. This I am quite certain of: that Parliament means either to give the guarantee or to refuse to give it. How much better it will be to express that decision in such terms as cannot be misunderstood! At the best, from what has fallen from the Hon. the Attorney-General, it appears that he first of all moved the adoption of this draft contract under the impression that the provisions it contained were sufficient, and last night he informed the Council that he was ready to make such alterations as would make the matter sufficient.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I made the statement that the original contract was not insufficient, but that to suit the views of honourable members I would alter the contract.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—The very fact of his bringing this forward showed that something further was necessary; and it is in order to satisfy the Council on these matters that I now move that the consideration of the draft revised contract be referred to a Select Committee, to consist of the usual number of members. I move, That the consideration of the draft revised contract for the Midland Railway be referred to a Select Committee, consisting of the Hon. Sir F. Whitaker, the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, the Hon. Mr. Holmes, the Hon. Dr. Pollen, the Hon. Mr. Miller, the Hon. Mr. Johnson, and the mover.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—On a point of order, I understood you to say, Sir, that the contingent motion I placed on the Order Paper will not be intercepted.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—That is so—intercepted, of course, by any one when you had the opportunity. The honourable member is in possession of the Council, and it is quite competent for him to take advantage of his being in possession of the Council, and one of the privileges of a member in that position is that he can move an amendment to a question that may be before it.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN.—I must acknowledge that the leader of the Council has been out-generalled for the time being on this question. I was satisfied with the amendment moved by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, and also with the addition given notice of by the Hon. the Attorney-General. The repute of New Zealand in the Old Country is of a tender nature, and the Hon. Mr. Holmes has made it his particular business in this debate to make that repute worse than it is. If it had not been for his remarks I should not have risen on this occasion. The honourable gentleman delivered a speech which might well have been made in 1884, when the question arose, "Shall we enter into the contract or not?" But the question now is simply this: "Shall we facilitate the efforts of the company to raise money in order to carry on the work?" The question as to whether the work shall be carried on has long been decided. It is now considered that it might be beneficial to all parties to give better concessions to the company. These concessions have been well considered in another branch of the Legislature. The proposed concessions have been passed there, and they have been sent to the Council for approval. The Hon. Mr. Holmes made it his business to speak against the contract itself. He based his objections to the contract on unreliable reports, which have been subsequently contradicted, and on the report of a Royal Commission. I consider that the report of the Royal Commission was not worth the paper it was written on. I base that opinion on my own observation of how that Commission went to work in order to get the necessary information. By making the proposed concessions the colony will be benefited considerably. We must not forget that the making of this railway will extend over a period of from ten to twelve years. Employment will thus be given to a large number of those who are now unemployed. Already a great many hundreds of labourers have found employment on the railway. The construction of the railway will also give an impetus to shipping and other business, for the amount of material to be brought here must be very great. The Hon. Mr. Holmes said that the railway could never yield any return, and that the land was not worth anything at all: at the same time he said the colony had no right to part with such an extent of land to the company. If the land is worth nothing at all, then the sooner we part with it the better. But I decline to accept the honour-

able gentleman's assertion. I should like to know from whence the honourable gentleman got his information. I have also some information on this matter, and it is information gained from my own observation, and is information founded on fact. I know, for instance, that, since this railway has been started at the West Coast end, timber land in the neighbourhood has gone up in price. Land which formerly was valued at 10s. an acre is now valued at £10 an acre for the timber alone. I have not the least doubt that the specified sum, £1,250,000, will be obtained within the prescribed area. There are certainly tracts of land there which are not worth much; but we know, at the same time, that the country is full, if not of gold, at any rate of coal and iron. There may not be five millions of acres of land fit for agricultural purposes, but I have no doubt that there are many thousands of acres which will be found to contain gold. Therefore it is wrong to say that the land is not worth anything at all, and that this company is more a sham than anything else, and that they will never be able to carry out the work. All this has been stated, and we know very well that the present repute of the colony in England is partly owing to speeches made in Parliament. It is detrimental to the interests of the colony and detrimental to the functions of the Legislature to give the colony such a bad name. No good can be derived from it. I trust that the word "repudiation" will never be used in this Council, or in any other place in New Zealand. If the colony declines to carry out the contract it has entered into the country will be very much worse off than it is now. We have now to endeavour to agree to a contract which will be carried out by the parties; and, if we can concede anything without imposing any burden on the colony, we ought to do so. I am fully prepared to agree to the proposed concessions so long as the colony will not be responsible for any loss which may result in case the land does not fetch £1,250,000. The proposed contract fully conserves the mining interests, which the former contract did not. That, in my opinion, is a very important matter.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT.—I hope the Council will not pass the amendment moved by the Hon. Mr. Menzies. The Council has already permitted a similar amendment referring the matter to the Committee to be withdrawn, and I trust the present amendment will be negatived. The question of the worth or policy of the Midland Railway has already been settled. We have now nothing to do with that. It is a question of the past. The question now before the Council is, whether it will grant certain additional concessions or refuse them. Some of these concessions are embodied in the contract now before the Council. There is one important point, and it is only to that that I shall direct the few remarks I wish to make—the point referred to by the Agent-General as the central point in the whole matter. It will be found in the following words:—

"If the 2,304,000 acres of land selected by



the company and granted by the Queen does not, on sale, realise the sum of £1,250,000, the Queen will, upon the completion of the said railway, grant such additional land as may be necessary to bring the total selling value of the land granted up to the said sum of £1,250,000."

I confess that on reading this I was very much startled. It seemed to weaken or remove any interest in or motive for good or careful management on the part of the company, and to involve a possibly very large future demand on the colony. After more fully considering the point, I see it in a different light. I have endeavoured to place myself in the position of the company, and it does seem to me a very natural demand to make. To refuse this concession would, I think, seem to betray suspicion that the land which is to be given in payment for the railway is not worth what we profess to believe it is worth. The value, no doubt, of land in the future is very doubtful and speculative, and I think that the company are not unreasonable in calling on New Zealand to share to some extent in that speculation. Sir Dillon Bill represents the agent of the company as putting it in this light: "The company take up the ground that the clause guaranteeing the value of the land does nothing more than express, in simple and intelligible language, the terms of the original contract, and the understanding on which all the negotiations have been carried on from the first." This does not seem to me to be an unreasonable mode of putting the concession that the company now ask, especially as it is very largely modified in the draft contract now before the Council. The words in the draft agreement seem to me to preclude any money demands being made by the company under any contingency; but, inasmuch as the Government now propose an amendment that will preclude any possibility whatever of such a demand being made, I shall vote for the amendment of the Hon. Mr. Stevens when it comes before the Council.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I wish the Council to understand exactly the position in which the matter now remains. I take it that the question you, Sir, will put will be, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the question," and that that will not prevent our adding any other words in addition, explanatory of our intention, as, for instance, the words proposed by the Hon. Mr. Stevens.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The Hon. Mr. Stevens has put a question to me which I found great difficulty in deciding, and so reserved it for further consideration. The question was, whether it would be competent for him to move the contingent motion that appears on the Order Paper in the event of the Council deciding that the first order of the day should stand as printed; in other words, whether, if the Council should decide that these words stand part of the question, he could move for words interpolating that question. The difficulty is a novel one. It is proposed to alter the words in the first order referring to the contract that

has been laid on the table; therefore the question is, If it is decided that the contract should stand as sent to us from the House of Representatives, could it be amended by interpolating these words? On reflection, I have come to the conclusion that that cannot be done, but it is competent for the honourable member to move words in addition that are not contradictory to the question, that the words stand part of the question. I would take the opportunity of pointing out to the Council that there is among the Standing Orders a Standing Order which is of a very comprehensive character. It is Standing Order No. 150, which is as follows: "No amendment may be proposed to be made to any words which the Council has resolved shall stand part of, be inserted in, or added to a question, except the addition of other words thereto." That is large and comprehensive.

The Council divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 20.

Acland	Lahmann	Scotland
Baillie	Martin	Shephard
Barnicoat	Oliver	Stevens
Bonar	Peacock	Walker
Brett	Pollen	Waterhouse
Buckley	Reeves	Whitaker.
Chamberlin	Richmond	

NOES, 12.

Campbell	Johnson	Shrimski
Dignan	Menzies	Swanson
Fraser	Miller	Talaroa
Holmes	Peter	Williams.

Majority for, 8.

Words retained.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I now move the addition of these words: "Provided that, in the contract to be formed thereon, section 8 be amended as follows: That the following words be inserted in clause 8, line 7, after the figures '£1,250,000': 'the only claim of the company in respect of such difference (if any) shall be a right on the part of;' and, in the same line, after 'company,' to erase the word 'may;' in line 8, after the word 'thereafter,' to insert the word 'to.'"

The Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL.—I wish to say that I think the history the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse gave us the other day of the whole of these contracts was an exceedingly lucid and able one. He traced the contracts from the beginning, and showed exactly how we came out. Now, the original contract, he showed us, was that fifteen miles of land should be appropriated on each side of the railway, and the Government would get alternate blocks. I have been over a good deal of this land, and I know it. I have also gone into the Bill very carefully. It gives power to the Government to give a promissory note for £1,250,000. I contend that cannot be denied. Now, I ask, if the railway is worth making at all, why should we not construct it? The subscribed capital of this company, it has been pointed out, is

only £250,000. I do not know how much of that has actually been paid up; and this company will go in for selling this for a very considerable amount, and they can transfer to anybody. I was very much struck with the remark of the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn, who said this company might become a land company, and he thought it was very likely to happen. I have been told, upon very good authority, which I would not dispute, that the land to be given is worth considerably more than it has been estimated at—10s. per acre. I have been informed that a portion of it could be sold at 25s. per acre. You do not offer the company any inducement to sell it at more than 10s. There is also a part of the land which is subject to obligations, and the people residing on it will have to be driven down to the Waitaki in order to make up the whole concern; and I have been told, by a man whose opinion I would take before that of any Minister of the Crown, that there will be a loss of £500,000. Then, we know we have not got a contract, and we do not know that they are going to complete the line. If you will read the agreement through, you will find no agreement that the company shall complete the contract; and why on earth should we go and enter into this without getting corresponding advantages? I was surprised at the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse consenting to withdraw his amendment. The Government ought to have some concession made in their favour in this matter. The concessions seem to be going all the one way. I have been told that 750,000 acres of this land was actually gazetted by the late Minister of Mines in defiance of the Government.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—No.

The Hon. Mr. CAMPBELL.—Of course I must accept the honourable gentleman's statement. There is land here which will go for 10s. an acre, and which the Government of Sir George Grey reserved from sale at £2 an acre. I consider that we are proposing to give the company the pre-emptive right to take out all the best land in the country. The Solicitor-General has forwarded us a memorandum stating distinctly that the words proposed to be added should be included in the contract. I say things are bad indeed when we refuse to refer this matter to a Committee. I will take very good care that a report of this debate shall go Home to England to all the banks. Why should we be afraid to refer this matter to a Committee? Surely it can do no harm.

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND.—I have given a vote this evening which is not at all according to my desires. I must thank my honourable friend for having brought forward this amendment. I feel certain that the more explicit we are the better it will be for all parties concerned—not only for ourselves, but for those who have to find the money for this scheme. I think the greater the candour we show in every respect the better; and the plain speaking we have had, and the plain speaking I hope we shall have to the end of the chapter, will be useful. It would mean nothing but mis-

Hon. Mr. Campbell

chief to the colony to have this affair undertaken upon any mistake, or upon any unreal expectation fostered by us. I have thought it my duty on more than one occasion to speak my mind plainly, and I thank the Hon. Mr. Holmes for having spoken as plainly as he has done. I will add my little testimony in the same direction. I will reply to something which has fallen from the Hon. Mr. Lahmann. He was highly indignant at the mode in which the prospects of this line were dealt with by the Hon. Mr. Holmes and others. I would remind the honourable gentleman and the Council that the goldfields, which really are the only tangible hope of profit out of this line, for no one of any experience expects that coal and timber will be carried over Arthur's Pass—these goldfields do not require a railway for their development. They have existed for years; they were for a considerable period a very important part of the industry of the country; and they were opened and fed then not by a railway, not by fine steamers and through harbours with tolerably-accessible entrances, but by small coasting vessels, and the smallest class of steamers, and without any roads for a considerable time. There is no industry that less demands railways than the gold-mining industry. As for coal, no one who has considered this question or who has any knowledge of railway operations would dream for a moment that the coal or timber on the West Coast was going to be transported over Arthur's Pass. There is not the slightest probability of it. In speaking plainly we are doing something towards removing a reproach which I heard cast on this scheme in words which I shall always remember—namely, that it is "the most mendacious proposition that ever proceeded from any quarter in New Zealand." Those are not the words of a stranger—of some one unacquainted with the affairs of the country—but of a very old settler, who has travelled over every part of the colony and a great deal outside it—a very cautious and, I will say, a very wise man. The result of the scheme is sure to be a failure in London and New Zealand. At the same time, we have gone so far that the old legal maxim, "*Fieri non debuit, factum valet*," comes into force. We do not know at this hour what interests have arisen under the contract. We have no right to assume that there are none. The loss under the scheme will fall upon people who have taken it up in perfect good-faith. We have been told several times that we have the authority of Mr. Brodie Hoare and his colleagues as to the valuable quality of the land that is offered, and the value of the line when constructed. I am quite certain that no man of ordinary judgment going over that line would say that there is a fair prospect of fair gains to be made out of it; and Mr. Hoare's honesty can only be defended at the cost of his common-sense. That there will be large profits made upon the manipulation of the money I do not doubt. My regret is that the distance to which this matter has gone prevents my voting as I should have desired to

vote on all occasions—namely, in direct opposition to the scheme. Now that the thing is established I desire to give really the fairest chance possible of profit to those who undertake it. I deeply regret that the Legislature should have taken up the matter in the first instance, although I cannot deny that they are bound to continue it liberally, having begun it.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I congratulate my honourable friend who has just sat down at having been able to work up his sentimental feelings upon the most unlikely of all subjects to arouse one's feelings of sentiment, and that is the Midland Railway. I do not know whether it is that I am of a colder and more phlegmatic nature than my honourable friend, but I must confess that the Bill has not aroused my sentimental feelings. To me it is the most unsentimental and, I may add, one of the most unsightly pieces of legislation I have ever had to do with. I agree with a great deal that the Hon. Mr. Richmond has said, but my action in this matter has been determined by force of circumstances. I recognise that the Bill must pass one way or the other, and my object has been to make it as little injurious as possible to the colony; and, with the amendment proposed by the Hon. Mr. Stevens, I think it will now be brought into a shape similar to that in which I expressed three years ago my readiness lukewarmly to support the measure—namely, that it should not involve the colony in any expenditure whatever.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—I desire to explain my reason for voting with the "Noes." I thought it would be advisable to refer this matter to a Select Committee; and I thought the Council should give careful consideration to the question of this railway. It must be acknowledged that it is from the formation of so many railways that we, collectively and individually, have been compelled to borrow money. It is owing to the large sums of money which have been raised that the difficulties now fall upon us—both Europeans and Maoris. We are all in the hands of other persons. It is all very well for honourable members to laugh; but it cannot be denied that we are being taxed even down to the poorest man. I am a farmer, and I own perhaps more farms than many honourable members in this Council. I bought those farms at a high price, and now they have gone down to a very low price. I think that this fall in the price of land is owing to the large sums of money spent on railways; and it is owing to this that the public have no money of their own. Before there were any railways the price of land was high enough, and people had money. Now we propose to give away our land to foreigners. The company is not formed by ourselves. It is quite possible for us to raise the money on these lands and to do the work ourselves. Those who form that company may be from many nations. I maintain that we are giving away our land to other persons, when we could well do the work ourselves. That is why I thought it advisable to refer the matter to a Select Committee. I do not think we ought to be governed by what passes in another

Chamber; I think that we, being unprejudiced, are the persons who ought to consider more fairly the subject of this railway. I have not any objections to the railway itself; but I think we should be careful before passing such a measure as this, because we are the persons who will have to suffer eventually. We are too apt to blame the railway or the way in which it is carried out; but we should remember that we are the persons who authorise the railways. I agree with the Hon. Mr. Campbell that this amounts to the issue of a promissory note for the sum named. I think that all the Acts we pass amount to promissory notes, because they incur liability. I therefore think the Council should be careful before passing this measure.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—It has been assumed by one speaker that it is not still open to the Council to appoint a Select Committee to consider this matter. I think that is an error. It is still open to propose a Committee to examine this subject, and to propose that the names shall be balloted for, or other names inserted in place of those suggested. The question that the Council has decided is that the Committee, consisting of so many names, shall not be appointed. So far as I understand it, that only has been negatived. I do not say it is desirable to appoint a Select Committee. I think that the acceptance of the suggestion of my honourable friend Mr. Waterhouse by the Government, and the proposal of this amendment, which I suppose the Council will adopt, gets rid to a very considerable extent of the necessity for the appointment of a Select Committee. With regard to the matter which I brought before the Council—namely, the necessity for legislating against the possibility of these private railway companies adopting discriminating rates, rates discriminating between one customer of the railway and another, the adoption of which plan has had so disastrous an effect in the United States—I have consulted the Attorney-General, and I understand that he has consulted his colleagues about it, and I am assured that, while they recognise the desirableness of legislating in that direction, they do not think this opportunity is the most fitting, and that, in their opinion, a fitting opportunity should be taken to legislate not only with regard to the limitation of the power of adopting discriminating rates by this company, but by another private company in existence—namely, the Wellington and Manawatu Company. That it is absolutely necessary that injury to that sort should be passed I feel perfectly convinced. The evidence has, in the last day or two, accumulated in my hands as to the extreme corruption, and the extreme injury to free and proper business, in the United States owing to certain companies returning heavy rebates to certain customers. It has resulted in this: that certain railway companies unite and actually crush out of existence some firms. It is most important that such a thing should be prevented from occurring in New Zealand. Finding that, in the opinion of the Government, this occasion is not the most fitting one to legislate on this subject,

and that they acknowledge the desirableness of legislating on it, I shall watch their actions in this matter, and, if they do not stir on a proper opportunity presenting itself, I shall myself propose such legislation. I think a fitting opportunity would be when a Public Works Bill is before the Council, or a Bill dealing with some such matters as come before us in a Public Works Bill. With regard to the general question, I have hitherto, in this debate, refrained from expressing any opinion whatever. The only time when I have thought it my duty to express an opinion on the subject was four years ago, when I not only spoke against this scheme, but voted against it. I have been absent from the Council for a period of two years, and in my absence the Council has legislated on this matter, and it stands in a very different position now from the position which it occupied when I voted against it. And, Sir, although my opinions have not changed—the opinions I expressed on the occasion to which I allude—yet the circumstances in which we stand have very much changed. This land has been visited by representatives of this company—men who, so far as one could gather in intercourse with them, are as well able to guard their own interests as we are to guard ours. They have had their agents travelling all over this land which is to form the endowment, and, if they are satisfied that by means of these endowments they will be able to construct this work, I say I should be very glad to see them do it. I am not convinced that the work is absolutely necessary, but I think that eventually communication by railway between the east and west coasts of the South Island would be desirable. If, therefore, by any endowments of this kind we can, in the present depressed condition of the colony, insure the completion of this work, I do not think that we should push our objections any further. We have given our opinions on the value of the endowments; if, after this, we should be right—I do not say we should be right absolutely, because I have heard friends of mine, who are quite competent to express an opinion as to the value of a great part of these endowments, say that these are very much misunderstood and very much underrated; but, Sir, if we should be right as to the value of the land, we have delivered our souls. It is from these considerations that I gave my vote just now in favour of the motion before us standing part of the question, as against the proposal of the Hon. Mr. Menzies that the matter should be referred to a Select Committee. I think still that the contract ought to have provided a penalty for non-completion. I think that that is now the most important defect in this contract; but I do not agree with the opinion which has been expressed by one or two honourable members, that it would be to the interest of this company to sell their lands carelessly for what they could get. That evidently is not to their interest. The lands are only estimated to amount to 50 per cent. of the cost of construction; and I would point out

*Hon. Mr. Oliver*

that if they make a large profit on these lands it will go in reduction of the part they have to furnish in cash. Thus it is clearly to their interest to get as much for their land as possible. Then, there is the question as to whether, in handing over the endowments to the Company, they should not be bound to construct two sections of the railway before they receive the endowment for one. It seems to me that, instead of being paid in land 50 per cent. of the cost of the section which has been last completed, they ought only to be paid for section No. 1 when section No. 2 had been completed. We should by this plan have held some guarantee that the work would be prosecuted. But I do not see that the colony holds any guarantee that when one section has been constructed, and the endowment handed over for the section, the work shall be proceeded with; the colony is not in a very strong position in insisting on the prosecution of the work. However, as I before said, the matter has now arrived at that point when I do not think it would be very useful to traverse the whole of the old contract. We are bound to contract for it in some way, and I suppose the best contract we are likely to get is the one before us.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—The honourable gentleman who spoke last told us that provision should be made with reference to the railway tariffs which are to be charged hereafter on this railway.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—The tariffs are provided for in the schedule.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—The honourable gentleman said they could be altered, and that when a Public Works Bill was brought in he would take an opportunity of getting that attended to. I thought the honourable gentleman was one of those who at all times objected to retrospective legislation; and any Act which may hereafter follow this contract will not affect the contract of this company in any way whatever. In fact they would only then come back to the Legislature and ask for further concessions, their rights having been interfered with by any subsequent legislation. Having once accepted their contract, how can we then alter it without protecting existing rights? I had not intended to speak on this question to-night, although I had made up my mind to vote and act in the way I intend to do. I cannot help seeing the wonderful change that has taken place in the opinions of some honourable gentlemen in this Council. And when I go back to former years, when the first contract was entered into, and remember the speeches made then as compared with the speeches made on this occasion by the same honourable gentlemen, it proves to me that all depends upon who is on the Treasury benches and who is not. Sir, the company entered into a contract in 1884, and they knew perfectly well what they were then undertaking, and what they were asked to perform. That contract specified that they should receive alternate blocks of land, and at a given price. At that time the honourable gentlemen who now

form the Government and their friends denounced it as a very wrong transaction; they said that it was giving the public estate to private companies, and that the colony ought not to agree to it. I speak as I think, and I have always done so, and I believe the Council will give me credit for doing so.

HON. MEMBERS.—Hear, hear.

MR. SHRIMSKI.—I say, had the late Government introduced a measure of this kind they would have been hunted out of the colony by those who are now giving the great concessions imported into this new contract. I have no hesitation in saying that the defeat of that Government at the last election was caused by those who would have denounced such a proposal if made by them; and yet we find those who very strongly denounced the late Administration are the very parties who are now giving the company concessions which no reasonable man in this colony would sanction. Sir, as I said before, under the original contract alternate blocks were to be taken, and the price was to be 10s. an acre; and it was the duty of the Government, whether the company agreed to it or not, to insist on their carrying out the contract they had entered into. I appeal to the Hon. Mr. Oliver, who was Minister for Public Works, if it is not a fact that men who had entered into contracts for railways, and, through stress of weather and other misfortunes and casualties, were unable to complete them in terms of their contract, have yet had to abide by it, and in some instances, to their own ruin, have had to forfeit, and have had to pay penalties for doing so.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—Very seldom.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—That has been the case, and it is the case up to the present day. This company have undertaken a contract on certain terms and conditions, and now they come before the Government and the Legislature to ask for further concessions. Had the contract been carried out on the original scheme, that of taking every alternate block, the blocks left in the hands of the Government would, by the construction of the railway, have so increased in value that the value of the land given to the company would have been actually little or nothing compared with the increase in value of the land left in the hands of the Government. But what is the consequence now? We give them all the land they like to take. We repeal the Act making the value of the land 10s. per acre, and give them power to take whatever they think proper. It is too much for the colony to submit to, and I think it would have been far better for the colony to have borrowed the money at £80 or £90 for its bonds, and to have constructed the railway itself, than to have given the concessions provided under this contract. Sir, we are giving a guarantee to this company of a million and a quarter of money. To do what? To spend three millions of money. Why, surely the colony could have borrowed that money on better terms. It could not have cost them one and a quarter millions, and it would have been far better

for the colony to have carried the work out than to have allowed a company to do so. Then, what guarantee has the colony that the company will carry out the work? Not the slightest. As the Hon. Mr. Campbell says, it is a question whether they have got, or are likely to get, the means for carrying out the work. I do not wish to detract from the character of the people who are constructing this railway, because I should like to see it constructed, as it would provide means of employment for the people; but I do say the colony is not right or justified in giving the company the lands now asked for. I therefore oppose the measure on these grounds.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—Sir, I wish to say a few words in respect to the amendment of the Hon. Mr. Menzies. I think the Government will understand that the passing of this resolution and the division we have had has determined that question; and I think, therefore, it would be only just to those parties who desire full information before passing the measure to place it before them. There is a great deal of information that could be placed before them. I doubt very much whether any one in this Council has seen the opinion of the Solicitor-General on the question. There is a great deal of information collected by the Committee of the other House, and that should be accessible to the Council. Well, if all that were brought forward it would satisfy the minds of honourable members as to whether they were doing right or wrong in giving their assent to the measure. At any rate, it would not prevent the passing of the resolutions; so I think the members on the Government benches should be sufficiently magnanimous to satisfy the Council in that respect. I agree with the remark of the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse that we should never vote on a measure without having sufficient information about the subject. Some are in the dark when considering the effect of passing important measures. I have no desire to keep this Council any longer; but there are one or two phases of the question to which I desire to call attention. One is in reference to taking the best blocks of land throughout the six millions of acres. It is a well-known fact that already they have offers for some blocks, and no doubt these would fetch £1 or £1 5s. per acre. We could have parted with it for cash at any time. So that of that portion of the endowment we may expect that the company will avail itself immediately. Then there is another question affecting the public. When the Manawatu Railway Company got permission to construct their line it was a condition that the land should be sold publicly, that there should be no private bargaining about it; and the result of this has been that every block of land has been submitted to auction at Wellington, so that the general public had as good an opportunity of getting it as anybody. In fact, there are a great many amendments that are absolutely necessary and that have never been referred to, and hence the necessity of this information. In regard to the alternate blocks, this system has been followed out in America.

The land is all divided into square blocks of 640 acres, and every alternate block is kept by the Government. The result is that the price is doubled, and the American Government get the railway made for nothing. After the railway is made the Government get as much for half the land as they would have got for the whole of the land before. This land will all be sold in large blocks, and the public will have no opportunity of acquiring any of it. Some honourable members who have gone round the country have declared very violently against large estates, but when they come to the Legislature afterwards they go in for giving away two or three million acres of land in a block. Sir, whatever happens, this undertaking is only a speculation, and I have no doubt that a great deal of money will change hands for it in another country. There may be victims in New Zealand—the Government and the people who have to pay—but there are also victims in the poor unfortunate parsons, widows, and spinsters, and others who may invest their money in a transaction got up for the purpose of working a speculation in this land. The non-completion of the contract has been referred to: that is a most unbusinesslike matter. There is no reference in the draft contract to the completion of the contract. I think all these matters should have the attention of the Government.

Amendment agreed to.

The Council divided on the question, "That the motion, as amended, be agreed to."

AYES, 19.

Acland	Miller	Scotland
Baillie	Peacock	Shepherd
Barnicoat	Pharazyn	Stevens
Bonar	Pollen	Walker
Buckley	Reeves	Waterhouse
Chamberlin	Richmond	Whitaker.
Lahmann		

NOES, 11.

Campbell	Johnson	Swanson
Dignan	Menzies	Taiaroa
Fraser	Peter	Williams.
Holmes	Shrimski	

Majority for, 8.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes past nine o'clock p.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 1st December, 1887.

Country Telegraph Offices—North Auckland Trunk Railway—Native Lands—A. Carter—Addington Goods-shed—Rotorua—Wairoa Road—Resident Magistrates' Courts—Charges—Cuvier Island Lighthouse—Ladies' Privileges on Railways—Local Rates—Sir J. Fergusson—Lake Ellesmere Reclamation—Stationmasters in Grain Districts—Petane—Wairoa Road—Grass-seed-sowing—Makaretu Road—Volunteer Regulations—Auckland Resident Magistrate's Court Cases—Absent Officials—Trust Funds—Naval Defence Bill—Government Railways Bill—Mining Bill (No. 2).

Hon. Mr. Holmes

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### COUNTRY TELEGRAPH OFFICES.

Mr. MOAT asked the Postmaster-General, Whether he will consent to the closing between seven and eight p.m. of those small country telegraph offices where little or no business is done during that hour, if requested to do so by the residents in the neighbourhood? A few days ago a somewhat similar question in respect of post-offices had been asked of and replied to by the Postmaster-General. He was aware that petitions had been presented asking that the Government should do what this question suggested. These petitions had been presented both recently and in former years, and he knew the Postmaster-General had had the matter under consideration. He hoped the honourable gentleman would be able to give some relief in the direction asked for. Many people felt strongly that it was imposing an unnecessary expense on the colony, and hardship on a number of officers, who were kept at the offices for this hour when there was no business to be done, or hardly any, and who therefore could not devote the best part of their evenings to obtaining instruction or to recreative purposes.

Major ATKINSON said he should have great pleasure in doing what the question suggested.

### NORTH AUCKLAND TRUNK RAILWAY.

Mr. MOAT asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether it is intended to change the proposed route of the North Auckland Trunk Railway, so that it shall pass through Port Albert? He had been induced to ask this question from the fact that a number of persons residing in the neighbourhood of Port Albert had been exercised by seeing a report in the Auckland papers of an interview between the Minister for Public Works and a deputation which recently waited on him with reference to this railway, in which it was stated that the deputation strongly urged the line should be continued as far as Port Albert. According to the proposed route, it was never intended that the line should go within several miles of Port Albert, and it was to ascertain if it was intended to change the route that he asked this question.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the Government had no intention of changing the route of this railway, nor of extending it as far as Port Albert, the amount at the disposal of the Government for expenditure upon this line being insufficient to enable them to do so. It was true that a deputation of northern members had waited upon him with reference to the extension of the line, but it was for the purpose of urging the Government to make further provision for the extension, and not for the purpose of getting the route changed.

### NATIVE LANDS.

Mr. PARATA asked the Government, Whether they will be prepared to amend section 16 of

"The Stamp Duties Act Amendment Act, 1885," in the direction of altering the definition of Native lands so as to limit it to land held under Native custom, for which a certificate of title or memorial of ownership has been issued or granted by the Native Land Court? He had asked a somewhat similar question a few days ago, but had not then fully explained the matter. His object in asking the question was to point out that the law, as it now stood, appeared to contravene the original intention, inasmuch as it imposed the payment of duty on all lands the title whereunto might be investigated by the Native Land Court; whereas it was assumed that the object in imposing the duty in the first place was to secure a payment to the revenue as compensation for waiving the right of pre-emption over purely Native land secured to the Crown by the Treaty of Waitangi and the 73rd section of the New Zealand Constitution Act. To impose payment of duty on land over which the Native title had been previously extinguished before taking it into the Court to have the ownership investigated, was manifestly unfair, as no concession had been granted by the Crown to justify a charge of this kind being tacked on to property that had been set apart for Native purposes under some special arrangement. Under the present state of the law, all the Native reserves in the South Island recently dealt with by the Native Land Court were subject to duty in the event of the owners leasing such lands to Europeans. There were also lands in other places on the same footing on which, in fairness, the duty ought not to be imposed. It was hoped, therefore, that the Government would recognise the justice of altering the law to exempt the lands alluded to from the provisions of the Act, if it was found that the assumption was correct.

Major ATKINSON said it would not be possible to deal with this question this session, but during the recess he would look into the matter and see what relief the Natives were fairly entitled to, if any, and make provision if necessary.

#### A. CARTER.

Mr. LEVESTAM asked the Minister for Public Works, If it is true that a man named Alfred Carter, who is employed at the hydraulic lift at Greymouth, has not been paid any wages for the last nine weeks; and, if it is true, what is the cause of such delay? He had given notice of this question in consequence of a communication that had reached him making the statement referred to in the question. He should like to know if this was true; and, if so, whether steps would be taken to remedy the grievance for the future. This man was a constituent of his, and therefore he thought it his duty to bring the matter under the notice of the Minister.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the statement was correct; but the man had been working for the Greymouth Harbour Board, and not for the Government. The amount of wages due to the men had been certified to by Mr. Martin, the Government Engineer. The Board, how-

ever, being short of funds, could not pay them, and the long delay was caused by the Board having to negotiate with the Bank of New Zealand at Auckland for an advance of £5,000. This had been arranged for, and the men had had their wages paid to them.

Mr. LEVESTAM said that, when he spoke to the honourable gentleman on this matter, the honourable gentleman told him to put a question on the Order Paper.

#### ADDINGTON GOODS-SHED.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will cause to be erected a small goods-shed at Addington, the want of such shed being a great inconvenience to the people living in the locality?

Mr. MITCHELSON said that, as there was a goods-shed within a mile and a half of Addington, the Government did not see their way to spend money in erecting one at Addington.

#### ROTORUA-WAIROA ROAD.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Public Works, If it is intended to have the road between Rotorua and Wairoa put in repair, so as to enable tourists to visit that place during the coming tourist season? The road that he wanted put in repair was about nine miles long, leading from Ohinemutu to the old Village of Wairoa, which was destroyed by the late Tarawera eruption. Last season the road was put in repair, but in consequence of a large quantity of stuff having fallen from the hills the road needed further attention. A large number of tourists had been to Rotorua already, but they could not get to Wairoa by vehicle, and he hoped the Minister for Public Works would be able to give a favourable answer to the question.

Mr. MITCHELSON said it was not the intention of the Government to put this road in repair; but it was intended to divert the road from Rotorua to Rotomahana *via* Pariteru, and a sum would be placed upon the estimates in order to carry it out.

#### RESIDENT MAGISTRATES' COURTS CHARGES.

Mr. MARCHANT asked the Minister of Justice, Whether his attention has been directed to a recent case in the Hawera Resident Magistrate's Court, in which the costs, where a 5s. fine was imposed, amounted to £3 17s.; and whether he will devise some means to relieve country settlers from excessive costs in the Resident Magistrates' Courts? In this case a Stratford resident had been fined 5s. at Hawera, whilst the costs amounted to £3 17s. The greater portion of that sum was made up of mileage on the summons and on two subpoenas, the charge for which was £2 11s. In all probability, however, the summons and the subpoenas were served by the constable, who travelled free over the railway, the State being put to little or no expense in consequence. If this case had stood alone he (Mr. Marchant) would probably not have drawn attention to it, but whenever a Stratford resident

was summoned to Hawera or to New Plymouth the same hardship occurred, the charge for mileage in the latter case being about half as much again as to Hawera. Moreover, it was generally believed that the fees in the case of New Plymouth did not even go into the coffers of the State, but that they were the personal perquisites of the bailiff. He hoped that the Minister of Justice would inquire into the matter, with the object of relieving country residents from this injustice.

Mr. FERGUS said the attention of the Government had not been drawn to this matter until the honourable gentleman had put his question on the Order Paper; but, on making inquiry, he found that the Justices were not aware that they had the power to remit the costs, or any portion of them; otherwise they might have done so. But he also had a telegram from the Resident Magistrate, who said that he had been informed that the case was a very bad one, and that the penalty, including costs, was richly deserved. Still, he thought that something might be done to provide that, in cases of this kind, the person charged might, if he were guilty, at once plead by letter, and thus be saved the necessity of attending the Court. The Government would take the matter into consideration during the recess.

#### CUVIER ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE.

Mr. PEACOCK asked the Government, What progress is being made with the erection of the Cuvier Island Lighthouse, and when it is expected that this important work will be finished? The lighthouse referred to was very important in the interests of the shipping and maritime portion of the community. He understood that the lanterns and other apparatus had been in the colony some time, and it was understood that the work of erection would be proceeded with at once. He should be glad to hear whether the works were progressing, and when they were likely to be finished.

Mr. FISHER said it was quite true that the apparatus was in the colony; but he would ascertain the exact position of the matter in a day or two, and inform the honourable gentleman of the intention of the Government.

Mr. PEACOCK said the work was to have been proceeded with last year.

#### LADIES' PRIVILEGES ON RAILWAYS.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will issue instructions to the Railway Department to provide a carriage for ladies only, to be attached to the express train running between Dunedin and Invercargill, and also upon all long-distance lines where they are not at present attached?

Mr. MITCHELSON said there had for some time past been such a carriage attached to the trains running between Christchurch and Dunedin, but on five days out of six there were no ladies travelling in it. As the experiment had not been a success on that long length of line, it was not proposed to try the experiment on the

line referred to by the honourable gentleman. It was very costly to draw an unnecessary carriage all that distance; and he understood that there were conveniences on the carriages running between Dunedin and Invercargill. If it were not so he would make further inquiries.

#### LOCAL RATES.

Mr. W. P. REEVES asked the Premier, Whether the Government will consider the advisability of inserting a provision in the Rating Act to compel the rate-collectors employed by local bodies to make a reasonable effort to recover from occupiers of rated properties before making demands on the owners thereof? It seemed that rate-collectors employed by local bodies often did not endeavour to collect the rates from the occupiers. They let the rates stand for some time, and in the meantime it was often found that the tenants had made themselves scarce, and the owner had to pay. It was suggested that rate-collectors had done this because of a friendly feeling towards the occupier, but of that he had no proof, and could only say that complaints had been made.

Major ATKINSON could hold out no hope that what the honourable gentleman wanted would be done. It seemed only reasonable that the landlord should look after his tenants. The local bodies had quite enough to do to get the rate from the land.

Mr. BLAKE thought that the honourable member for St. Albans had never been Chairman of a Road Board.

#### SIR J. FERGUSSON.

Mr. W. P. REEVES asked the Premier, Whether Sir James Fergusson was acting as Governor of the colony when he purchased certain Native lands in the Waikato district on a written understanding between the Native Department and himself that the law relating to the tenure of such lands should be altered? He understood that Sir James Fergusson did not purchase the land first-hand from the Natives, but that he had purchased land which had been bought from the Natives. The title to the land was not complete, owing to restriction against alienation, but it was understood that there was a pledge that the restrictions would be removed.

Mr. MITCHELSON said that Sir James Fergusson never had purchased this land from the Natives, but that it had fallen into his hands as mortgagee during the time that he was Governor of Bombay. The land was purchased from the Natives by Mr. Every Maclean, of Auckland, and a letter was given to him by the Native Office promising that the restrictions should be removed; and when he sold the land to the gentleman who mortgaged it to Sir James Fergusson the document referred to went with the purchase, and that was how it passed into the hands of Sir James Fergusson.

#### LAKE ELLESMERE RECLAMATION.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked the Minister of Lands, What is the intention of the Government as to carrying out the proposed works

*Mr. Marchan*



in connection with the reclamation of Crown lands adjoining Lake Ellesmere, and providing a better outlet for the River Halswell? A great deal of preliminary work had been done in connection with the reclamation of this lake, and the settlers on the flat were suffering enormously in consequence of the quantity of water overflowing their lands from this work. He hoped the present Government would carry out the intention of their predecessors with regard to this reclamation.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON regretted that it was out of his power to give a favourable reply to the question, as it appeared that, on the most moderate computation, the work would cost several thousand pounds.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN would point out that there were two questions, and he presumed the reply had reference to the lake. Could the Government provide a better outlet for the River Halswell?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said the reply referred generally to both questions, but he would look into the matter referred to in the second question more fully.

#### STATIONMASTERS IN GRAIN DISTRICTS.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will arrange that at such railway-stations in large grain-growing districts where there are no regular station-masters temporary provision may be made during, say, two months of the grain-delivery season, by the appointment of one of the line-men, or other employé that can be spared, to act as stationmaster for that time? The Minister for Public Works must agree that it would be a very great convenience to a great number of settlers in a large grain-growing district to have temporary provision made during the grain-delivery season as suggested in the question, and he believed the cost would be very trifling, if anything at all.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the matter had already been brought under his notice by the honourable member for Akaroa, who had communicated with him by letter. It was still under consideration, and if the concession asked for could be agreed to it should be carried out; but before that was done inquiries would have to be made.

#### PETANE-WAIROA ROAD.

Captain RUSSELL asked the Minister of Lands, If he will authorise a detail survey being made of the best line of road from Petane to Wairoa, Hawke's Bay, and cause a bridle-track to be made on that line out of funds available for opening up lands before sale? There was, he understood, a considerable area of land in the neighbourhood of Wairoa, to which there was no access except by the precarious method of going by sea and landing on an open beach.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said he had learnt on inquiry that the land in question was of a somewhat difficult and inferior character. The road-line between these points had been

surveyed, and the estimate of the cost of making the road was £25,000, and of a bridle-track £10,000. In the meantime the Government were unable to undertake this work.

#### GRASS-SEED-SOWING.

Mr. TANNER asked the Government, If they will give instructions that grass-seed be sown on the forest-lands of the Crown immediately after a fire has passed through, also on roads which have been cut through forest-lands? It was well known that when a fire passed through a forest a quantity of undergrowth sprang up which could not be burnt off, and it was therefore a very important point that grass-seed should be sown after a fire.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON replied that the question of sowing forest-land was important, and it was now the recognised rule both to sow down roads in grass and areas of forest recently burnt when notice of such fires had been sent to the Government; and this principle would be adhered to so far as funds permitted.

#### MAKARETU ROAD.

Mr. TANNER asked, If the Government will take steps to improve the road through the new Makaretu blocks (recently sold) at a spot known as "the Ravine," to enable settlers to reach their sections? The road had been recently cut, but there was no Road Board, and the road was in such a state that he understood no pack-horse could be taken past the ravine. He understood that, in the opening of these roads, the practice of the Government was to open them sufficiently to enable settlers to get to their land, but in this case that had not been done.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said, with regard to this, the House would be asked to vote a small sum for expenditure on the road to the Makaretu Block.

#### VOLUNTEER REGULATIONS.

Mr. WARD asked the Minister of Defence, If he has any objection to there being issued under section 14 of "The Volunteer Act, 1881," an Order in Council for embodiment in the Volunteer Regulations: (1) the compulsory retirement of all officers, unless for good and sufficient reasons, on attaining the age of sixty years; (2) the approval of the Commander-in-Chief, so long as they are not repugnant to the Act and regulations now in force, to "standing orders" of any regiment of cavalry, artillery, brigade of naval artillery, or battalion of rifles; (3) permitting any battalion of rifles to work upon a "regimental system," if they should elect to do so?

Mr. FERGUS, in reply, said there would be no objection to retirement of field officers at sixty-five and other officers at sixty years of age. But a system of retirement after so many years' service in each rank as in Her Majesty's service would be preferable, whether or not combined with a fixed superannuation age. As to the second question, there was no objection to it. As to the third, where Volunteers desired it this would be advantageous;

but the wishes of each corps would have to be considered before taking away their present independent organization, and therefore the decision of a simple majority of the battalion would not be sufficient.

#### AUCKLAND RESIDENT MAGISTRATE'S COURT CASES.

Mr. MCGREGOR asked the Minister of Justice, Whether his attention has been drawn to the manner in which Mr. Baddeley, the Assistant Resident Magistrate of the Court at Auckland, conducts the business of the Court? He considered it unfortunate to have to draw the attention of Ministers to the decisions of Courts of justice; but this case was notorious, and he thought it right to call the attention of the Department of Justice to it.

Mr. FERGUS replied that the attention of the Government had been directed to certain decisions given by Mr. Baddeley, and it was the intention of the Government to inquire into the matter.

#### ABSENT OFFICIALS.

On the motion of Mr. TURNBULL, it was ordered, That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing the number of Government officials absent from the colony, their annual salaries, and the time and terms on which leave has been granted.

#### TRUST FUNDS.

On the motion of Sir J. HALL, it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a return showing the securities on which the several trust funds of the colony, whether sinking funds, Savings-Bank funds, funds of the Government Insurance Department, of the Public Trust Office, or any others, are invested.

#### NAVAL DEFENCE BILL.

A message was received from His Excellency the Governor, transmitting the Naval Defence Bill.

The House having resolved itself into Committee of the Whole,

Major ATKINSON moved, That the Committee recommend that leave be given to bring in the Bill.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Will the Colonial Treasurer be kind enough to inform the Committee what amount has already been spent for defence purposes?

Major ATKINSON.—I am sorry to say that I cannot state the amount positively; but, speaking from memory, I think that, including £54,000 of liabilities on the 30th September last, there has been about £369,000 expended. But I speak from memory, and of course am open to correction.

Mr. TURNBULL.—It is difficult to ascertain the amount, as it is classed with harbour works and defence. I think we have got into the position in which we now find ourselves through having a military man as Governor, our timidity being increased in consequence of a paper read by him before an institute here. We have spent between £300,000 and £400,000 in putting our

harbours in a state of defence; and now we are called upon to do what, I freely admit, would have been the proper thing to have done before. Would the honourable gentleman tell us the amount which is proposed to be taken under this Bill?

Major ATKINSON.—On the basis of population it will be about £20,000 a year. It would, however, be more convenient to take the discussion when the Bill comes on for second reading. The honourable gentleman is under a misapprehension in supposing that the earth-works, and so forth, do away, or were supposed to do away, with the naval defence. These are simply a basis upon which the navy can act. I will explain all that more fully when I move the second reading of the Bill.

Motion agreed to, and the Bill read a first time.

#### GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—Mr. Speaker, in moving the second reading of this Bill, I shall endeavour to show honourable members the reasons that have decided the Government upon asking the House to hand over the control of our railways to a non-political Board. Ever since the inauguration of our railway system dissatisfaction has existed, and year by year this dissatisfaction has grown to such an extent that we now find the public from one end of the country to the other are clamouring for a change. One need only look at the Order Papers of the present and previous sessions to ascertain that in the minds of honourable members a great deal of dissatisfaction also exists. In the Provincial District of Auckland a very large number of people advocate the adoption of what is known as "Vaile's system." There is no doubt whatever that if that system were adopted throughout the country the users of the railways would be very largely benefited; but those benefits would be derived at the expense of the general taxpayer. While, in the present condition of the colony, I should not be disposed to recommend a trial of Vaile's system throughout the country, as I feel satisfied that by doing so great loss would result, yet I think it is a matter for the Board to consider, when appointed, whether or not it would be in the interests of the country to give that system a trial upon one or more sections. We are continually receiving applications from various parts of the colony for conveniences, extra accommodation, and other matters, and there are also complaints of inconsistencies and anomalies in our present scale of rates and charges, and repeated applications for reductions. The question has now arisen, whether the Government railways are to remain under our present system of management, or whether we shall adopt another. I myself have for many years been against appointing non-political Boards, fearing that by so doing we should be parting with too much power. I have during the past year considered the question very carefully, and I must say that I have reluctantly arrived at the conclusion

Mr. Fergus

that the only solution of our present difficulties is a non-political Board. I have come to this conclusion after giving the matter a very great deal of consideration. If it were possible that a Minister could be appointed to the position of Minister of Railways and Public Works for a definite period, then I should say, Maintain our present system; but where we have responsible Government, and Ministries are subject to come and go at the will of the House or of the people, it is a matter of impossibility for any Minister, no matter how clever he may be, to grasp the position, or make himself thoroughly acquainted with the intricacies of railway management, which require years of careful thought and study to thoroughly master. In the unfortunate position of Minister—who, perhaps, is only in office for a very short time—he has to rely, to a very large extent, entirely upon the advice and information he receives from the officials of the department; and this will always be the case so long as we carry out our present system of appointing Ministers to the position who have had no practical experience. I may, however, say that, as far as I am concerned, during my connection with this Ministry I have nothing whatever to complain of as to the officers of the department, for I have received from them every facility, and the greatest support from Mr. Hannay, who has, in the General Manager's absence, managed our railways in a most efficient and praiseworthy manner. I may also say that, in the years 1882-84, when I had the pleasure of occupying the position I now hold, I had then Mr. Maxwell, the General Manager, under me; and I may say that I then considered that he was a very able and very efficient officer: but he was very unfortunate in having to offend a very large section of the public. In endeavouring to do his duty to the country he had to refuse facilities and conveniences which, had he conceded them to the public, would have made him intensely popular; and from my observations then made I feel convinced that as a railway manager he will be hard to replace. So that, in asking the House to agree to the second reading of this Bill, it is not in any way casting reflections upon the previous management of our railways. The system itself will have to be remedied. The system now proposed has been in vogue in Victoria for four years, and there it has been so successful that the neighbouring colony of New South Wales has framed a Bill upon similar lines to that in operation in Victoria. It is some what an improvement on the Victorian Bill, but there is no doubt that the Government of New South Wales introduced it after being assured of the success of the Victorian measure. Of course, in dealing with a country which, from its configuration, is so peculiarly situated as our own, in which so many different elements are competing against us in the shape of water-carriage and roads, it is not quite right to compare it with either Victoria or New South Wales. We have a great many more difficulties to contend with; and, no

matter whether our railways are managed by a Board or by a Minister, these difficulties will exist; nor can we hope to obtain as good results as they have done; and for that reason differential rates, perhaps to a greater extent than they have them, however objectionable, will have, to a certain extent, to remain in force in this country. The Bill we have now before us is chiefly based on the Victorian Act. There are in it some clauses taken from the New South Wales Act, and there are some new clauses, and we have endeavoured to improve the Bill so as to meet the requirements of this country in every way. The language of the Bill is very plain, and I do not think it necessary for me to dwell at length on each particular clause, but I shall briefly refer to them, and, where necessary, shall comment on them. Clause 3 empowers the Governor to appoint the Commissioners, and fixes the date on which the Act is to come in force. This is necessary because we must have time to consider where the Commissioners are to be obtained from; but no unnecessary delay will take place. Clause 6 provides for the appointment of the Commissioners, and fixes their term of office. This is fixed at five years; but in Victoria and New South Wales the term is seven years, and I myself think it would be wise to strike out the "five" and insert "seven," because I think by that we shall be able to secure the services of better men, and give more satisfaction to the public. Much better results will, I am sure, be obtained by fixing the term at seven years. Clause 7 provides for the tenure of office of the Commissioners, for their removal and suspension, and also that, in the event of any Commissioner being suspended, a statement of such suspension shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament. It also protects the colony against any *laches* on the part of any Commissioner. Clause 8 provides for the appointment of the Chief Commissioner, who, under this Bill, will not have the supreme power that the Victorian head has. I think that is a mistake in the Bill, and that it will be necessary to give him supreme power, as in Victoria, where the provision is,—

"That the Governor in Council may appoint one of the Commissioners to be Chairman, and, if the Chairman should differ from the decision of the other two Commissioners with respect to any matter that is before them for determination, such matter to be deferred for twenty-four hours, when it shall be again brought forward; and, in the event of the Chairman again differing from the decision of his co-Commissioners, such matter shall be determined by the Chairman, who shall enter his reasons in the minute-book, and shall forward to the Minister a true copy of such minute for presentation to Parliament."

I think that would be a very wise course for us to adopt, for it is a mistake to introduce an expert with a high salary and then allow him to be overruled by the two other Commissioners, who may not have the same knowledge as he possesses. Clause 9 provides for salaries and

allowances. Clause 10 provides that any two Commissioners shall be a quorum. Clause 11 provides that if, at any meeting when only two Commissioners are present, a difference of opinion should arise, the matter is to be postponed for a full meeting. Clause 14 stipulates that no Commissioner shall be interested in any contract or other emolument, under a penalty of a fine or imprisonment. Clause 15 defines the duties and powers of the Commissioners, giving to them the management, working, and maintenance of all railways now constructed or to be constructed. I think that is a very important provision, and I feel certain that a great saving will be effected by handing over to the Commissioners the power to construct railways. In the past our railways have been constructed in a manner which has not been satisfactory, and consequently a very large amount of money has been voted by Parliament out of every loan for improvements upon open lines which would not have been necessary if the lines had in the first instance been properly constructed. Of course a great deal has been spent on rolling-stock, which is a matter of necessity; but a great deal has also been spent in reconstructing actual lines, in straightening curves and flattening grades, which should not have been necessary. By placing construction as well as working in the hands of the Commissioners I feel sure a large saving will be effected. Clause 16 vests in the Commissioners all railways within the meaning of the Public Works Act of 1882, giving them full power to construct, purchase, or acquire any railways which are now worked by and on behalf of Her Majesty, and all rolling-stock, machinery, goods of every kind, land, and, in fact, everything in connection with our railway system. Clause 18 provides that the titles to lands are to be registered in the names of the Commissioners. Clause 19 provides that all conveyances and agreements made before the commencement of this Act by the Minister shall be binding on the Commissioners. Clause 20 confers upon the Commissioners all the powers under "The Public Works Act, 1882," respecting the working, management, and maintenance of railways. Clause 25 empowers the Commissioners to undertake construction-work. Clause 26 vests in the Commissioners any railways that they may construct. Clause 27 is a most important clause, as it prevents either the Governor or the Minister from having any control whatever over the railways. Clause 30 provides for the reconstruction, duplication, or other extension of any existing railway. It also provides that the Commissioners shall not incur liabilities to a greater amount than Parliament has appropriated, except in cases of emergency, and then only after having received the consent of the Minister in writing. Clause 31 gives to the Commissioners the authority to decide upon the position and erection of stations, sidings, piers, wharves, buildings, and other works of accommodation. I think that is also a very useful clause, as in numerous instances in the past stations and sidings have, through political

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influence, been erected in places where they would not have been erected had proper discretion been used. Clause 36 gives to the Commissioners power to make or alter by-laws for the objects mentioned in the subsections. Clause 39 vests in the Commissioners the working of the telegraph-lines as agents for the Postmaster-General. Clause 40 gives the Commissioners power to enter into contracts with the Postmaster-General for the conveyance of letters, papers, parcels, and any other thing in connection with the postal service. Clause 42 gives to the Commissioners power to make contracts for everything required by them for the purpose of carrying out the Act. Clauses 43, 44, and 45 also refer to contracts, and how they are to be carried out. Clause 46 vests in the Commissioners the power to control and expend all moneys appropriated by Parliament for the construction or other work upon the railway. Clause 47 provides that the Public Revenues Act of 1878 shall apply to the Commissioners, and that all moneys collected or received by them shall be paid in to the credit of the Consolidated Fund. Clause 48 provides that before intrusting any of their employes with the control of money satisfactory security must be taken. Clauses 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, and 59 relate to employes, showing how they are to deal and be dealt with. They are all safeguard clauses. Clause 60 stipulates that the Commissioners shall lay upon the table of the House an annual report within a month of Parliament meeting. Clause 61 gives to the Commissioners power to appoint and remove employes, to regulate salaries and wages paid to employes out of moneys voted by the General Assembly, and provides that persons in the employ of the Government shall have the same rights as if they had been appointed by the Commissioners. Clause 62 states the powers vested in the Commissioners respecting regulations as set forth in subsections (1) to (11). Clauses 63 and 64 set forth how appointments are to be made. Clause 65 is a most important clause, as it provides that no appointment shall be confirmed until the probationer has effected an insurance upon his life for an amount which will be considered satisfactory to the Commissioners. Subsection (2) provides that from the salary of every officer, clerk, or employe a percentage to be prescribed shall be deducted, which shall be invested in the Public Trust Office at interest; and upon retirement from the service of such person, from whatever cause except for the commission of a crime, the amount to his credit is to be paid over to him. This will be a great boon to the railway servants, as by adopting this means they will to a certain extent be provided for. With reference to this clause, I think it would be well for the Government to subsidise this fund by putting into it the amount which they now have to pay for accidents or injury to men, and also adding to it the amount now at the credit of the accumulated fund account. The absence of a benefit fund has been a great blot on our system, the amount of money

that the men have received in case of accident being very small indeed. Practically, it has been no benefit to them. Clauses 66 and 67 relate to promotions, gratuities, and overtime payments. Clauses 69 and 70 relate to discipline. Clause 71 makes the Commissioners, or a majority of them, a Board of appeal for employes. Clause 75 saves the existing rights of Civil servants. The meaning of that clause is this: that all persons now in the Civil Service who are entitled to pensions or retiring-allowances when leaving the Service, as soon as they receive appointments under this Board will have their pensions or retiring-allowances computed, and the amount placed to their credit; so that, if they take service under the Board, they will cease to have right to pensions or retiring-allowances; and when they leave the service of the Board the amount of the computed value will be handed to them. Clause 76 provides for the investigation and reporting of accidents. Clause 77 provides that the Governor may direct a formal investigation to be made as to any accident that the Minister may consider has not been properly inquired into. In conclusion, I have only to say that, if the House will pass the second reading, and will assist the Government in making the Bill a workable measure in Committee, I shall be very much pleased; for I am convinced that, unless we pass this most important measure this session, we shall not be doing our duty to the country, and the inconsistencies and anomalies in our existing scale of rates and charges will still be a cause of irritation to the public. If, on the other hand, the Bill is passed and the Board appointed under it, I trust and feel sure that they will rearrange the tariff so as to give general satisfaction to the public throughout the country.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I have very great pleasure in rising to make a few remarks on this Bill; but I should first like to be allowed to congratulate the honourable gentleman on the speech he has just made, giving a short description of the very important measure he has introduced, and, further, on the evidence of the care and trouble which the honourable gentleman has taken in preparing this Bill. I have reason to know what that trouble has been, because on previous occasions I have gone through the same process myself, and have prepared at least three Bills on this subject, to one of which I shall presently refer. I do not propose to follow the honourable gentleman in his description of the Bill, or in the remarks he has made, but rather to call attention to a few points which he has not laid much stress on, and which to me appear to require to be brought before the House and to be thoroughly understood before this important Bill is passed. The honourable gentleman said that since the railways have been opened in this country dissatisfaction at their management has existed, and that that dissatisfaction has increased from year to year. I have no doubt that he was speaking from his experience when in his present office in 1883 and 1884, and also now, and that, if he has extended his inquiries to

what is going on in the adjoining colonies, he has found that the dissatisfaction in New Zealand is not a tithe of what it has been in Victoria and New South Wales, and, further, that the dissatisfaction which has existed in these colonies is not nearly so much as the dissatisfaction which has existed in connection with railway management in older countries such as Great Britain, and in several European States. He will find that dissatisfaction has existed and has grown in every country in which railways have been constructed on a scale of any magnitude. I shall presently refer very briefly to the reasons—which the honourable gentleman has not really stated—why the Colony of Victoria has adopted this system of railway management, and why New South Wales is about to do so. I was very sorry to hear the honourable gentleman say that he thought it not improbable that the Commissioners might try what is known as Vaile's system of working on some of the lines. I do not believe at all in that system, and I hope they will not waste much time in considering it, because, if they look into various works which have been published on railway management, and the reports of the proceedings of various institutes in older countries, they will find that fully twenty-five years ago this matter was discussed, and the plan, I am told, was even tried on a small scale, and it has been condemned absolutely by all those who have really had anything to do with railway management, not only in Great Britain, but also on the Continent of Europe. I have a work now before me in which the matter is dealt with in a very able way. I was exceedingly pleased to hear the honourable gentleman state so emphatically as he did that the Government, in bringing forward this measure, had no intention of casting any reflection on the officers of the Railway Department. I entirely agree with that, and I may say here that the officers of our Railway Department generally have shown the possession of capabilities of a very high order indeed, and they are, as a class, very superior to those who, till quite recently, were employed on the railways in the neighbouring colonies, and a class of men who, if they had had freedom of action in dealing with our railways as a commercial concern, apart from all other considerations—some of which I shall refer to presently—would have caused our railways to show very much better and very much larger results than they have done hitherto. The honourable gentleman went on to say that the real point—the decision we have to come to—is, whether the system has to be changed. Now, I should have liked to hear him go a little more fully into this matter, and say what he means by changing the system; because, as far as I am aware—and I think, probably, I am as fully informed as it is almost possible for any one to be—as to the action taken by the Railway Commissioners in Victoria, and also what has taken place in regard to the management of the railways in Victoria prior to their being placed in the

hands of the Commissioners, having had the good fortune to be closely associated with some of those largely connected with the railway management there;—I say, from my knowledge of this, I understand that the system of management by the Victorian Railway Commissioners is practically the same as it is now in this colony and, practically, all the world over where there are railways. The difficulty that has been met with in our railway management—the honourable gentleman did not lay much stress on it—has been the interference, if I may so call it, of political pressure as to the question of rates; and the same difficulty has existed to a large extent in the adjoining colonies. I think there has been very little else that has caused difficulty in this colony. The honourable gentleman then went on to say that, owing to the peculiar circumstances of this colony, and the position in which the railways are placed as regards competition, differential rates are necessary here. Now, there also I should have liked him to go more fully into the point, because I propose to say a few words further on it; and my remarks on this head probably would not have needed to be so long if the honourable gentleman had been a little fuller and stated explicitly what he meant. Before going further I may say that there is a very considerable difference between the Victorian Act and the Bill now before us; and the New South Wales Bill differs largely from both. When the honourable gentleman was referring to the appointment of a Chief Commissioner an honourable member asked if the rate of remuneration for that officer had been fixed; and I understand the Government have not yet fixed it. Very great powers are proposed to be given to the Chief Commissioner, as in Victoria, and very much will depend on the rate of remuneration the Government offer as to the class of man the Government will be able to induce to come to the colony, if they go to Europe for him. That is a very important point, and one on which very much depends as to making this system successful. I shall pass over a number of other remarks the honourable gentleman made until I come to what he said with regard to the expenditure incurred on opened lines. On hearing the honourable gentleman's remarks, it struck me that he inferred that a large part of that expenditure had been needlessly incurred; whereas the facts are these: When our railway system was initiated in 1870 and 1871, it was proposed that the lines should be of a light, cheaply-constructed character, and that the rolling-stock should be of the same character; but since the lines have been opened there has always been pressure exercised to increase the speed of running trains, and to bring our railways generally more up to a class of a very much higher character than what was proposed on the initiation of our system. The consequence has been that, as the rate of speed has been increased, it has been found that heavier rolling-stock was indispensable; and this, in its turn, necessitated very considerable additions in the

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way of strengthening, ballasting, and so on. In fact, both the lines and the rolling-stock have been made of quite a different, more expensive, and more permanent character than what was intended when the railways were made. The honourable gentleman passed over clause 25 very lightly, and it was to that clause that I expected him to draw the attention of the House especially, because it is by that clause that the entire future construction of the railways is placed in the hands of the Commissioners. The honourable gentleman has not told us what the views of the Government are as to the instructions which will be given for the guidance of these Commissioners—I mean by "instructions" the general method of the future management. To show what I mean in this respect, I have taken some notes of the references by various speakers in a recent debate; and I have found that among those who have referred to the railway-management question opinions seemed to be just about equally divided as to what should be expected of the Commissioners. That is to say, some honourable members have stated that the railways should have been made more, in the past, for the purpose of opening up the country, and those honourable gentlemen have added that they do not think that the railways ought to be expected to return interest on the money laid out on them. On the other hand, we find an equal number of members who have addressed the House stating that the railways ought to be put in the hands of a Board such as is here proposed, and to be worked on commercial principles, and be made to pay interest on the cost of construction. Of course, if the Commissioners are to have this great power, it will be necessary, before the House gives them that power, that some understanding should be arrived at as to what the railways are to be expected to do. As to the provision for employees who may meet with accidents, I will only say that, in respect to the sum of some thousand pounds which has accumulated from fines inflicted during several years past, it was the intention of the late Government, if the Board Bill had been passed in 1885, that this sum should be handed over for the commencement of such a fund as the honourable gentleman proposes to make under this Bill. Now, I think there has been a great deal of misapprehension in this House and in the country generally as to the reason why the railways of Victoria were handed over to a Board. It was not owing to any such system of management as the honourable member referred to, but it was because of the enormous political influence that was brought to bear for securing employment on the railways for the friends of members of Parliament, supporters of the Government for the time being. Abuse in that direction had grown to such an extent in connection with the Victorian railways that it was absolutely necessary that something should be done. It was a notorious fact that the skilled officers in the department, those who really understood their work, were actually being impeded by the enormous number of persons forced upon the

department owing to that political influence of which I have spoken. That was really the reason of the Government of Victoria adopting this different system of management. And, if my information is correct—and I am sure it is, because it comes from one of the highest authorities in New South Wales,—that sort of thing has also gone on in New South Wales, although not to the same extent as in Victoria; and that is regarded as a cause for alarm. It seems to them that the only way out of the difficulty is to completely alter the system of management. It is not my intention to draw any comparison between the working of the railways in New Zealand and in the other colonies; but, when I state to the House that the Government of New South Wales are about to spend something like half a million in the way of reorganizing their workshops and their general management, I think the House will see that it is time indeed that they did alter their arrangements. Before leaving this part of the question, I may say that since 1880, at any rate, none of those abuses with reference to the appointment of officers to which I have been alluding have taken place in New Zealand. The system of classification adopted here in 1880 on our railways has been, as far as I have been able to see, carried out fairly; and improper appointments have not been made as the result of political pressure. It is almost impossible that they should be made. However, the fact is that you have now, and have had for some years, in force on the railways of this colony precisely the same system that has been adopted in Victoria, so far as that part of the management of the railways is concerned. Of course I do not say that we have any right to claim originality, for we had taken our system from those which had been adopted by other countries. However, such is the fact, and it is a fact that, I think, has been overlooked, that you have already in this colony the system of classification that is in force in Victoria under the Railway Board, and that it has been brought into operation by the departmental officers. Now with reference to this question of differential rates. In reading through this Bill, though I have had some little experience in these matters, I am bound to say that I should have liked to see the specific powers which it is proposed to give the Board set out at much greater length, for it seems to me that some necessary powers are omitted, while one or two of the powers proposed to be given ought, I think, as I said at the outset, to have been further alluded to. Among those I now refer to are those of fixing rates. The Victorian Board has power to make what are called contract rates for quantities. I believe it is doubtful whether such a power exists here. At any rate it is not specified in this Bill. I believe that it has been used to a small extent on the New Zealand railways, and it has been used to a considerable extent on Victorian railways; and it is a point on which there is a great deal of dissatisfaction in many directions in Victoria. In this Bill it is proposed specifically to authorise the Board to make differential rates

of charges for the carriage of passengers or goods. Now, there is a very great difference of opinion among experts as to what this term "differential rates" will cover. In older countries differential rates have been made for export traffic, import traffic, and rates for long distances and rates for short distances; and these already exist to a very considerable extent in this country. These rates have been made after careful consultation with importers, exporters, merchants, and traders generally, and also not in entire forgetfulness of the interests of producers and consumers. Of course it is quite understandable that a rate which may suit an importer will not suit an exporter, and a rate which will suit the consumer may not suit the producer: hence all the trouble and dissatisfaction that have been caused under the different railway systems, not only here, but in the older countries. I dare say the honourable gentleman had seen Mr. Grierson's work, which is the most recently published work on the question, and if any honourable member looks through that work he will see chapter after chapter on this question, showing how these different rates operate under different circumstances on the railways throughout the world, and how they have given rise to the appointment of various Commissions by the Houses of Parliament in England, the sittings of one of which Commissions lasted over two whole sessions of Parliament. It will be seen from the evidence of experts that a large number of persons who use the railways get what they ask for, and they are never heard of; but those who fail to get what they want are heard of very often, and, as a rule, the smaller the complaint the more you hear about it. That is to say, you never hear of those who get what they want; but those who have any cause to be discontented come forward and continually worry till they get what they want; and, if they do not succeed with one Minister, as soon as there is a change the worry begins again. No doubt honourable members will carefully look at this Bill, and I dare say they will discuss the matter much more freely and much more capably than I can, and they must see—that is, if I read the Bill aright—that a very great power will be placed in the hands of the Commissioners to follow in the footsteps of the Board in Victoria and make these special rates; and that, if it is allowed to go to any large extent, would produce dissatisfaction far greater than anything we have yet seen in this colony in connection with our railways. Act after Act has been passed in Great Britain and on the Continent of Europe to prevent this very thing, and they have stopped it as far as it possibly can be stopped, and it cannot be done openly in England; but, of course, differential rating is allowable, and exists to a very considerable extent. Although it has only been in force to a very small extent here, owing to the extraordinary troubles which the honourable gentleman in the course of moving the second reading of the Bill alluded to as opposing those in charge of the railways, still I am quite sure it will ob-

tain, if the railways are put under a Board, to a much larger extent. I am sure the honourable member will bear me out when I say that the Manager or Acting Manager of the Railways has told him that he could bring in a considerable amount of revenue if he could make a rate in a certain direction, but, at the same time, he had pointed out that, if this were done, the Ministry must be prepared for a repetition of what had taken place before, and that, if they were not strong enough to resist it, although the rate would bring in a large amount of revenue in one part of the colony, yet in another part, if pressure were brought to bear, and it were adopted there, it would bring about a very large loss. The question of different rates in different parts of the country I have heard referred to in recent debates on more than one occasion, and I have no doubt we shall hear a great deal more about it. I have no hesitation myself in saying that there is room for a very considerable alteration in that direction, and that in that way a very large additional revenue may be got from the railways without doing anything that any reasonable-minded man could object to. I shall not trouble the House further. There are several other points in this Bill, but they are more Committee objections, and to refer to them would involve such an amount of technical description that I should trouble and weary the House. I can only again say, with regard to my action in this matter, that in this House on several occasions misrepresentations have been made when I have not had an opportunity of replying; and that those misrepresentations have been repeated outside, and very much magnified. I spoke very strongly in favour of Boards of Management before I took office in 1884.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—“Hear, hear,” the honourable member says. Well, immediately on my taking office I gathered all the information that could be got on the subject from Victoria, and I may say I have been constantly engaged on the subject. I communicated with officers in Victoria and in other colonies, and I prepared a Bill—a Bill I have here—which was introduced by me into this House in 1885. Now, it is an open secret—and there can be no harm in my saying it—that the original Bill I prepared is almost on the same lines as that now before the House. But the Government of which I was a member did not consider that they would be justified, in view of the feelings of the country, in centralising the whole of this power in Wellington and having one Board only; and I was called upon—though to a certain extent against my will—to alter this Bill, and to propose the establishment of two Boards, one in the North Island and one in the South. Now, that Bill was not discussed in this House, and my reason for not pressing it was that I found, from consultation with various members of the House—and my colleagues will bear me out here—that there was by no means a strong feeling in favour of this measure at that time, but rather the reverse; and the business of the

session was such that it was not considered worth while to take up the time of the House discussing it, for we had not the slightest chance of passing it, and we thought it better, as I stated in the House at the time, that this Bill should be circulated, and that we should hear what the constituencies had to say about it. Before the end of the session I had a very large number of copies of that Bill struck off, and they were sent about in many directions; but between that and the next session we hardly heard any reference made to this question throughout the country. I mention that fact because it has been stated very freely, and it was said in this House by an honourable member only a day or two ago, that the late Government did not dare to bring forward a Bill on this subject. The late Government were quite prepared to deal with this question; but, from the various causes I have just referred to, the matter was not considered sufficiently pressing to force it through the House. There is not much difference between the Bill of 1885 that was introduced into the House here and the Bill which is now in force in New South Wales: in fact, many of the clauses are the same, as must be the case, because they are drawn from very much the same sources. In many of the clauses of the New South Wales Act the wording of our Bill of 1885 has been adopted in preference to following the Victorian Act, and I had the honour of sending copies of this Bill, by special request, to New South Wales. I am not going to take up the time of the House further, but will only say, in conclusion, that, if this Bill goes into Committee, if I can be of any assistance to alter it or improve it I shall be very glad to do anything in my power to help the honourable gentleman in the matter.

Mr. COWAN.—I have very much pleasure in rising to support this Bill. It embodies a proposal which the country looks to this Parliament, and, if it is at all possible, to this session of Parliament, to give legal effect to. It is a source of considerable satisfaction to me to have heard the late Minister for Public Works promise his cordial help in passing this Bill through the House and Committee, because I know it was through adverse circumstances that that gentleman, when he was head of the Public Works Department, was unable to put the management of the railways under a Board as is proposed in this Bill. I therefore think it is a matter for great satisfaction that this Bill will have his support in making it a workable and efficient measure as it goes through the Committee of this House. Now, Sir, there is no doubt this question is one of very great magnitude and one of very material interest to the country. In the first place, it deals with the management of a property which has cost the country over fourteen millions of money. In the next place, the best and most vital interests of the producers of this country will be at the mercy of the Board of Management which it is proposed to constitute. Our railways may be made a huge taxing-machine. As such, that machine can be put in operation

Mr. E. Richardson



for either the weal or the woe of the producers of this country; and therefore I consider that this Bill is one of the most vital importance, and it ought to be looked at from the point of view of the interests of the producing part of the community. Now, it has been stated, and no one can doubt, that the management of our railways has, from North to South, produced nothing but dissatisfaction. As I have said previously in this House, that dissatisfaction has been brought about not so much from the conduct of the officers in connection with the management of the department as from the fact that this Parliament looks to the officers connected with the railways to produce a certain revenue from them. Those officers have, unfortunately, adopted what I call cast-iron rules. From carrying out those cast-iron rules with a view to producing the amount of revenue which they had instructions to produce, this dissatisfaction has in a great measure arisen. Now, although it is my intention to help the passing of this Bill to my very utmost—and I trust it will get fair consideration from both sides of the House—still I must say that the blot of this Bill seems to be this: that no direction, no indication is given to the Board in this Bill as to what they are to produce from the railways. That is an omission which strikes my mind as being a blot on the whole Bill. If such directions are not given to the Commissioners under this Bill, the amount of dissatisfaction that may be created in this country through the operations of these Commissioners will be at least tenfold what it now is. If these Commissioners think of producing not only interest on the capital of fourteen millions but revenue in addition, the effect of that policy will be that it will crush out our producing community; it will have a most deleterious effect upon the best interests of our producers. And therefore I would urge the Minister to take this matter into consideration, and that he should, by legal enactment, give instructions to these Commissioners as to what our views are of what they should produce from the railways. That is a point that strikes my mind as being most necessary in regard to this Bill. The Minister for Public Works has referred to what is known as Vaile's system; and I have a certain knowledge of the proposals of Mr. Vaile, and I know the result of the Committee's inquiries into his proposals. His proposals in regard to passenger traffic failed entirely only on account of the paucity of our population; but I can see this: that, if Mr. Vaile's proposals, instead of having reference to the passenger-traffic of our railways, had application to the goods-traffic, and the carrying of the produce of the country, then I think that that system would be productive of immense good; because, in a few words, Vaile's system is this: It puts an individual resident a hundred miles from a port in the same position with regard to freight as an individual ten miles from a port. That is the plain English of Vaile's system, so far as I understand it. And if such a system could be put into operation so as to put the producer

a hundred miles from a port in the same position as a producer ten miles from a port, then an immense impetus would be given to the producers of the colony. But, as I say, so long as we have a limited population and no leisure population, Vaile's system, as applied to passenger-traffic, cannot be a success. Now, in regard to the omission in the Bill of guidance with regard to what the Commissioners are to do with reference to a revenue from our railways, there is no doubt that the manner in which to produce satisfaction in the management of our railways would be to reduce the rates. No doubt that is the process, and, until the rates are reduced, depend upon it this competition that we have had from the roads as against our railways will still continue. But, on the other hand, the reduction of the freights on our railways will bring about an injustice to some of the taxpayers of the country, because there are large districts in New Zealand that have not the facilities of railways. Depend upon it, if the rates are reduced so as to reduce the ultimate revenue from this source of income, that will produce an injustice to those taxpayers who, without having facilities, will be called upon to make up the loss in the revenue. It is a patent fact that the management of the Victoria Railways under a Board such as is proposed by this Bill has been productive of an immense success. But, on the other hand, we must not expect to have similar results here, because in our colony the circumstances are very different. We have the competition of water here, and we have a straggling country and very many centres; whereas in Victoria the whole produce of the colony centres at one point, and therefore their circumstances in this respect of the management of railways are very much in advance of what we can look for in regard to ours. Another omission of this Bill, as far as it strikes me, is that the management of the railways in both Islands is to be centred in one Board. My view is that a greater amount of satisfaction would arise if two Boards were appointed, one for the North and another for the South; but I prefer to abandon the two, on the score of economy, so as to have a trial for a few years of the management under the one Board. The Board should not be centred either in one Island or in the other, it must necessarily be a peripatetic Board, and, in order to bring about the greatest amount of satisfaction, it must not be centred for very long in any one portion of the two Islands. As I say, I shall waive my objection in this respect, so that we may have a few years' experience of the working of the Board; and then, if the necessity arises, a Board for each Island may be appointed. Then, with regard to the term of years for which the Commissioners are to be appointed, my view is that we should adopt the smaller number of years proposed in the Bill, and not the number suggested by the Minister for Public Works, because I think, if they were appointed for five years to begin with, if they are not a success, and if their powers are not put into operation in such a

manner as to foster the best interests of the producing portion of the community, then we ought to have the power in five years to bring their work to a conclusion. I am glad to know that the Bill will have the support of the late Minister for Public Works, and I trust that in its passage through the House it will be made as workable as possible, and be so framed as to conserve and foster the interests of the producing portion of the inhabitants of this colony.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—It is with very great satisfaction indeed that I hail the introduction of this Bill into the House. For a long time past I have felt that until we got the railways of the colony under the management of a non-political Board we should not only have popular dissatisfaction all over the colony—as has been mentioned by the Minister for Public Works, and also by the late Minister—but we should from year to year find more extensive cause for that dissatisfaction. The honourable member for Kaiapoi has told us that no such dissatisfaction has existed in this colony at any time as has existed in Victoria, in New South Wales, and also in England. While I defer very largely indeed to the honourable gentleman's much greater experience, and will therefore not attempt any positive contradiction, all I have to say on the point is this: that very great dissatisfaction has existed here, and—as far as I have been able to judge—with a very large amount of cause. The honourable gentleman said the original design upon which our lines were constructed was very different from what is sought for now: that the railways were constructed of light material, and were intended only for slow travelling, and to carry light weights. I am bound to agree with him in that to a large extent; but I would point out this to him: that that does not at all, in my opinion, excuse the numberless mistakes—which it is very difficult for any man of common-sense to understand—that have been made in the location of the lines and the gradients fixed for those lines. The most familiar and forcible instance that occurs to me is on the Manawatu line, that line having, in the first instance, been laid out under political supervision. Though it will be hardly credited, I have the best authority for stating it as a fact that on the length of that line between Otaki and Longburn two sections of it were laid off by the Government with grades of from 1 in 40 to 1 in 50, and curves down to so small a radius as seven chains. Any one who has travelled along this line—and a number of members of this House must have done so—could scarcely see how human ingenuity could have planned grades and curves such as I have described. The line is now constructed by the Manawatu Railway Company with, I am informed, not a single grade exceeding 1 in 100. Such is my information, and I shall be very glad to be corrected if I am in error. Numberless instances such as that will occur to any one travelling along the lines of the colony, and it must be abundantly evident that very little business knowledge and very little of the commercial idea could have been present to the

people who laid off those lines; and we now have, unfortunately, to pay for this in the great cost of working those lines. Under the Victorian Act it is incumbent upon the Commissioners to furnish a report to Parliament before any new lines are constructed, showing what the expectation is as to the working results; and I am sorry to see, as far as I have read the new Bill, that there is no such provision in in as that. I hope the Minister for Public Works will insert such a provision, for I think it is one of the most important in the Victorian Act. Now, the honourable member for Kaiapoi laid special emphasis on clause 25, and expressed his inability to gather from the Bill what was expected from the Commissioners—that is to say, the lines on which they were expected to act in fixing freights and fares. I confess I did not quite understand the meaning of the honourable gentleman; and I could not help thinking that clause 36 was much more to the point than clause 25. Under the corresponding clause in the Victorian Act—that is, the clause relating to by-laws and fixing freights and fares for passengers—the law gives the Commissioners power to enact such by-laws; but the Government reserve to themselves the power to assent to those by-laws, and they cannot come into force until an Order in Council gives them effect. I have been picturing to myself the position into which the Commissioners would be launched with powers such as are contained in this Bill. What guide are they to have as to whether they are to manage the railways from a strictly commercial point of view, or where they are to draw the line? I hope that when the honourable gentleman replies he will make it clear to us what the policy of the Government is in this direction. The honourable member for Kaiapoi, in giving the reasons which induced Victoria to appoint a Board of Commissioners, stated that the pressure there had been enormous to find work for the unemployed, and also in the direction of getting cheaper rates; and that pressure somewhat similar to that had existed in New South Wales before they appointed a Board. He also stated that no such abuses existed here. In so far as that they do not exist in this colony to the extent to which they exist in the two other colonies, I agree with him; but I cannot admit that no such abuses exist in this colony. Can any honourable member who recollects what has occurred in the House within the last few days say for one moment that pressure has not been brought to bear on the Government? Do they not recollect member after member getting up whenever certain railway questions were before the House; and can any one say that pressure has not been brought to bear on the Government? I cannot help thinking that the honourable gentleman, no doubt quite inadvertently, has to a certain extent misled the House; and I am sure that in relieving the Government in the future from political pressure this Bill will be conferring a great benefit on the country. Another point raised by the

Mr. Cowan

honourable gentleman—and I am glad he referred to it, because I could not otherwise have understood the remarks he made—was as to the dissatisfaction which he says exists in Victoria owing to the special rates as to quantities. I have here the last report of the Victorian Railway Board, giving all the instances in which these special rates have been made for quantities and for other reasons, and I can hardly understand how any dissatisfaction can exist, because the whole number of instances in which these special rates have been made is only nineteen. I have a summary showing the different reasons for making them, and I may say that there are only six of those nineteen instances in which the special rates have been made on account of quantities, and in nearly every case it has only been for short distances—that is to say, from Melbourne to the port and *vice versa*. I cannot help feeling that the honourable gentleman is misinformed as to the extent of this dissatisfaction which he says exists in Victoria. Of course there is this to be said: that the Commissioners who may be appointed here may take a different view of their duties, and extend these special rates very much more largely than the Victorian Commissioners have done; but the fact remains that it is simply impossible, so far as this item is concerned, that any large amount of dissatisfaction can exist in Victoria. The honourable member referred to the Bill which he himself had drafted; and, recollecting also the very emphatic language he used before he came into office in 1884, it must be evident that very strong reasons existed in his mind in favour of such a Board as this. He explains to us to a certain extent, but only to a certain extent, the reasons which brought about a change in his mind. I shall not dwell on his reasons any further than to cite one of them, which he gave in speaking to his constituents at Kaiapoi, that Harbour Boards, such as Timaru, Oamaru, and Kaiapoi, would be injured.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I did not give that as a reason why the Bill was not gone on with. I simply said it might be the effect, if the Bill were drawn on the lines of the Victorian one.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I will leave the honourable gentleman himself to answer, when I ask him what other inference any one could draw from his remarks than this: that the position of these Harbour Boards formed one of the reasons which actuated him in not pushing on the Bill which he had drafted.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I never made use of any such argument. I simply pointed out what would probably be the effect of working the line between Oamaru and Hurunui if it were worked on purely commercial principles. It had nothing to do with the drafting of the Bill or pushing it on. It was merely a local question.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Well, I am not disposed to dwell upon that, and will accept the explanation of the honourable gentleman. I was very glad indeed to listen to the remarks of the honourable member for Hokonui with regard to the question of whether one or two Boards

would be most advantageous. I do hope, in the best interests of this Board, if it is to be appointed, that the Bill will pass with one Board and not two. I also hope that members from the South Island generally will take the same view as that taken by the honourable gentleman to whom I have referred. I regret that the Minister for Public Works, in moving the second reading of the Bill, did not give us a summary, from his point of view, of the results accomplished by the Victorian Railway Board as compared with what was done under political management. I should like to make a short statement of what I have gathered on the subject. I find, for instance, in the report furnished by the Victorian Government for the year ending December 31, 1883, that the gross receipts from the railways had been £1,898,000, and, deducting the working expenses, it left £611,044, leaving a loss on the year's working of £235,000. That is to say, the consolidated revenue had to pay £235,000 for interest which the working of the railways under political management failed to cover. The first report from the Commissioners was brought down in 1885; but I will not refer to that, so as to save time. In the next year the report showed that the revenue from the railways had increased by £147,000, although the freights and fares had been reduced for the year to the extent of £100,000. This means that, as compared with a deficiency of £235,000, which had to be supplied from the Consolidated Fund in 1883, the report presented last year showed that a surplus profit of £61,000, after paying interest, had been paid into the Consolidated Fund; and this year we find that, although reductions have been made by the Commissioners in the freights and fares equal to a total of £253,000, a surplus of no less than £40,000 was paid into the consolidated revenue. The honourable member for Hokonui said it was not to be expected that we should get the same successful results from a Board here: and with that I fully agree; but I am strongly convinced that, though the results here may not be so great as in Victoria, yet the system will be an enormous improvement on the present if we are only fortunate enough to get the right man as Chairman—of course, very much indeed will depend on that. The success of the Commissioners' management in Victoria is also emphasized by this fact: that, while the population has increased by only 9 per cent. since the Commissioners took office, the receipts from the railways have increased by 80 per cent. It has given me great pleasure to be able to state these few facts in support of the Bill, and I hope the measure will be carried into effect, with the necessary amendments suggested by the late Minister for Public Works, and others which will no doubt be suggested by other speakers.

Mr. WHYTE.—I intend to support this Bill—at all events, its second reading—because I think that it holds out a slight hope of mitigating one of the more prominent of the evils connected with the system of representative government. We are all aware that repre-

sentative government has many defects in its working, and I fancy that hitherto our railways have supplied a glaring illustration of at least one of these defects. They have shown it not only as regards their management, but also as regards their construction; and, in the management, not only as regards the rates, but also as regards the appointment of officials and employes generally. Perhaps dealing with the matter of construction now is something like locking the stable-door after the horse has been stolen; but, nevertheless, it is better late than never. There is no doubt in my mind that if our present system of management were continued our railways would, in time, become a great political engine, if, indeed, they have not become so already. I am glad to say they have not yet become so to so great an extent as they had in Victoria before the present system of management there was established. The late Minister for Public Works has told us how bad the Victorian system had grown and what an engine of corruption and mismanagement it was. I am glad to say that, so far, here that has not been the case. But I think prevention is better than cure; and this Bill holds out a hope of affording the required prevention: otherwise I fear that in course of time our railways would come to be manned from end to end by those who are little better than political agitators; for, if you give employment in any grade on the railways, be it high or low, through political influence, of course the men will be engaged not on their merits in railway-work, but on their merits as political agitators and street-corner politicians. In my district the question of railway-management was really the burning question of the late election; and I dare say this will be readily understood when I say that my district is about a hundred miles from a port, so the question of freight is continually coming up and agitating the public mind very much: indeed, the state of feeling there in regard to railway-management is not sufficiently described as one of dissatisfaction—it almost amounts to one of exasperation. I cannot illustrate that more forcibly than by saying that the House and the country very nearly lost my valuable services through this very question, as I was considered to be not quite energetic and radical enough upon it. The Minister for Public Works has already alluded to Mr. Vaile's system; and, whatever may be the merits of that system, in my district the belief in it almost amounts to a religion, and very many clear and hard-headed men believe in it; and, although, I regret to say, I have never been able to see my way to support it in its entirety, still there are certain lines in Mr. Vaile's policy of which I approve, and that are capable of being productive of good results. It must, however, be manifest to all that a change is required, and also that it is absolutely necessary that some policy as to working our railways should be indicated by the House to guide the Commissioners; and, speaking generally, I believe that the encouragement of production and settlement should be the object

aimed at in working our railways, rather than the raising of revenue only. Of course the getting of revenue must also be considered; and, in the present state of the country's finances, it perhaps may be admitted that we could not afford to receive a less total than at present from the railways. Still, I think production and settlement should also be duly regarded; otherwise country districts at a long distance from ports will become depopulated instead of peopled. I also think some difference should be made in the direction of favouring the longer distances by a graduated scale of charges, or in some other way. This is, however, not the time to go into the details of any policy. All I wish to point out at present in that respect is that a policy should certainly be laid down by Parliament in the Bill for the guidance of the Commissioners, and, as far as possible, it should go in the direction of encouraging production and settlement. I know I shall be told by honourable members who represent districts that have no railways that that would be unfair to them. And no doubt to some extent it would be unfair to them; but I dare say the House will be surprised to hear that the proportion of the population in the colony that is not served by railways is only about 11 per cent., and that that percentage is decreasing every day. Only about 11 per cent. of the total population do not directly reap some benefit from our railways; and in many cases these people have had assistance in the way of harbour and other works in their districts, and therefore the position is not so unequal as it at first appears. It must be remembered also that even they will reap some benefit from an improvement in the management of our railways, because, if settlement and production are encouraged, that must mean increasing the number of our population, and decreasing thereby the burdens that are now pressing upon the general mass of the people. In speaking of the past management of the railways, I must say, in fairness to those who have been responsible for it, that they have been very much handicapped by there having been no definite policy at all laid down for their guidance. They have been told to make the railways pay. But, on the other hand, they have been subjected to very unequal political pressure to reduce rates. In some districts political pressure has been strong in one direction, and in other districts there has been pressure in another direction not equally strong, and therefore it has prevailed in some places and not in others. But even when political pressure has prevailed in getting what might be a perfectly proper reduction in one district, as soon as it has been made there has been an accusation of unfairness. As the late or ex-Minister for Public Works said, the same reduction has then been insisted on all over the colony, and consequently a great loss to the revenue has ensued. Speaking generally as to the policy on which the railways should be worked, I will just say that I think *those* who use the lines for the longer distances should be favoured as much as possible—that

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is to say, people travelling or sending goods one hundred miles or so should be allowed to pay a less rate per mile than those who only use the railways for a distance, say, of ten miles. That is the principle which regulates wholesale and retail trade, and I believe it is perfectly sound on commercial principles. I also think that the fares should not be so high as to be an absolute bar to people travelling, and that no one should be prevented from going about the country, to look for work or otherwise, by high railway-fares; but, to meet that difficulty, I would only lower the fares for the second class, while those who wished to be select, or who wanted comfort and plenty of room to sprawl over the cushions and take their ease, should be made to pay for it. In my journeys throughout my district and other districts in the colony I have found that a very great part of the existing dissatisfaction—nineteenths of it, I believe—is caused by the high charges upon small consignments, and by the extreme uncertainty as to what the charges will be. No one seems to know with certainty what he will have to pay; consignors have found by experience that they have been charged 10s. one day and 15s. the next for the same article. Of course the departmental officers tell us that should not be, and that it is owing to the mistakes or carelessness of officers, and that these things should be complained of, and they would be put right. That is all very well, no doubt; but, though possibly complaints might be made and grievances redressed after a lot of trouble had been taken, yet many people do not care about being compelled to take that course. There are many people who have a strong objection to complaining, or even to writing a letter, and many of such people, to my own knowledge, have become so irritated and angry at the mismanagement and overcharges by which they have suffered that they have ceased to use the railways at all except when they cannot possibly help it. With regard to Mr. Vaile's scheme, of which we have heard so much, one of the principal reasons why, though sympathizing with the object in view, I could not entirely approve of it was that it seemed to me to begin at the wrong end, by dealing with passengers' fares instead of with freights. It seems to me that the question of freights is of much more importance than the question of the fares of passengers. It is true that Mr. Vaile says that he can apply his system to freights equally well, and perhaps he can; but he has not done so yet at any rate: therefore at present we can only consider his system as applied to passenger-fares. Moreover, it appears that the prospect of lowering freights is contingent with him upon the financial success of his scheme as applied to passenger-fares. He expects to make £200,000 a year more than at present by means of his system of passenger-fares, and with that money he would be able to reduce freights by one-third. The earnings in respect to freights amount at present, I believe, to about £600,000 a year; and by means of this £200,000 he expects to be able to reduce freights generally by

one-third. However, as I was not convinced that this scheme would prove a financial success, I, as one of the Committee appointed to consider the matter, would only agree to give it a trial in some part of the colony on the condition that the district in which it was tried should be responsible for any deficiency to the revenue that might accrue. I was afraid that if his system were tried generally, without any such restrictions as that, it would result in a large deficiency, which would, of course, have to be made up by extra taxation. I desire to say, however, that this is only my individual opinion, and that, on the other hand, there are many practical men in my district and elsewhere who cordially approve of Mr. Vaile's proposals. I desire also to say that such a hold has this system taken upon the public mind in the Province of Auckland that nothing but a fair trial of its merits will set the question at rest. Of this there has been ample evidence; and the agitation in its favour will, I think, never cease until a trial is accorded to it; and I trust the Board will see their way to grant one. Meanwhile I should like to see freights reduced, more particularly with reference to articles for export. I think that such articles should be carried at cost price. The question of differential rating and special rating has been referred to by previous speakers. Now, any one who has considered the subject must admit that differential rating is an absolute necessity if we are to get any revenue from our railways. If we do not take into consideration such things as cheapness of working in some localities as compared with others, and the competition there is with the railways in certain places, we shall find the trains, especially near the large towns, running empty. Now, I wish to say a word as to the Victorian Railway Board, about which we have heard so much. As I have said, I intend to vote for the second reading of this Bill; but I do not expect anything like the benefits to ensue from it which we are told have ensued in Victoria. I emphasize "we are told," because I have my doubts, and I have heard very varying accounts of the working of the Board in Victoria. At any rate, supposing it to be a success there to a large extent, it does not follow that it would be equally so here. The circumstances are entirely different. There the railways form one system, radiating from one centre, and, generally speaking, all running inland; whereas here we have about a dozen different systems. We have the Whangarei-Bay of Islands system, the Auckland system, the Napier, and the Wellington and Foxton systems, in the North Island. In the South Island also we have pieces of scattered railways on the West Coast, and the Picton, Nelson, and Hurunui-Bluff systems, each of these particular systems requiring separate staffs and surplus plant; and, moreover, they have, in many cases, to compete with water-carriage either by sea or by river. Therefore we cannot possibly hope to have the same results from the adoption of this scheme as have been secured in Victoria. Another thing

seems to be lost sight of also, and it is this: that the rates in Victoria—I have had occasion to look into this rather closely lately—are, on the average, higher than they are in New Zealand. Now, I hope and most sincerely trust that the rates here are not going to be raised, because, if so, the people of the country districts, situated at the longer distances from a port, will not be able to live at all. We hear a good deal about Protection, but if any class in the country requires protection just now it is the small struggling settlers, and I venture to say that protection to them would benefit the colony more generally than any protective duties upon imports. We have been told that local conditions should not be considered. I say it is absolutely necessary to pay attention to local conditions. I freely admit it would be very difficult for any Government to introduce special rates, because they would be at once accused of favouritism, and there would be great dissatisfaction. We have seen it attempted to a small extent already, and it is always said that it is done to suit this or that person, and that it is done to benefit Auckland or Canterbury, or whatever place the Minister for Public Works happens to come from. This, I think, would not occur with a non-political Board. I am glad to see that the present double system of constructing railways and managing them by separate departments is to be abolished, and that both are to be put in the hands of one body. I think every one who has paid any attention to the working of these departments must know well that the dual system has not worked well—that one party is always undoing what the other has done. I am glad to see that this is abolished by the Bill. I think it is a very necessary change. And also, as to the matter of construction of future railways, I am sure that if the proposal contained in this Bill had been in force in the past we should have saved a great deal of money. Certainly some of what are known as political railways would not have been built. I notice also a proposal in the Bill to maintain a system of account-keeping as between the Railway and the Postal and Telegraph Department. I wish to throw out the suggestion that I think it is unnecessary, and that the railways should, as a matter of course, carry the mails for the Postal Department and do the telegraphing without any account-keeping. It would not affect the general revenue, though it might result in the department being credited with moneys which did not properly belong to it. But we have got rid of that sort of thing in connection with the stamp duties; and, although we do not know exactly where the revenue comes from, I do not know that that matters very much. I also wish to say that I agree with the system of insurance, and think that a man should be forced to make some little provision to meet the requirements of his family in the event of his being injured, killed, or discharged. There is another question that I should like to say a word upon, and that is as to damages. I think that when this question is being dealt with there should

be a little reciprocity—that, if individuals are to be liable for damaging the railways, the colony should be responsible to individuals who are injured by the railways. I am certain that some of our farmers will be ruined sooner or later by fires created by the railways, and I think that the Government should be made clearly liable for this sort of thing. There seems to be no clear law on the subject just now. Sometimes persons suffering loss by these fires gain actions, sometimes they lose them; but I understand that the Government always plead non-liability. I think that, as damages have to be paid to the Government in certain cases, the Government should also be liable in similar cases. I regret that, owing to the hour for adjournment being so near, I have had to curtail my remarks upon this subject, which is of such vital importance to the country districts. I shall therefore simply conclude by saying that I shall support this Bill at present; but I do not bind myself to vote for it when it comes out of Committee, because I think it is capable of a great deal of improvement, and it will be time enough for me to decide what I shall finally do when it comes out of Committee. My main reason for voting for it now is that it holds out a hope of at least lessening one of the evils of our representative system of government. Honourable members need only refer to the Order Paper of this and last session to see how the present evil is growing and is likely to go on growing, until our railway system will become little better than a field for political intrigue and patronage. For that reason I support the second reading of the Bill, and beg to congratulate the Minister for Public Works on his efforts to improve the existing state of things and to provide against worse in the future.

Mr. SAMUEL.—If the second reading of this Bill goes to a division I shall vote against it; and I will try to shortly explain why. When I entered politics three years ago I was of opinion that it was necessary to have the railways managed by a non-political Board; but my opinion has changed. The principal reason for that change is this: that we have seen the experiment of the Insurance Board. That Board was appointed for the purpose of getting rid of the perpetual attempts made to serve the interests of individuals at the expense of that institution, but it was an utter failure. And that Board had a greater chance of being a success than this. That was an elective Board, the members of which could be rejected at the will of those who were chiefly interested. It is not so in this case. This Board will be a power in the land; and I venture to predict that, at no great distance of time, from one end of the colony to the other we shall hear complaints about the management of this Board, and that we shall be doing our best to do away with it. I sympathize with the Minister for Public Works in his desire, and with the ex-Minister for Public Works in his desire, to give the management of the railways into the hands of a non-political Board; for there is no doubt that the management of the rail-

*Mr. Whyte*

ways is the chief cause of the unpopularity of successive Ministries, and it also causes greater trouble to members of this House than any other subject. It is quite natural that Ministers and honourable members should like to get rid of this question; but I venture to say that the change will not satisfy the country. The railways are necessary more for the purpose of encouraging settlement and promoting production than for supplying revenue; and I venture to say that no non-political Board that could be appointed under this Bill would sufficiently recognise that fact, and I think that the appointment of a Board which will make everything subservient to getting revenue will mean the sacrificing of the best interests of the colony, because the Board's only aim will be to show as good a return as possible. For that reason, if this Bill goes to a division I shall vote against it. I am convinced that if it does pass there will immediately be a revulsion of feeling against the system, and the most strenuous efforts to undo the mischief the House is now so anxious to perpetrate.

Mr. PEACOCK. — Sir, there is no doubt whatever that the Bill which is now before us asks us to take a most serious step with regard to our railways. While it cannot be denied that there is a very large amount of dissatisfaction throughout the country regarding our railway charges and management, still it is questionable whether we should look at the matter in the light the Minister for Public Works has put it, that some change is wanted, without looking very cautiously and carefully into the scheme proposed to be substituted for the present state of things. The position, I believe, that most honourable members are in with regard to this question is that, while many of them were unfavourable towards the management of our railways by a non-political Board, they have recently come to look favourably at that proposal from the experience which has been had in Victoria with regard to a similar Board. At the same time, I think it must be apparent to most honourable members that the information which we possess upon that subject is of a very meagre kind. It is true we know that, whereas before the Commissioners took charge of those railways there was a large deficiency in the revenue to meet expenses and interest, now there is a considerable surplus. But I cannot help thinking it would have been well had the Minister for Public Works, in introducing this Bill, taken the trouble to get the particulars with regard to the working of this system in Victoria, so that honourable members might be able to come to a better judgment on the matter. It is evident that a great deal would depend upon these particulars. If we had some tables put before us, giving in a condensed form the particulars contained in the Victorian railway report, we should be able at all events to see whether the improvement which has taken place in the Victorian railway-management is of such a character that we might fairly hope that similar results would obtain in New Zealand.

Of course we are all aware of the very great difference that exists between the geographical features of the two colonies; and I think it would have been well if we had all the information it was possible to get before being asked to come to a decision upon this point, for we must take care that we do not, to use a homely phrase, "jump out of the frying-pan into the fire." It is the more necessary, if the new system is to be made binding for a series of years, that we should be thoroughly persuaded in our minds that it is a judicious and prudent thing for us to do. It might be said in favour of the Victorian system that since the Commissioners took charge of those railways, the returns of revenue and the improvement in the finance have been of a gradual and increasing character. I believe that in 1884-85 the amount of revenue earned was equal to 4.18 per cent. on the whole cost of the railways, the increase of the revenue for the same year being £280,117; and in 1885-86 there was a further increase of £147,000, less increase in the expenditure of £33,000, leaving the net increase at £114,000; making in all, compared with the year 1883, an increase of £647,317. It is also stated in the report for 1884-85 that there was a deficiency to meet the working expenses and interest of £39,000, and that in 1885-86 there was a surplus over all working expenses and interest of £61,483; and in the same year a reduction in the rates took place to the extent of £100,000. Now, I admit that the fact that the returns of revenue and the general results in the railway-management of Victoria have been of a gradually improving character says much in favour of the adoption of that system. I believe that the evil which has existed in our own system has been this: that the rules which may be applicable to one portion of the colony are not equally applicable to another, and that the rules have been of such a rigid character, with such a want of elasticity in them, as to be not suitable to meet the requirements of particular districts. It would be evident, I think, that if the Commissioners spoken of in this Bill are to be appointed, and there is to be only one Board, it will be absolutely necessary that the Commissioners shall reside for a certain time in each Island in order to become thoroughly acquainted with the particular requirements of the various districts. Unless such a course is adopted on the part of each Commissioner, I am afraid we cannot hope for that improvement which we have seen to mark the Victorian system. The intention which the Minister expressed, of increasing the term for which these Commissioners are to be engaged from five years, as stated in the Bill, to seven years, does not meet with my approval. I think, if we make such a very serious change as this, it is not wise to bind ourselves to a long period, and that it will be necessary that the colony should have some means, if the change were found unsuitable, of reverting to the present system, or to some other which might be thought to be more serviceable. I mentioned, when I spoke generally on this subject in the

financial debate, that it would be absolutely necessary for this House to decide as to what rules should guide these Commissioners—whether they should be supposed to aim at earning interest on the money invested in the construction of the railways, or whether we should give chief prominence to the settlement of the country and look to the indirect gain flowing to the colony from that source. My own opinion is that we ought distinctly to look for our railways being made to pay a reasonable amount of interest on the money that they have cost. I do not say that I would go to the extent of asking that they should be made to pay the full charge of 4 per cent. which we have had to pay for the money; but I say that we might possibly aim at their being made to pay 8 per cent., leaving the margin of 1 per cent., which might fairly be looked upon as covering the indirect advantages to which I have referred. We are at a disadvantage as compared with Victoria, as our population is scattered, and we have a great amount of water-communication; and there are other circumstances which, by bringing competition to bear on our railway system, will make difficulties in the way of any Commissioners making our railways pay, possibly at any early date, because I believe it will be necessary for any men acting with business prudence to make sure that the railways carry a fair amount of traffic, even although, to secure that, the rates have to be made so low in the first instance as not to enable them to reach the amount of interest on the cost of construction, which they should aim at in the future. There is one point in the Bill about which I have considerable doubts, and that is, whether it is a wise thing to bring in the question of the construction of new railways being placed under the Board of Management. It is quite true that those gentlemen who will be found most useful in giving effect to this scheme might be engineers, men trained in the actual making of railways, or in mechanical engineering, or otherwise, and that it might be possible they would have that knowledge which would enable them to give effective assistance in the way of constructing railways. At the same time I think it must be borne in mind that it does not necessarily follow that this engineering experience would be the best to carry out this from a business point of view. I think, myself, that it might very fairly be confined, in the first instance at all events, to the actual management of the railways, leaving the question of the construction of new lines to be dealt with by those who have specially devoted themselves to that subject. With regard to the remark which has been made by the honourable member for the Waikato that this system, if it were introduced, might do away with what are called "political railways," I do not see that that has any force, inasmuch as the House would still have to deal with the question of what new railways should be constructed, and this Board would merely deal with the carrying of them out; so that the question of political railways, or of railways

*Mr. Peacock*

being made which are not necessary under the circumstances in which the colony is placed, would not be affected by the appointment of such a Board as this. The honourable member for New Plymouth made the remark that he had been in favour of giving the management of our railways to a non-political Board, but that he had changed his mind, and he gave as a reason for his change of opinion that the Insurance Board had been a failure, and he argued from that that the same result might come from the Board we have now under consideration. But I will point out to the House that the two things are not on parallel lines at all. In this case it is proposed that we should put in charge of our railways men who have special aptitude for the particular work to be undertaken, and that they should devote the whole of their time to these duties, whereas in the Insurance Board we had a number of men who were supposed to give a portion of their time to that purpose. Therefore the cases are not parallel, as they would be if, in the case of the Insurance Board, the men had been actively engaged during the whole of their time, and had been men of practical experience in carrying out such a system as an insurance scheme. I will only repeat that it would have been well if the Minister, in bringing down the Bill, had given us—and I hope he will do so yet—in a condensed form, the particulars supplied by the Victorian railway reports, so that honourable members may be able to judge as to the particular changes that were made during these years by the Commissioners in charge of those railways, and be able to judge how far a similar course of treatment would be applicable to this colony, or likely to produce the result which we anticipate. I shall support the second reading of this Bill, but I shall reserve to myself the right to make further inquiry with regard to the details of the measure. Possibly in Committee it may be modified to a considerable extent, and I shall await that process before coming to a final decision as to the action I shall take.

Mr. FISH.—I think, Sir, the Minister for Public Works may fairly be congratulated upon the clear manner in which he has placed this very important subject before the House. At the same time, I do not think that the arguments he or other speakers have used in favour of the Bill are sufficiently conclusive to justify the House in taking a departure of such a very serious character as this is. The principal reason that appears to be urged in favour of the reform now sought to be effected is that it will relieve the Government of what is called political pressure. Now, I am free to confess that it is quite possible, and no doubt true, that a considerable deal of political pressure has from time to time been brought to bear on the Government of the day in connection with our railway system; but I am not prepared to admit that that pressure has assumed such a phase as to justify us in taking this very extreme step. It is said that the people of the colony are clamouring for a change. To a cer-



tain extent, no doubt, people may be dissatisfied, but I take leave to express my very strong opinion that, even when the railways are placed under this Board, there will still be a great deal of dissatisfaction; and people will, in all probability, clamour for a change in the management of the Government railways as much hereafter, if not more than now. It is a moot point, and one fairly open to debate, as to whether the Government should retain the control of the railways in their own hands or not. I admit there may be arguments used on both sides of the question. I am strongly of opinion, however, that it is right for the Government of a country to have the control of its railways; and, if we once concede that principle, I think we should hesitate very seriously before giving up the control of Parliament. I think that Parliament should be extremely jealous as to giving up the right they have of criticizing freely the management of these railways from the meeting of one session to the other. I am very much inclined to think, with regard to political pressure, that these three Commissioners, if they were appointed, would be all subjected to pressure, perhaps almost as strong as that to which the Government of the day is. And when we talk of political pressure being brought to bear on the Government, and that it is used to the disadvantage of the railways, what a humiliating thing we have to admit! We have to admit that the Ministry of the day is unable, or not strong-minded enough, to resist pressure of an improper character. That is no argument for a change of system. It is only an argument in favour of getting a better and stronger-minded man to be the Minister of this particular department. If the Government of the day were to have an efficient manager of railways under a political head, I see no difficulty in the Government, and that gentleman, carrying on the railways in as satisfactory a manner as they would under a Board. I beg leave to express an opinion that the great cause of the fault-finding with regard to the manner in which our railways have been managed in the past does not so much arise from any inherent defect in the system, but is to be attributed more to the fact that the working head of the department was not a competent man. I have heard the Minister for Public Works this afternoon, and subsequently, at a later stage, the late Minister for Public Works, pay great compliments to the General Manager, Mr. Maxwell. I do not like to speak of a gentleman in his absence, or of a person who cannot defend himself; but, still, when talking on an important subject of this kind, we must do what is our duty, though we have to mention names. As I said, I think the cause of a great deal of the complaints we have heard may be attributed to the incompetency of the General Manager of Railways. Now, I do not think for the salary that was paid that gentleman you could get the best man possible for the work. If the Government establish this Board, it stands to reason that if the Board is to be intrusted with the enormous irresponsible

powers proposed to be conveyed to those gentlemen they must give the head of that Commission a very large salary indeed—not less than £2,500 or £3,000 per annum. Now, if the Manager of our railways had been paid a salary of £1,500, and you had got a man who was worth that money, the possibility is, I think, that we should have heard very little grumbling with regard to the management of the railways. I utterly deprecate the idea that it is not a possible thing to manage our railways properly and economically whilst under the control of the Government, and consequently under the control of Parliament. I am not at all prepared to admit the Minister for Public Works' dictum that the only solution of our troubles now is a non-political Board; and neither am I prepared to admit that the dissatisfaction throughout the country is so general or so strong as to justify so great a departure as is proposed in the present Bill. The honourable gentleman has said that Ministers are not long enough in office. I am free to admit that, as a rule, they are not, but I do not know that it is absolutely necessary for a Minister to be very many years in office in order to carry out the working of the railways properly, because, under any circumstances, whether he is a long or a short time in office, he must rely to a large extent, and properly so too, upon the General Manager under him; and it only requires the firmness of an ordinary business-man to be able to resist any pressure of an improper and mischievous character. Strange how office sometimes does alter the minds of honourable gentlemen! We heard, as I said just now, the late Minister for Public Works passing very eulogistic remarks on the General Manager. I recollect the time, before that honourable gentleman got into office, when he held an opinion very different indeed. I think I recollect hearing him say once that, if ever it should be his lot to get into office, it would not be long before the General Manager received his *congé*. However, as soon as he got into office he became quite enamoured of the General Manager; and, after being three years in office, he passes a high eulogium upon the General Manager. I trust he deserves it, and that the honourable gentleman was wrong in the first instance and right in the second. Now, it has been said that this system in Victoria has been proved to be a success. I quite agree with the last speaker that we have not sufficient data before us to justify us in coming to a safe conclusion on that point. The profits derived from the railways in Victoria may have increased since the appointment of these Commissioners; but it must be borne in mind also that the great profits derived from the Victorian railways come from the suburban lines, and the traffic on these suburban lines has during the last few years enormously increased. But you will find, if you read the last report from the Commissioners of Victoria, that almost every length of line they have made lately, and which they are now constructing, is being worked at a loss, and in some cases a very considerable loss indeed.

And I do not hesitate to predict that in years to come the profits arising from the railways in Victoria will decrease instead of increasing. With regard to the profits, there is no analogy between New Zealand and Victoria. We may have the same length of lines here as in Victoria, and we shall be doing as well as or even better than they even if they are making 5 or 6 per cent. and this colony only 2½. First of all, we have to go through a far greater length of sparsely-populated districts; we have to compete with water carriage, and we have to suffer from small centres of population,—all of which causes tend in the direction of lessening the profits on the railways. And speaking on the profits of railways brings me to a very important matter in connection with the consideration of this question, and that is, upon what lines the Commissioners shall work these railways. I understood the last speaker to say that the railways should be made to pay a very considerable portion of the interest upon the cost of their construction. Well, I differ from the honourable gentleman in regard to that. I say the indirect advantages given to the country by the construction of railways, and the necessary opening-up of country in consequence thereof, the cheap transit they get both for passengers and goods, are a profit to the country in itself, and that you should not make a main principle of working our railways the getting of the interest upon the cost of their construction. They pay the country in an indirect manner, and thereby benefit the country, even though they do not pay interest. I was sorry to hear the Minister for Public Works state, in criticizing or explaining the clauses of the Bill, when he came to that clause which referred to the length of term the Commissioners should hold office, which in the Bill is stated to be five years, that in the opinion of the Government that period of five years should be increased to seven. Now, we are entering upon an experiment so far as we are concerned; and it appears to me that to bind us down to that experiment for seven years would be a most woeful mistake. If we do go into the undertaking at all, if we, by a majority of this House, think it is wise to create a Board of this kind, then, I say, as it is an experiment, we should make the term of the appointment of the Commissioners as short as possible; and I think that the term should not in any event exceed three years. What will be the result if you do otherwise? If you find, after a trial, that this system does not work satisfactorily, it is all very well to say that you can alter it by repealing the Act; but the passing of any other Act repealing this one will not obviate the necessity and the right of the parties so dismissed to obtain compensation from the colony for loss of office, and very justly so too. Therefore, I say, under any circumstances we should limit the term of these first appointments to as short a time as possible. If the thing works satisfactorily, the term can easily be extended to such time as the Legislature in its wisdom may think wise and desirable. Then, in connection with these

Commissioners, there was another statement the honourable gentleman made which I was very sorry to hear, and which, I think, if carried out, would be a step in the wrong direction, and that was, in the event of the Commissioners disagreeing upon any particular point of policy, that then the Chief Commissioner's opinion was to be final and conclusive, and to override the opinion of the two other Commissioners. It appears to me that that would be a most disastrous thing. That is a line of policy which, I am told, is now carried out in Victoria; but it is a policy that I have never seen adopted in connection with anything of this kind before. It is always right and proper that a majority should decide whether a thing should be done or not; but to say that, if the two other Commissioners disagree entirely with the Chief Commissioner, he shall be the sole judge and have the right to do as he likes, seems to me to be a most pernicious thing. If that is to be the case, why not appoint one Commissioner? Why have two others, unless they are to be satellites to go all round the country and do as the Chief Commissioner wishes? However, that is rather a Committee objection, and can be dealt with when we get there. There is another thing to be considered, and that is, will one Board give satisfaction to this colony? We are differently situated in that as well as in other respects from the Colony of Victoria; and it appears to me that one Board of three Commissioners will never give satisfaction to this colony. If we go into this scheme at all, I think we are almost bound to have one Board for each Island. If not, you must perforce have one Commissioner stationed in Wellington, and the other two travelling about the two Islands; therefore you will seldom get a joint meeting of the whole of them. I think you will find that the establishment of only one Board will be very unsatisfactory to the whole of the colonists. I will now merely remark, in conclusion, that I think the powers sought to be conferred on the Commissioners are altogether too great. Notwithstanding the Victorian example, I think we are taking a leap in the dark, and that in taking that leap we are erring in the direction of rashness in conferring such large powers on a Board of this kind. On the whole I would suggest that, if this Bill is read a second time and discussed, it should be left to stand over till next session to be further dealt with by the Legislature. We know very little about it now, and, as has been suggested by the honourable member for Ponsonby, it would be well for the Government to get full information from Victoria as to the working of the system there from its inception to the present time, and this should be supplied to members during the recess, when we shall be prepared next session to vote for or against the proposal as we think best. It appears to me that, in a change of such magnitude, it would be unwise—and I do not suppose the Government wish it—to hurry its completion. It is true the matter has been talked about before, but I believe very few persons have paid any par-

*Mr. Fish*

ticular attention to it, and therefore, as I say, I think it would be wise to leave it till next session.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—I do not intend to enter into the merits or demerits of every clause of this Bill. No doubt the provisions in many of them commend themselves to the minds of most honourable members, and the objectionable ones may be so altered in Committee as to be satisfactory to the majority of the House. For myself, I intend to support the second reading, knowing from experience that the feeling of the great majority of the inhabitants of this colony is one of great dissatisfaction with our railway-management and our railway-system generally. I feel certain any change in the present system of management will be greeted with great pleasure by the country settlers especially, for they are very much handicapped under the present tariff. However, my object in rising was not so much to discuss the general merits of the Bill, but for a special reason, and it is this: I notice there is no provision in the Bill whereby a trial can be given to a scheme of railway-management that has been brought very prominently before this House and the country for some years past. That scheme has been supported by petitions signed by at least twenty thousand persons, and also by local bodies throughout the country. Some honourable members seem to be amused at the position I am taking up in this matter, but I can assure them that, if they had been placed in the same position as I was in during the last election, they would have found it a very serious matter. There were a very large number of electors in my district who were very anxious to see a trial given to this system—I mean Vaile's system,—and if that gentleman had not been defeated by a small majority he would have been here instead of me to fight the battle for his scheme. It must also be remembered that a Committee of the House during the last Parliament reported in favour of a trial being given on a section of our railways, provided the district in which it was to be so tried rated itself in case of loss. Of course this condition rendered the report useless. I should be glad if the Minister for Public Works would give facilities in Committee for inserting a clause making it compulsory on the Commissioners to give that system a trial. We all know that great reformers are often laughed at for a considerable time, and so are great inventors. Sometimes men fail during their whole lifetime to get their ideas carried out, but the time comes when their value is recognised, though the originators may meanwhile have passed away in obscurity. It may be so with this matter. At all events, no great loss can ensue from giving the system a trial on one of the Auckland lines, and I hope the honourable member in charge of the Bill will not oppose it.

Captain RUSSELL.—Sir, I admit fully that I have not had this Bill in my possession for a sufficiently long time to make myself acquainted with all its details, and therefore I shall not presume to criticize them at all. But, sad as I

am to think that it may be my duty to vote for this Bill, I cannot but think that it is a serious reflection upon parliamentary government when we admit that it is impossible our railways can be managed by the chief legislative body. It is as much as to say that we have been continually doing what we know to be wrong, instead of insisting on what is right being done. I do not believe that under the proposed Bill we shall get much better results from our railways than at present. The honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill paid a high and, I believe, a just compliment to the officers working the department. They are gentlemen who have devoted much time and attention to the administration of the railways; and, if it were not within the power of members of Parliament to go nominally in the interest of their constituents, and bother the heads of the department for relaxations here and concessions there, our railways would be much better managed. But I recognise the thing is inevitable, and, sad as it is, I am afraid we must have a non-political Board. My object in rising is to say that I do not believe, under such a Board, our railways will pay a much better dividend than they do now. It is possible there may be better management in matters of detail than there is now; but, generally, results are governed by wider influences than mere details, and these wider influences are against our railways paying. The last speaker said it would be a good thing if the Commissioners were instructed to give Vaile's system a trial. I do not believe myself that Vaile's system can do anything but result in loss. Still, if there are any enthusiastic gentlemen who believe, like Mr. Vaile, that there will be a dividend paid by managing the railways as he proposes, by all means let some company be formed and hand over to them some section of railway, upon their guaranteeing to pay to the colony the same dividend that that section paid last year, and then, if they do a good thing for themselves, it will be a good example for us to follow. Under those conditions I do not see why the system should not be tried; but I venture to say that you will not find any body of business-men in the colony who will attempt anything of the sort. One has only to travel over the lines to see that it is not want of money which prevents people from travelling. People here are too busy to travel much for pleasure, and when they have to travel on business they travel no matter what the cost is. A large proportion of the people in this colony travel first class. In other portions of the world you will find that even rich people do not do so. I happen to know of one particular instance in which some junior members of our own Royal Family were travelling from Florence to England, and, I suppose having that amount of snobbishness which appears to be inherent in Englishmen, they took first-class tickets from Florence to the next station at which they could change, because it would not look well for members of the Royal Family to be seen leaving Florence in anything but a first-class carriage; but as soon as they got

some sixty or seventy miles away, to a place where they were not known, they travelled second class from there to London. That is an absolute fact, as I chance to know, because a friend of mine, who knew them by sight, travelled in the same train with them. We are told that people here do not travel because they cannot afford it; but I contend that that is not the cause, inasmuch as people who do travel travel first class instead of second, as inevitably they must if their powers of locomotion were restricted by want of money. We are continually told of the marvellous success that attends the running of excursion-trains; but that is no argument at all that Mr. Vaile's scheme would be a success. On public holidays people having nothing to do are fond of going into the country on excursions, and, as it affords them a cheap method of relaxation, they avail themselves of the opportunity of taking a run into the country. I have a very distinct recollection of the opening of the extension of the Napier line to Woodville, when every carriage on the line was used to convey excursionists over the line, and I am sure that if you had offered the great bulk of those people £1 each to travel over the same line in the same carriages next day they would not have done it. The idea that people are restrained from travelling by the high fares is an absolutely fallacious one. But the bottom of this whole question is the number of miles of railway we have in New Zealand in proportion to the population. In looking over the subject some months ago, I found that as steadily as the number of miles of open railway has increased in this country so steadily have the average net earnings of the lines decreased. In 1885 the average net return was £217s. 3d. per cent., and it had been as high as £3 18s. 6d. a year or two before. From £2 17s. 3d. it dwindled in the next year to £2 11s.; and last year the net return was only £2 6s. per cent. on the capital invested. The reason for all that I believe to be that we have more miles of railway in this colony than of people who can profitably employ them; and if you compare our position in that respect with the position of other countries, you will find that New Zealand has a greater length of railways in proportion to population than any other country in the world. In New Zealand we have 299 miles of working railway to every 100,000 of population; and in the United States, which comes next, there are only 210 miles of railway to every 100,000 of population. Then there is a very large drop to the United Kingdom, where there are only 52 miles of railway to every 100,000 of population, and the proportion of miles of railway to people is far greater in Great Britain than in any country on the Continent of Europe. I willingly admit that New Zealand is a richer country than most other countries in the world, and therefore that we here can afford to spend more money in travelling than can the people of other countries; but still the fact remains that the net return from our lines has decreased the greater the length of railway open has become; and there is also this fact:

*Captain Russell*

that by the time all the railways now authorised are completed, unless the population increases in the meantime far more rapidly than it has done for some years past, there will be in New Zealand 400 miles of railway to every 100,000 of population. I say we are so completely over-railroaded that there is no probability whatever of largely increasing the net return from the lines. If you carry the argument a little further, and look to the dividends which are paid by railway companies in other countries, you will find that, taking all the railways in the world, they only return an average profit of 3½ per cent. on the capital invested in them; and if you consider how much capital that has been invested in railways has been altogether lost, which makes no return at all, and wipe that off, I believe it would not be understating it in the least to say that the railways of the world do not return an average profit of 3 per cent. Therefore I think there is no ground to hope, however good the management of our railways may be made by a non-political Board, that they will give a much larger net return, because every mile of railway you make in the colony will steadily diminish the average net return, and good management cannot prevent that. It is said continually that the management of our railways is so bad, and the charges so high, that people are deterred from travelling and sending their produce by the lines; but if you compare the New Zealand railway tariff with those of Australia you will find that ours in numerous instances is the lowest. I had no intention whatever of speaking this evening or I would have got the exact figures, but I do know that in almost all classes of freights and fares in this country the charges are lower than those in any of the Australian Colonies. In these circumstances the Commissioners may endeavour to increase the trade by diminishing the charges, but I believe the result would be that you would not get a much increased trade and no increased revenue. You hear continually that dray-traffic is competing successfully with the railways; and it is so in some instances, though it does not seem what one might expect. But there is this to be remembered: that grain and other farm-produce has usually to be carted some miles before it can be carried by railway, and when it gets to the end of the railway journey it has again to be put on drays and taken elsewhere; and therefore, in a country like this, where horses and horse-feed are so ridiculously cheap, it is not at all a matter for wonder that dray-carriage can, in some cases, compete successfully with railway-carriage. I know from my own experience that where the distance is such that a dray can take a load of produce and be back with a return load in a day, it is absolutely impossible, whatever rate you may offer on the railway, to divert the traffic from the road. You may endeavour to get further traffic by reducing the charges, but I believe that, with a very few exceptions, you will fail altogether to do so. There is only one other point I will allude to. The honourable member for Dunedin South

said the powers proposed to be given the Commissioners are altogether too large. I do not agree with that at all. If the scheme has any merit in it at all, and if the problem is to be carried to a successful conclusion, I think the best we can possibly do is to make the Commissioners almost autocrats, and give them such a tenure of office that they will not be afraid to face, as they inevitably will have to face, if the railways are worked on a commercial basis, an almost universal howl of disgust from one end of the colony to the other.

Sir J. VOGEL.—It is somewhat odd that I should do anything but cordially support this Bill, for in times past I have expressed very strong opinions in favour of the management of our railways being confided to a Board or Boards somewhat after the plan proposed in this Bill. But I candidly confess the observations I have been able to make since I have been in the colony have led me to think, admitting, as has been stated several times during this debate, that there is a great deal of dissatisfaction with the present management of the railways, that that dissatisfaction is not of a character which this Board could remove, but is, so to speak, in an entirely opposite direction. Before proceeding further I would like to say this: that I hope this Bill will be considered purely on its merits, and not as a party measure. I cannot help thinking that the debate which has already taken place, and any further debate which may take place on this measure, whether it is passed or not this session, will be of great advantage, because we shall have obtained the opinions of members representing the various parts of the country. I do not feel that, having altered my opinion very much on the subject, I shall be entitled to vote for the second reading of the Bill, which, I think, would mean my affirmation of the policy of the measure; but I certainly shall not vote against it. On the contrary, I think it would be an advantage if the Bill passed its second reading, and, if possible, the various large points which it raises should be discussed in Committee. I think the Government may be contented with the Bill being read a second time, and, if they find the various questions to be too much to deal with in Committee in the time at our disposal, I think they should not be reluctant to allow it to be postponed until next session. I am of opinion, from the views which have been expressed by honourable members on the different points raised in the Bill, that they will take a very long time to discuss; and not only that, but it may not be undesirable that those views should be placed before the country for consideration. Therefore, while I shall not oppose the second reading, and shall offer no obstruction whatever to the Bill in Committee, I shall not be sorry to see that the Government decide ultimately not to press the Bill through to its conclusion this session. In speaking on this measure, I wish rather to bring forward prominently what I conceive to be the objections to it; but, in doing so, I wish to say this: The Bill is before us, and those points

of which we approve are presented to us, and it is not to be supposed, because I pick out the points which I object to, that I do not admit there is a great deal to be said in favour of the proposals. In fact, it appears to me to be a question of a very open nature. Obviously, there is a very great advantage in divesting the Government of political control over the railways. Obviously, there is a great advantage in removing from this House the duty of voting the salaries of railway employees, and removing the railways from the possibility of being used by the Government for political patronage; and there are other advantages to be found in leaving the railways to the control of those who will devote their entire time to attending to the railways. But I cannot help thinking, on the other hand, that there is this to be considered: that there are hundreds of owners of property who are not wise in the management of it, but who yet would rather manage it unwisely themselves than put the management out of their own hands and into the hands of trustees, they receiving the revenue the trustees made the property earn for them. The case is pretty much the same here. We admit, or think we admit, that the railways are not well managed by ourselves; but the question is, whether, therefore, we should remove them entirely from our own management and place them in the hands of those who will have no responsibility of a serious nature to ourselves, and divest ourselves of the control. I think there has been a great deal said as to change of opinions on this subject, which should make us exceedingly cautious in taking a step which it would be very difficult for us to retrace. I do not wish to be understood as saying it would be quite impossible to withdraw from a step which we might take in this direction, but I quite agree with the honourable member for Ponsonby that the time which we should bind ourselves for in this matter should be so limited as not to fetter the future freedom of the country and the House in dealing with this great question. Now, I wish to turn to the point as to whether the present discontent with the management of the railways will be removed by the proposals of this Bill. I have closely watched the complaints which have been made about the management of the railways, and those complaints seem to me, more or less, to go in this direction: that the department does not exercise sufficient discretion as to the different treatment of different parts of the country; that its rule is of too cast-iron a nature, and that there is not a sufficient disposition to conciliate the persons using the lines. I think I may say a few words about a gentleman who, if his name has not been mentioned during this debate, has, at any rate, been mentioned during the session—that is, Mr. Maxwell. Now, he is not a popular man—very much the reverse; but, at the same time, there is no question that he is a man of very great ability. He has not the powers, or functions, or disposition I should say, perhaps, which enable him to make himself personally popular; but, as

regards questions relating to the railways, he has made himself thoroughly acquainted with the subject, and most of his decisions are sound in themselves, and, after all, more annoyance is generally felt at the way in which he announces them than because of their purport. Now, if we are going to make these railways subject to management of purely a commercial nature—that is, to run them to the best advantage from a pounds-shillings-and-pence point of view—I exceedingly doubt whether the dissatisfaction felt will be at all removed. In my opinion, it will be rather intensified. If the railways were run upon commercial principles a very great advantage would be offered to those who use the railways largely. For example, persons who have a thousand bales of wool to send on the railway would be treated more liberally than those who have ten or fifteen bales to send, and similarly with other products. You see in Victoria they have to gazette all departures from the scale rate; and sometimes a lower rate is charged because of a whole cargo being the subject of a contract, and so on. Now, I question whether the feeling of the country would respond to treatment of that kind. The railways have been made at the expense of the colony; they do not pay sufficient to cover interest on cost, and the colony is charged with the deficiency. It was no part of the original intention to run the railways as a commercial concern, but in view of the immense direct and indirect advantage that would accrue from them in the way of colonising the country. Now we are asked to change the nature of the railways from a colonising machinery to a commercial undertaking. I doubt whether the feelings of the people will respond to that. We see that the honourable member for Ponsonby has spoken of different treatment in the South and in the North, and we know that there are a great many paragraphs appearing in the newspapers about the Government allowing competition by carriers. Why is that competition allowed? In most cases it is for this reason: No doubt the railways could run the carriers off the road, but, if that were done, we should have to reduce the rates, and, if such reductions were applied to all parts of the country, there would be a serious loss to the revenue. Thus, now competition is very often permitted because the moment you made the reduction in one district you would have to make it in another, and so the colony would lose in the end much more than it would gain by running those particular carriers off the road. Of course, if a Board had charge of the railways, it would simply consider the question as to what would pay best, and would make exceptions in cases where large quantities were concerned, or where opposition had to be run off. Mr. Vaile's scheme has been advocated by the honourable member for Auckland North, who asks that that should be especially forced upon the Commissioners. I have always felt that there was a considerable foundation of truth in the principle advocated by Mr. Vaile; but, as a matter of fact, Mr. Vaile's proposals are not new in

principle—they are a more exact application of the principle that already obtains in the management of railways. The whole subject has been gone into very fully in a book lately published by Mr. Grierson, who was for many years General Manager for the Great Western Railway Company. Now, what is the foundation on which Mr. Vaile bases his contention? He says, what is undoubtedly the case, that when a train start from a station for a number of points you may be sure that by the time it reaches the last point there will be very few of the original passengers still in the train. In other words, the way-traffic is much larger than the through-traffic. Upon this well-known fact Mr. Vaile has ingeniously worked out a precise system. But the conditions of various parts of the country are so different that his precise limits will not answer, in my opinion. As regards the general principle, it is recognised and acted upon, because the rate per mile is reduced over longer distances; or, in other words, it pays better to take long-distance freight cheaper, rather than lose it. Let us suppose a train is to run a hundred miles, and that, without additional expense for haulage or rolling-stock, extra freight can be carried fifty miles because of the train not being filled. In such a case it is evident freight can be carried over a hundred miles at little more than would pay for fifty miles. But this is one example out of thousands which admit of no precise deduction. Then, if you place the railways in the hands of the Board, to work entirely from a commercial point of view, there will arise an important question as to the harbours. It will be no part of the business of the Board to consider what has been done in connection with harbours, or what the interest that the ratepayers may have to pay: it would be the duty of the Board to try and run the harbours off, and to carry the traffic at the lowest rate that it could be carried at without large loss. Then, there is another point well worthy of consideration, and it is this: Whilst I admit that we would much rather not have to vote the salaries for the railway officials in this House, there is a great danger in handing over the whole power of dealing with this matter to the Railway Board, because invariably this would be found to be the case: that they would fix a scale of their own for retiring-allowances, and perhaps pensions, unless they were prevented by the terms of the Act from doing that, and, the profession being what may fairly be called a technical and skilled one, the salaries would rise to a higher scale than it seems to be the intention of the House should prevail in the public service; and as the major cannot go back to the less, as we could not reduce the salaries in the Railway Department, there would soon be influences at work, silently but none the less powerfully, in the direction of introducing a higher scale of payment throughout the public service generally. I shall go back now to a point which I have already touched upon, and which I reserved for further treatment, and that is the question of the railways not having been constructed for commercial

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purposes but as a colonising agency. And, first, I may say that I heartily concur with the remark of the honourable member for Ponsonby, that it would not be desirable to leave so much control to the Board in the way of deciding what should be the railways undertaken in the future. The railways constructed in this country were constructed upon an understanding which was thought to be indefeasible, and that was, that there should be a through trunk line constructed from one end of each Island to the other. When it was agreed that the most payable parts of the lines should first be constructed it was never supposed that there would be a breach of the obligation to complete the trunk lines right through. At present, and until the lines are completed, this is what is the case: During the construction of all lines and during their working, till they pay the full amount of interest which is payable on their account, the whole colony is charged with a portion of the cost. Can it be fair that those portions of the colony which have got railways, and have obtained them partly at the expense of the whole colony, should turn round and say, "We prefer not to go on with the railways because the continuation of them will not be a payable undertaking"? I proposed, when I first brought down the public-works policy, that there should be a tax imposed upon lands benefited by the railways. Had that been done, how different would have been present results! A great many of the branch railways would never have been made, and there would have been a larger recognition of the principle that parts of the country not already supplied with railways are entitled to be so supplied. Is it fair now that we should, having commenced with the assurance of making the trunk railways, place the control, the decision of this matter for the future, in the hands of Commissioners? I must say that I do not think it is fair. If it is, and we are to look upon the railways simply as a commercial undertaking, then there can be no extension of the railways, except in the case of short suburban lengths, such, for example, as that from Christchurch to Sumner. If we are to be guided by that principle, we should come to the decision that no other railways except suburban lines and feeders should be made. But no one who knows anything of the past history of the colony would advocate such a course. If I were now in a position to make proposals I should consider that, far from extending the commercial principle on which the railways are worked, it would be desirable for us to lower to the minimum extent we could consistently with there not being a loss on the carriage—to lower the rates upon local produce and local manufactures of all descriptions. I am convinced that a larger assistance could be given to local industries of all kinds, whether of a pastoral, agricultural, or manufacturing description, through the railways than by any other means. I believe that nothing would be more conducive to the interests of the country than to propose at once, as I believe it could be now, or to propose that within a very short

period, a very few months, we should lower the tariff materially upon all articles which are the subjects of local industry. If that cannot be done at present, is it desirable that we should shut out from ourselves the power of doing it in the future?—as we shall if we enter upon this proposal of a Board for seven years with the large powers proposed to be given to them in the Bill we are considering. Now, there is a great deal, I think, to be said in favour of the proposal made by the honourable member for Foxton. Of all the proposals that have come down for the solution of these difficulties, I believe a Parliamentary Committee, with power to sit during the recess, would probably bring more into harmony with the wishes of the House the management of the railways than any other plan which has been proposed. Besides, I think the railway rates should be looked upon very much as part of the revenue of the colony, and be generally decided, at any rate within very narrow limits, by Parliament itself. The argument that is used about getting an experienced man from Home is, I think, overdone. You may get a man of very great genius—I believe in Victoria they have one in Mr. Speight—yet, Sir, honourable members would be under a mistake if they supposed that the railway system of Victoria has become popular. It is less popular than it was. No doubt it is more remunerative, but the evidence shows that it has not been worked more safely than formerly; and with regard to safety certainly we have reason to be proud of the way in which the New Zealand railways are worked and managed. But, returning to this experienced gentleman from Home, if you were to ask persons in the Home-country what they consider to be a clever railway manager, and a person fitted to take charge of railways, they would tell you that the genius of railway management depends upon the way in which a company can fight off competition, or deal with it if it cannot be prevented. That, Sir, is what makes the railway kings in Great Britain and America—the dealing with competition. As regards the management of the railway traffic, and so on, that is divided into many hands, and, whilst very high salaries are paid to men in the highest positions, still there is such a division of duty that it will not be found easy to find an all-round man familiar with the whole of the details. Putting apart that objection to which I have referred, I doubt if for three times the salary you could obtain as competent a man as Mr. Maxwell; and it is a matter of fact, as regards the management of our railways, that from time to time offers are made to the railway officials of New Zealand to go over to the other colonies at largely increased salaries. It is not long since that a gentleman happened to be visiting a colony, one of the largest of the whole, on leave of absence from our railway department, and he was, so to speak, caught up by the Government and prevailed upon to remain there to make examinations and reports; and the Government had to extend his leave, I think, three times to oblige the Government of

that neighbouring colony. We might pay a much larger sum, in my opinion, and not get better men than we have now. As I have spoken so favourably of Mr. Maxwell, I wish to say, also as regards Mr. Hanney, I believe you might go a long way and pay a great deal more money than he receives and not get a better man. Sir, I shall not refer to many of the points which can be discussed in Committee. I will terminate my remarks by saying that I have made these criticisms not at all in a hostile spirit. On the contrary, as I said, I shall not oppose the Bill. I recognise that if I had not changed my opinion considerably I ought to support the Bill. I have changed my opinions, so that I do not feel certain that I should vote for the policy of the measure, but certainly I shall not oppose it; and I say that advantage will arise from discussing the Bill both in the House and in Committee, even should it not be considered desirable to press it to a conclusion this session. Therefore, Sir, I hope the Government will not consider that I have offered these remarks in any hostile spirit, and will not consider themselves debarred from agreeing with them to such an extent as they may be able to concur with them. This is a large question, and it would be a wrong and a shameful thing if we could not, for the sake of the country, discuss such a matter as this without allowing any party feeling to have place in the discussion.

Sir J. HALL.—I quite echo the sentiment which has just fallen from the honourable gentleman opposite, that this is a question which we should endeavour to approach entirely free from any party feeling, and I, for one, quite recognise that the honourable gentleman appears to have done that. Although I may not agree in all that he has stated, I quite believe that he has been animated by a wish to put before the country a proposition which he believes will be beneficial, irrespective of party bearing. Like the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill, I am a convert to the principle which it embodies. I have taken a great deal of interest for a long time in the question of railway-management, and I have been, as Minister in charge of that department, concerned in the working of the system. For many years, although I was conscious of the evils of the present system, I could not see my way through the difficulties which appeared to me to surround the management of railways by one non-political Board. Those difficulties—arising chiefly out of the peculiar manner in which this colony is settled, and the extent to which its various settlements are isolated from each other—no doubt surround the question of railway-management; but as time has gone on the difficulties of the present system have continued in spite of the earnestness and ability of the gentlemen who have had charge of our railways; and I am very glad to be able to add my tribute to those which have been paid to the ability and zeal of those gentlemen. I say, as time has gone on, the evils arising from political influence and constant political pres-

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sure have not only not diminished, but have gone on increasing. Whether in this House or out of it, that pressure is now so strong as very largely to interfere with the proper working of the system, and to very largely interfere, I may say, with the discipline of the department. That pressure is felt not only in this House, but during the elections. I suppose that almost any member who has in his constituency a large number of railway employes will admit that he is very strongly urged, when he comes here, to advocate their interests.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Sir J. HALL.—Well, that is my opinion; and if he is supposed to be hostile to the interests of the railway employes they will exercise a very considerable influence against him at his election. I think that will not be denied. Now, that is a very undesirable state of things. Then, we see a reflection of that in this House. The Order Paper this session must render it impossible for anybody to deny that an amount of political pressure is brought to bear upon the Government with regard to the treatment of these employes, and with regard to rates, and with regard to concessions, sometimes reasonable and sometimes unreasonable, which it is very desirable we should get rid of. Continued observation of this fact has led me to the conclusion that it is most desirable we should try to have what I would call an independent system of management—a system which shall be, to a large extent, independent of political pressure. I had an opportunity a short time ago, when travelling in Australia, of inquiring into the working of the Victorian system, and I must say, in opposition to what has fallen from the last speaker, that I did not find that system to be, as he says, unpopular. On the contrary, whether you judge from what takes place in Parliament, where all classes are represented, or whether you gather the opinions of commercial men, I affirm, without fear of contradiction, that the system is exceedingly popular, that it gives almost universal satisfaction. Although there are one or two men in the Victorian Parliament who rail at the Railway Commissioners, as, no doubt, we shall have here, still they meet with no support and no general sympathy. Both with the commercial community and in that body which represents the country at large the system gives very great satisfaction, and no proposal to interfere with it would be considered for a moment. Several difficulties had suggested themselves to me in the working-out of this system, and I was glad therefore of an opportunity of a conversation with Mr. Speight, the Chief Commissioner, and explained to him the difficulties which had occurred to me, and I found that in practice there were really no difficulties at all. He is not, as has been stated, dissatisfied with his position; on the contrary he is satisfied with it, and quite proud of its results. He mentioned one circumstance which I think ought to be known,—that during the last year the gross return from the Victorian railways had increased by £500,000, and the working-expenses were only 30 per cent. That, I think,



is a tribute to the management of the Victorian railways by a non-political Board. Then, passing on to New South Wales, I found there the state of things which has been alluded to during the present debate. Political influence has brought about mismanagement, extravagance, and miserable returns, as it had done in Victoria, and the public there were almost unanimously in favour of the measure which is now being passed by the New South Wales Government to place their railways under a non-political Board. The proposal has also been made in South Australia. Therefore, if we are at all to be guided by the experience of the neighbouring colonies, I say that that experience is in favour of the establishment of the system now proposed by the Government. The late Minister for Public Works, whose speech on the subject I think must have given pleasure to every member of the House, went cordially into the merits of the case, and he, I was very glad to find, will support this measure. I think he suggested that there might be a difficulty if we had only one Board. I thought so at one time; but the experience of the last few years has shown, at any rate, that it is not the question of one central system of management that is our difficulty. The difficulty is that that managing body is so liable to political pressure. Then, Sir, the honourable gentleman has contended that five years is too long a term for which to appoint these Commissioners. I venture to think that five years is not long enough. The whole success of your scheme, I think, will depend on the person you get to work it. If you get a thoroughly good man I believe you may be successful, but if you do not you will not succeed. Now, to get a man of high standing, ability, and experience to come out from England, you must offer him very considerable inducements, and it is not likely that a person occupying a good position as a manager of railways will come out for a shorter engagement than five years. I doubt whether you would get one for that term, and therefore I was glad to hear the Minister for Public Works propose to increase it to seven. The honourable member for Ponsonby spoke as if the introduction of this system necessarily involved the question of differential rates. I think it has nothing whatever to do with that question. It is quite competent for this House to lay down a broad general principle on which this Board shall manage the railways. It does not follow that they are to manage them merely with a view to profit, and to neglect the development of the resources of the country. I think that would be a great mistake. But, on the other hand, I think one honourable gentleman made a very extraordinary mistake when he suggested, as one of the evils that would result from putting these railways under the management of a non-political Board, that that might injure the harbours which had been constructed at very considerable expense. What does that matter? The people of New Zealand were not made for the harbours; the harbours were made for the

people; and if we can, by any proper adjustment of our system, transfer the produce that is exported more cheaply by means of our railways than by our harbours, I say let the harbours go. It is the interests of the producers we have to consult; and, if these can be better consulted by carrying their produce by rail, let the goods be so carried. With regard to the same honourable gentleman's statement that the appointment of this Board would have, for one of its results, the fixing of high rates of salary, I think that is purely imaginary. If they do anything of that kind, the estimates will come under our revision every year; and, although we shall not vote the details, still that will be an opportunity when the opinion of the House can be expressed in the manner it thinks proper to do. I cannot help saying that I differ from the honourable member for Hawke's Bay as to the small traffic on our New Zealand railways not being at all owing to want of money. His part of the country must be very fortunate. I know that in our part of the country it is the hard times that have diminished the traffic, and I believe that if we could consistently reduce the rates there would be a very large increase of traffic. With regard to the Bill itself I do not agree with the whole of it. I would only now refer to one point, which I am sorry to see in the Bill, and that is the proposal of the Government to intrust the construction of railways to this Board. It is true that it rests with the Government to say whether that power shall be intrusted to the Commissioners or not; but I must say, to commence with, that I would rather not see that in the Bill. You may get men exceedingly well qualified to manage railways when they are made—that requires one set of qualifications; but to decide where and how railways shall be constructed requires different qualifications altogether. And I think, for that reason, and also believing that in the first instance it is undesirable to hamper this new Board with too many duties, I should prefer not to see this in the Bill. There is one other objection, which may appear to be a trifling one, I was sorry to see in the Bill—that the Commissioners should have power to issue licenses for the sale of spirits at railway-stations, and that the fees to be paid should become railway revenue. This is rather an inducement to extend the sale of spirits at railway-stations to a much greater extent than there is any necessity for. I mention this in the hope that the Minister for Public Works may consider it when we go into Committee. In conclusion, I can only say that this Bill is an experiment, no doubt. I do not suppose my honourable friend can say more than that; but I am very glad that the Government have had the courage to bring it forward. I do not agree with those honourable members who say, "Let us read the Bill a second time and then drop it." We have considered the matter for many years. It is not a new subject. Opinion on the subject has gradually grown, until I believe now there is a very large preponderance of feeling and opinion in

favour of the establishment of this system. I hope, therefore, that my honourable friend will go on with the Bill and carry it successfully through; and the Government will have my very best support in doing so.

Dr. HODGKINSON.—I have very little to say with regard to this Bill, and what little I have to say I am well aware will not be well received. With regard to the Bill, I am quite willing to vote for the second reading, and to see it come into operation, though I have no faith in it as a satisfactory solution of the difficulties under which the colony now labours. I believe the only satisfactory solution would be to sell the railways, and so get rid of the political influence and jobbery that are continually going on in connection with these railways. I do not intend to discuss the Bill. I can only say that I think it will only very partially effect the object aimed at—that is, to prevent the exercise of political influence. It might prevent it in the management of the railways already made, but not those to be constructed, if any more are constructed. I sincerely hope that no more will be constructed by the Government out of loans. In fact, I think that will almost be impossible. I believe that if the matter were fairly looked into the colony is at this time on the very brink of bankruptcy.—(Oh!)—Those honourable members who say “Oh!” will have to say “Oh!” in a few years more. It is a fact that for many years the colony has paid its way out of capital, not out of income. We have now arrived at a most alarming stage. The interest paid every year on the colonial debt is, in round numbers, £1,800,000; and if this were paid in wheat it would require nearly fifteen million bushels—three times the gross produce of the whole colony; or, if in frozen sheep, it would require 5,400,000 fat sheep, at 6s. 8d. each. How is that to be continued? It is all very fine to talk of the inexhaustible resources of the colony, and of our valuable assets in the shape of railways; but our railways are nothing more than a white elephant, and will be a white elephant so long as they are in the hands of the Government. I am well aware that these opinions do not correspond with the communistic views of many members in this House. But, Sir, we have only to look around and see the results of their administration for the last seventeen years; and where have they landed us? On the verge of bankruptcy, with one of the most enormous debts of any country in the world, with political corruption pervading the country, and our finances in a deplorable state. I do not intend to press any arguments of this sort upon unwilling ears, but I think it incumbent on me to speak as I have done by way of protest. Ten years ago, when I was last a member of this House, I gave expression to the views I am expressing to-night, and what has happened during that time has justified the remarks I then made on the subject. I think that, as we go on, this Bill may obtain some mitigation, but it will be no real solution, of our difficulties. We shall get deeper and deeper in debt, and

*Sir J. Hall*

the time will very likely come when our available assets will have to go under the hammer, whether you wish it or not. And, I say, while we have some control over our assets we should do what any reasonable man in business would do when he found that his business was of an unprofitable nature, or that he was not skilled sufficiently to make it pay. In that case, if he met with a purchaser who would give him good value for his business, he would readily sell, and would be very foolish if he did not. That is what I contend the colony should do with its railways—sell them. That is all I have to say on the subject.

Mr. BLAKE.—It is unnecessary for me to say that I am one of those who happen to be opposed to the placing of our railways under political Boards, for I can see no other term to apply to them as long as these Boards are appointed by the Government. As in most things, I have no particular opposition to bring forward against this Bill, except that I have a great objection, after spending so much money on our railways, to handing them over to mere strangers, who possibly might make ducks and drakes of the money. As far as I can ascertain, we have spent £14,500,000 in the construction of our railways. I think that constitutes one-half of our public-works debts, because anything over the £29,000,000 was spent on the Native war. So that, really, we are handing over half our immense property, which we have acquired by means of this debt, to be used by people of whom we shall probably know very little. I have listened to-night and heard a great deal more said about the Victorian railways than about the New Zealand railways; but this Bill is intended to deal with the New Zealand railways. I do not know whether many honourable gentlemen are acquainted with the difference between the Victorian railways and the New Zealand railways. If I recollect rightly, when we undertook the construction of railways in this country in 1870, we determined that our railways were not to cost more than £4,000 or £5,000 a mile for construction, and some £2,500 for rolling-stock; and that is about what we have expended on them, for we have constructed some 1,750 miles of railway at a cost of £14,500,000, which gives about the cost per mile I have mentioned. But what is the case with regard to the Victorian railways? The first contract for railway-construction from Melbourne to Sandhurst was let to the firm of Cornish and Bruce at the rate of £32,000 a mile—or four millions; and I cannot see how you can draw a comparison between railways costing over £30,000 a mile and railways costing £5,000 a mile. Then, again, when we started our railways we were content to have a speed of fifteen or sixteen miles an hour; but now we have changed that: we have put on stronger engines, and we are not content unless we are running at about double that rate of speed. Those who are acquainted with the working of railways will know what that means, and that it entails a much greater cost in the maintenance of our railways. One rea-

son why they do not pay, and especially in Canterbury, is that when they were constructed we had no idea that the price of produce would fall so low as it has done. I know that it was calculated that we should never get less than 4s. a bushel for our wheat,—and that would pay; but time has shown that we are getting much less, and our produce does not pay, and therefore our railways do not pay. Another reason is that we have constructed so many lines that cannot pay, no matter how they are managed. Political pressure has been brought to bear on various Governments to construct railways in all directions different from those which were first intended. The first proposition was that we should only construct the trunk lines of railway, and it was calculated that they would pay at the rate of 4 per cent. on the money that they cost, but the political pressure which was brought to bear on the various Governments led to the construction of railways that could never possibly pay. It is useless to grumble at that now, but it is well to mention it so that those who are supporting this proposal may show how it will pay. We know that there are 1,200 miles of railway from Hurunui to the Bluff, of which 800 miles are main line, and 400 miles are branch lines. We get a return of £2 13s. per cent. from the whole system of 1,200 miles; and 400 miles of that costs more money to work than it returns. That causes a dead loss on the 800 miles, or they would be returning £3 12s. 6d., or £3 15s. per cent. interest on the money expended on them. That will show the fallacy of constructing these branch lines, and working them as they are being worked. If a system could be proposed for working main lines, or any lines which would pay over 2 per cent., and if the branch lines were worked differently, our railways would pay. I have no hesitation in saying that not more than two or three branch lines in the South Island should be worked by steam. If they were let to people in the district as iron tramways, to be worked with horses, they would act as feeders to the railways; they would not fall into decay, because of the way they would be worked; and there would be nothing to pay for clearing off the grass for fear of fire. I am quite sure if you worked these branch lines as iron tramways you would find that system much better, and that it would give far more satisfaction to the country. No doubt it would cause the discharge of the servants who are now employed on them, but it would give employment to others; and that is the only way to make them pay. Then let us come farther north. Take, for instance, the Picton line, which is paying 11d. per cent. I am sure a man and horse could take all the goods that are sent on that line. Again, in Nelson the line is paying only £1 1s. 6d. per cent.: that might be worked just the same. In the North Island there are two railways that are paying over 2 per cent.—the Wellington line, which pays £2 5s., and the Napier line, which pays £3 14s. 6d.; but what are we to say of the Wanganui line, which only pays 10s.? I say that, no matter what men you

put to manage those lines, if there is no more traffic on them they will never pay the interest on their cost. The loss we are now sustaining on our railways is at the rate of £300,000 a year; for, although we talk of giving 4 per cent. on the £14,500,000, we lose in other ways  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The returns from our railways last year were something under £300,000. Like the honourable member for Ponsonby, I do not say that they should pay full interest; but I think that with reasonable management they might be made to pay 3 per cent., and that would be a hundred thousand pounds a year more than they are returning at present. I do not wish to take up the time of the House, and I merely mention these matters to show that if the Minister for Public Works would take the matter in hand with a strong grasp he could see his way to alter the whole position without having recourse to this measure. I must say I am opposed to handing over property which has cost us £14,500,000 to persons whom we do not know, because I have seen so many things in the various colonies that I feel certain it will be impossible to get three or four or five men to manage the railways who will not in some way be under pressure, either from banks, or from loan companies, or political pressure at any rate, if they are not very different from any men I have met in New Zealand. I am not in favour of our railways being put under a Board: not that I have any particular reason for saying so, but that I am sure it will not be a better system. This I may say: that whenever anything new is proposed in New Zealand every one jumps at it, and, as this is a new proposal, every one seems inclined to jump at it. That there is no comparison between the geographical position of our railways and those of Victoria any one who considers the matter must see. We have not more than eighty miles of railway in any one place in a straight line, so that we are always loading and unloading; and we have so many interests that it is almost impossible for any man to grasp the management of the whole under a considerable time. We have had our own servants managing these railways since 1870, and surely they must know what ought to be done much better than strangers can, and for that reason I say we should not take this leap in the dark, for it is a leap in the dark when we hand over property which has cost us so much to strangers. If the scheme must be tried, try it first on a small scale in one part of the colony, and let us see then whether it will pay. It might very well be tried in the North Island, and then if any one can make the railways there pay 3 per cent. it will be time enough to go across the Strait. The trade of the country is not sufficient to make the railways pay unless you put on heavy rates, and then people do not travel as they used to do. You will see by the returns that the only railways that pay are two small coalfields lines and the Napier line. Then, there is a million and three quarters which has been expended on the Auckland line, on which we are losing some 3 per cent., which is some £600,000 a year; and then there

is the Wanganui line. In fact, as nearly as I can see, the losses amount in the North Island to about £140,000, and in the South Island to £170,000 a year. I really think that if the matter were kept in hand by the Government themselves, and properly managed, it would be far better; and, although I may not vote against the second reading of the Bill, I hope that when it goes into Committee I shall be able to make some proposals which possibly may be put into practice.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Sir, I almost entirely agree with the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, as I also do with the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, who spoke in somewhat the same strain. If this question were one of detail—some variation in the management of our railways—I might possibly support it; but I intend to oppose it on the second reading, because I believe that the principle on which the Bill is founded is an entirely erroneous one. What is wanted to make our railways profitable is not a change in management. I am one of those who, although they may be in a minority now, think that the railways in New Zealand are now, and have for some years past been, very well managed indeed; and the immunity from accident goes a long way to induce in me that belief. At the same time we are perfectly conscious that there is something wrong. The universal dissatisfaction expressed about our railways is but an admission of the fact; and the question is, What is it that is wrong? It is, perhaps, natural for us to blame the management, and to pour the vials of our wrath on the head of the General Manager; but any one who carefully studies the facts will come to the conclusion that it is something else—something quite different. Briefly stated it is this: that railway-construction in New Zealand has outrun the population. When my honourable friend the member for Hawke's Bay gave statistics and facts in support of that view he did not give all that might be adduced in support of it. First of all, let me say that, by a curious coincidence, we have about the same mileage here in New Zealand as they have in Victoria and New South Wales. We have 1,727 miles, and there are seventeen hundred odd miles in these other colonies. The Victorian railways pay  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and the New South Wales railways pay  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., both colonies having double the population that we have; and ours pay £2 2s. per cent. That is to say, they have both over a million of inhabitants, whereas we have only a little over half a million; and our railways pay half, or a little over half, the interest that their railways do, which is exactly what might be expected with half the population. We have half the population, and half the profit on our railways; they have double the population in both instances, and almost double the profits we have. If these facts are not entirely conclusive, they go a long way towards proving that our railways have outgrown our population. It is alike natural and logical to suppose they have. A railway is exactly like any other

trading concern. You may stock a shop to the very doors with the best possible kinds of goods, and have the best possible management, but if there are not the customers it is not possible for the shop to pay. It is the same with building in a town: it is a monstrous assumption that people would go on building for ever if there were not the population to occupy the houses put up. As soon as the thing ceased to pay they would stop building. So it is with New Zealand in the matter of our railways; and, regarding them as profitable concerns—for I am not now considering the making of railways for the indirect advantages arising from them—judging the matter only from the profit standpoint, the increase of population has not kept pace with our railway-construction, and therefore there cannot be a profit from the concern. There is some limit which checks private individuals and causes them to pull up when the paying point has been reached; but we in this colony have been building railways and disregarding the profit-and-loss question, because we have been drawing on a fund which does not depend upon the energies and self-denial of the people—the loan fund. The means of getting the money have been easy, we have got it, and we have spent it. We have gone on increasing our mileage of railways year after year, while the population has remained for several years almost stationary. If anything else was wanted to prove that statement correct, it is supplied in figures somewhat similar to those given by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. The honourable gentleman did not go as far as he might have done in the matter; he gave the figures from 1885, but if you go a year or two further back you will find the facts are very remarkable, and well worthy the attention of the House. Here are a few figures showing the total mileage of the open lines in the colony during the past few years, and the net return per cent. on the capital cost:—

Year.	Mileage open.	Rate per cent. earned.
		£ s. d.
1881 .. ..	1277	3 8 3
1882 .. ..	1819	3 7 3
1883 .. ..	1358	3 3 2
1884 .. ..	1396	2 9 11
1885 .. ..	1477	2 15 4
1886 .. ..	1618	2 12 0
1887 .. ..	1727	2 2 2

That condition of affairs is not due to hard times. In 1881 the excess of revenue over working expenses was £814,497, and in 1877 it had gone down to £299,696: that is to say, we had constructed in the interval 450 miles of railway, in order to make a loss of £15,000. It is impossible to conceive that the hard times can account for anything of this sort. There can be no doubt whatever that, if we want to improve the condition of our railways and make them profitable, the only way is to

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cease railway-construction, or to construct at a very much lessened rate of speed, and allow the population to increase in the meantime; but to go on continuing expenditure on lines which, when constructed, can only lessen the profit from our railways is precisely the very thing which prevents our population from growing. Our indebtedness repels immigration. The honourable member for Selwyn gave us the results of some inquiries of his in Victoria, and, no doubt, they were very careful inquiries; but it was a rather cool assumption by the honourable gentleman, when speaking of the increased return from the Victorian railways, to ignore wholly the increase of population and trade in that prosperous colony, and to attribute all to the fact that a Board had been established to manage the railways. As a matter of fact they were paying interest on their cost before the Board was established.

Mr. FERGUS.—No; nothing near it.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—It is very easy to say "No." The habit of contradiction is so ingrained in some honourable members that they would, I believe, call out "No" if the question before the House were the salvation of their own souls. I know what I have said is the fact, for I have got the figures from the Victorian Blue Books, and I have seen the comments of the Victorian Press on them. If they did not then pay so well as now, they paid well enough to show that it is not the Board which has made the difference; but the fact is that the trade of Victoria, which is a prosperous colony, has enormously increased. When there has been a large increase of population and trade it is preposterous to say that all the increase of traffic has been due to the fact that the railways have been managed by a Board, or, rather, by the General Manager with a Board as an appendage. If I am right in these premisses, I think it would be a very great mistake to withdraw the management of a huge department which has cost some fourteen millions of capital from the control of the Government and the House, who ought to be responsible for its conduct, and hand it over to a Board. We have heard a great deal about political pressure, and I suppose there always will be political pressure. But it is a mistake to suppose that such pressure is always exerted in the wrong direction. I believe the political pressure exercised on successive Governments has, on the whole, done more good than harm; and the opinions of a large number of individuals, such as the members of this House, on railway-management ought not to be despised by any Government. I believe that political pressure to procure the construction of railways is very bad, because persons have a very direct interest in getting lines constructed in the wrong places. But political pressure by members of the House as to fares, freights, and other things concerning management, I believe myself has generally been exerted in the right direction. But if it be the case that, because a Government has had political pressure brought to bear upon it in the management of a huge department like

this, the control of the department must be taken from it and put under a Board, it appears to me to be a most extraordinary commentary on our system of government. You have only to extend the argument to prove that the whole management of the country should be removed from the Government. I could understand a contention that, because a Government could not properly manage the Railway Department, or any other department, from inability to resist pressure, therefore they should be turned out; but I cannot see why it should be a reason for withdrawing that particular department from its control. Sir, I believe we are making a mistake in this Bill, and I intend to oppose it.

Mr. STUART-MENTEATH.—I regret that so pronounced a Free-trader as the honourable member for Mount Ida should on this occasion depart so widely from a principle which lies at the very root of Free-trade. Those who support this Bill—and I must say I am one of them—look forward to certain results from it. I agree very largely with the expressions of opinion that have fallen from the honourable member for Mount Ida where they relate to railway-construction in the past; and no doubt the reason why our railways generally do not yield a large return at the present time is that they have been pushed beyond the growth of our population—that is, no doubt, one of the main reasons why they do not pay. But the question of our railways paying the interest on their cost is not the only question involved in this Bill. I have heard very eloquent speeches and I have seen eloquent addresses in the public prints from the honourable member for Mount Ida in which he declaimed against the corrupting influence of a Government being engaged in any industrial enterprise. Now, by this Bill we aim at depriving the Government of the control of a very large industrial enterprise, which, in this country, must always be more or less associated with the commercial life and industrial life and the social well-being of the community. Why, throughout this country so large has grown the fungus growth of the public-works policy that the Government is looked upon as the cause of all good, and as able to do anything to make prosperity. Everybody in the country believes that if the Government only did its duty we ought one and all of us, from the working-man to the great landowner, to be rolling in riches; and, if it is not so, that there must be something wrong, that there must be a screw loose in the administration of our public affairs. We have come in this country to mix up the cause of material prosperity with the Government, whose functions ought to be distinctly divorced from any questions involving pounds, shillings, and pence. Now, our railway system, extending throughout the country, with its host of Civil servants, is simply one of those means through which our Government is doing that which is destructive of individual independence among our New Zealand colonists; and, in removing from the Government the management of that great institution, the Rail-

way Department, we are really laying the axe at the root of a tree which, like the upas-tree, has been poisoning the atmosphere of New Zealand for years past. Even if the establishment of a Board—which I admit is an experiment—does not increase the net returns from our railways, if it does what we hope it will in other respects, it will deserve well of the country—that is, if it merely lessens the false prestige of the Government in the eyes of the people of New Zealand. Now, a great deal has been said in this debate about the railway employés; and I believe, from my own personal knowledge and from the opportunities I have had of studying the question, that a more deserving body of men, individually and collectively, than they are, it would be hard get. But why should the railway employés exert himself? What heart has he in his exertions? Let us imagine a railway employé who is really doing his utmost to bring credit on the department, and who takes a personal interest in the prosperity and well-being of the railway service in New Zealand. What shocks has he not to encounter! Let us suppose he is connected with the buying department. What does he find? A certain number of new locomotives are required, and, because of the pressure of some large commercial firm which exercises an influence on the Government through members of this House, the country, instead of getting its engines for £1,000 each, has to give £1,400 or £1,500 for them, and then they will not be so well put together, and may endanger the lives of passengers put behind them. Now, that is no exaggeration. We are now, under the influence of a paternal Government, paying £140 for every hundred pounds' worth of locomotive material put on the railways. That is one instance of bad administration of a great industrial enterprise by the Government. What would that mean on the purchase of a hundred thousand pounds' worth of material? It would mean that the country would have to pay £140,000. Would any railway officer, if he were manager of a private business of his own, act in that extraordinary way? Can we expect the railway employés to have any heart in their business if they are fettered with conditions like this? Then, again, let us suppose that sleepers are required for a line—even such a trifling matter as sleepers—or that some timber is required for a bridge. The railway employé who has the matter in hand knows well that a certain kind of timber is the best timber for the purpose—that it will last ten, or fifteen, or twenty years without rotting. He wants to buy it; but what happens? The member for the district makes a frantic appeal, and tells the Minister, "Here is Mr. So-and-so, the Government Engineer, actually going to bring timber down from Auckland to build a bridge in my district, instead of using local timber; and the local timber is as good as any grown in Auckland." What is the consequence? The department has to buy the local timber at a fabulous price, perhaps from some supporter of

*Mr. Stuart-Menteth*

the member for the district. The timber rots in five years, whereas the Auckland timber would have lasted fifteen years. That is what goes on constantly. I do not want to weary the House by giving more examples. Instances of the kind can be given by every member of the House; and yet honourable members get up and say that political management is possible, and that the railways can be well managed on this system. Why, one of the very first principles of government is that we should divorce as widely as possible all industrial action from political influence, for we know that men guided by political influence will only meddle to muddle as soon as they import their political influence into a department of industrial enterprise. Fault has been found with this Bill because, as we are told, it is incompatible with the different conditions under which different districts have been settled. Why, Sir, the first thing we have to do, if we want to make this country a prosperous and well-governed country, is that, as representatives and as electors, we should put our foot down upon these local jealousies. If we could stamp out these local jealousies, keep them under for three years, we should have no need for retrenchment, no need for any of these other measures which are now necessary to be proceeded with to bring the expenditure within the revenue. I am quite sure that these local jealousies cost the country fully the whole of last year's deficit, and more. Had it not been for these petty miserable local jealousies we should long ago have taken a far higher position in the race for progress in Australasia; and I dare say that they will continue to clog our progress for some years to come. If this Bill is passed, and this Board is brought into existence, and the Commissioners do their duty in paying no attention to the demands of localities, we may hope for better things. No doubt localities will at first kick and plunge and roar, but if the Commissioners will do their duty and conduct the Railway Department without regard to this miserable spirit, they will soon find themselves supported by a united public opinion. The localities in New Zealand have been like spoiled children. They have been accustomed to get every thing they cry for. They have got what they wanted, no matter how ruinous their demands have been to the Government, or what strain was put upon the resources of the country. The Government cannot resist them. There are exceptional circumstances in the history of every Government which make it impossible for the Government to stand up against the improper demands made by districts represented by some of the members of this House. With a Railway Board we may hope for a check upon this sort of thing. We may hope that the members of this Board, when these demands are made upon them, will say, in spite of all influence, "We are here for five years, and can only be removed for misconduct; whatever may be the popular pressure upon us, we are conscious that we are doing right in insisting upon these reforms; we know better than those who

are pressing us to accede to their selfishness; and we know that in a few years public opinion will support us: and we will do our duty." If the Railway Board takes up that position, then we shall have a new policy inaugurated, and may hope that our railways will ultimately become a source of pride to us, and also a source of pecuniary assistance to the colony's finances. That is what I hope for from this Bill. Then, we heard from the honourable member for Christchurch North of an idea which I had really hoped was worn out. We have had it declared again that when the railway policy was started a pledge was given to continue the railways. What pledge? A pledge of ruin? No. That pledge was given on the faith of the success of the railways. I have looked into that matter carefully, and I find the position to be this: It was proposed to construct railways, trunk railways, and we were told that these railways would yield certain results; and we said, "If these anticipations are fulfilled we will make railways all over the colony. If our railway policy is a success we will extend it." The meaning of that declaration is clear enough—everything depended on the result of the experiment. Did the people of New Zealand understand that the inauguration of that policy meant that they were setting a ball rolling down a steep hill at the bottom of which is a precipice; or is it to be said that when they find that out they are not to make an effort to stay the result of their action?—because that is the meaning of what the honourable gentleman says. We find that our borrowing policy is landing us in disaster, that year after year we are growing poorer, that the anticipations are not being fulfilled, that it is benefiting the few and cursing the many; and are we to be told that, because certain mountainous regions are still left without railways, we must go on building railways to keep a pledge the conditions of which have not been fulfilled, and to keep which we must ruin ourselves? Let us wait until New Zealand is peopled and prosperous, and then we may attempt to keep the pledge. What is the pledge? That we should make trunk railways throughout the colony? Sir, if we had made no main trunk railways, but had confined our attention to short lengths, we should have been better off. What does the result show? That the only lines which are paying are the short lines, or those portions of the main lines which penetrate the interior of the country, and enable the producers of the country to find a channel for the export of their produce through the harbours. Look at the geographical formation of the country: a long narrow strip of country with a long seaboard, the interior beyond a certain point being nearly all mountainous. Can any one who takes a glance at the map say that it is advisable to make railways from one end to the other of a country with a configuration such as this country has? One glance at the map will, I think, show that it is stupendous folly to make railways up and down this colony to compete with water-carriage, for the conduct of which there are numerous harbours—some

of them magnificent harbours—between which we have trading some of the finest shipping lines, considering the age of the country, that the world has seen. Sir, I support this Bill, not because I feel confident that the Bill will at once effect what those who still have some enthusiasm left in them believe it will effect, not because I think it will make railways pay which never can pay—railways simply made to gratify political demands—but because I hope it will have a very large influence in purifying the atmosphere of this House, the atmosphere of our political life, in purifying the electors' aims throughout the colony, and because I think it will, at any rate in a measure, improve the returns now received from our railways. For these reasons I support the Bill. It will give a fair trial to an experiment which, both on account of the reasons that exist for the trial and on account of a similar experiment having answered, at any rate to some extent, in other colonies, we may hope will succeed. And we are certain of this: that, whether it succeed or not, our railway-management cannot possibly be worse than it is at present.

Mr. BRUCE.—Sir, in considering the measure now before the House, we have, in the first place, I think, to determine whether to affirm or reject the principle of placing the management of our railways in the hands of non-political Boards. The Bill before us is a mere machinery Bill—it is merely a Bill to give effect to that principle; and I think I may be permitted to say that it speaks well for this measure when we find that such a high authority as the late Minister for Public Works found in it scarcely any material for adverse criticism. Now, I may commence by saying that the whole question is to me one of surpassing difficulty. There can be no doubt that, rightly or wrongly, the management of our railways has met with universal dissatisfaction. In fact, I may almost say it has met with universal condemnation. That much of this dissatisfaction is of a most unreasonable character is highly probable; but, making all allowances, I believe that there is good ground for the belief that the management of the railways has not been in the best interests of the shareholders, who are the general public. We find in the Financial Statement the assertion that the system rather than the management is at fault; and, while I think that the latter has been of a somewhat imperfect character, still I think the statement is substantially correct. I have already said that to me the question is one of surpassing difficulty. In point of fact, this is a problem that can only be solved approximately, because we are dealing with unknown quantities. I intend to support the measure, and for various reasons. In the first place—I am afraid I shall be repeating what other speakers have said—I think it goes without saying that we may anticipate that our railways will be more economically administered. Government administration is, as a rule, expensive administration; and it is also, I may add, inefficient administration when carried on under high political pressure. This has been called an

experiment, and no doubt it is such; but I shall hail with delight any mode by which political influence may be withdrawn from the management of our railways, and I believe that if they are to be efficiently and economically managed it is absolutely necessary that an independent authority—and when I say an independent authority, I mean one quite outside political pressure—shall have the control and regulation of all details, of all classes of railway employes, and full power to manage the railways on sound commercial principles. Sir, it has been said, during the course of the debate, that it will be impossible to institute a Board, or manage our railways, without being subject to political pressure. Well, I hope, at any rate, this experiment will prove successful in relieving us from that pressure. So long as any man whose services the department may think fit to dispense with can bring political influence to bear upon the floor of this House, or so long as that influence can be brought to bear in reference to the retention of those whose services are either inefficient or perhaps superfluous, so long will the railways be inefficiently managed. I think that goes without saying, and it furnishes one of the strongest arguments for the institution of non-political Boards of management. Now, it has been alleged, during the course of the debate, that the railway-management of Victoria is a success, whilst others have denied it. Some believe it a success, others believe it is a failure. I believe the balance of evidence is entirely in its favour. I have not heard outside or read anything on the subject myself, but have listened very attentively to the other speakers during the debate. Now, it has been urged, during the course of this debate, as an argument against the introduction of these Boards, that there has been a very serious railway accident lately in Victoria. These railway accidents, as a matter of fact, take place on the best managed and regulated railways in the world. It is no argument at all; and so long as men are liable to errors of judgment, so long as they can be guilty of carelessness or negligence, so long as they can be incompetent from any cause whatever, so long will these accidents take place on railways. But, Sir, I think that to cite as an argument against the institution of these Boards an accident of this kind having taken place in Victoria is just about as absurd as to condemn a system of machinery because there is a wheel in it in which a cog happens to give way. Now, I wish, in the remarks that I am about to make, to avoid repetition. It has been assumed by many speakers that I have listened to in this House that our railways do not pay because they do not yield interest upon the cost of construction. I am inclined to believe that, directly and indirectly, our railways are paying now, and that they will pay very much better as years roll on, and as settlement continues to advance. I may ask this question: What is a railway? It is a means to an end, just as a metalled road is. In the one case we run our vehicles individually over the

road with horses, in the other case we draw our wagons co-operatively with steam. That is the difference. Now, allowing, for argument's sake, that we have spent in the colony three millions sterling on roads and tracks—I believe we have spent a good deal more; but we will put it at that—will any one contend that because these roads do not yield interest directly, while they cost annually large sums for maintenance and repair, they do not pay? Unquestionably they do pay; and if the argument is sound in one case, what is the difference when applied in the other? I venture to say that the railways have not been managed in the best interests of the shareholders, who are the general public, and I will endeavour to prove it by two or three hypothetical illustrations, which I believe have their counterpart in fact. I will take the case of five men who, for argument's sake, we will say leave Christchurch to obtain employment a hundred miles southward. We will say that it cost them, taking into account the value of their time, £10 to reach their destination—that is to say, if they have to walk. At the same time here is a railway—and, recollect, these men are shareholders in the line—here is a railway running almost parallel with the road, on which carriages are run, perhaps empty, or nearly empty, and it might not take, as an actual matter of fact, sixpenceworth of steam, perhaps not a shilling's worth of steam, to draw those five men the hundred miles, while if they were given the ride for nothing they would be, so to speak, £8 richer. We may take this as an argument in favour of what was advanced by the honourable member for Waikato, that the second-rate fares should be materially reduced. I will take another case in regard to goods: the last applied to passengers. We will suppose, for the sake of argument, that in a county in this colony there is such a state of things that there are no metalled roads in existence. And we will further allow that the inhabitants of this county borrow money to make metalled roads, the traffic in the first place being done by means of pack-horses over muddy tracks. Now, when the metalled roads are made, what would be the wisdom, or, rather, the unwisdom, of the local authorities—that is to say, the parliament of the county—if they placed such tolls on these roads as to necessitate the shareholders, the inhabitants of the county, who originally borrowed the money to make the metalled roads, reverting to the original practice of carrying their products on the backs of horses, over tracks parallel to the roads! That is practically what is taking place to-day in respect to a number of our railway lines, and therefore I say that, presumably, they are not managed in the interests of the shareholders, the public. I will take another case which actually occurred. In the Manawatu District there is a very enterprising firm of saw-millers, who, had they been able to obtain a small concession in the way of rates, would have been able to contract for the supply of a million feet of white-pine timber for the Melbourne Exhibition, but, owing to their inability to get the concession,

*Mr. Bruce*



they were unable to contract for the supply of the timber. Now, I put it to the House, would it not, in this case, have paid the colony, I will not say merely to have run it at cost price, but to have run it, perhaps, at a trifling loss? I say, most certainly it would. That is another instance which I have adduced of the present vicious system of the management of our railways, which were put up, in the first place, for the convenience of the public. Of course this line of argument of mine leads in the direction of throwing the railways open to the public absolutely; and I believe that is theoretically the solution of the problem. There is no doubt about it that the day will come—it may not be in our time, but the day will come—when the railways of this colony will be thrown open to the public just as the metalled roads are. There is this distinction which honourable members must bear in mind between our railways and those of either Great Britain or America: that here our railways should be run in the interests of the public, who are the shareholders; in the other case they are run in the interests of the few. Now, I may remark that there was a very suggestive return laid on the table of the House the other day, showing the results of a low-tariff period and of a high-tariff period on the railway line between Lyttelton and Christchurch. It is shown in that return that during the low-tariff period a very large number of passengers, greater than that of the high-tariff period, were carried—I think a hundred thousand at least, if I recollect rightly—and at the same time the revenue obtained was greater. I say that is a very suggestive return. It has been advanced by a number of people in this colony that we should either sell or lease the railways. I am very strongly opposed to either proposal. In the first place let me ask this question: Who could determine, even approximately, the value of the railways? To enable us to estimate the value of the railways I may say we should require to know who would occupy those Government benches for the next twenty years,—whether they would be Governments which would give confidence and draw the right class of immigrants to the country, and advance settlement along these lines. We should also require to know the values of produce for that period, which would be a determining factor in the settlement of the country along these lines. Some honourable gentlemen, in the manner that the honourable member for Mount Ida has, I think, rightly put as jumping to a conclusion, have estimated the value of the railways at fifteen millions. I think that must be only jumping to a conclusion; but if they are good for that for a company they are equally good for us, and, I might say, a great deal more so. I am very strongly opposed to selling what have in reality a very great prospective value, and because also, as I have already said, I believe the time will come when the unborn millions will ride triumphantly on these railways; and I believe that when that time does come it will add in an incalculable

degree to the comfort and prosperity, and, I would even add, to the happiness of the people of this colony. I know ideas of this kind are looked upon as revolutionary, but perhaps I, like the honourable member for Mount Ida, live fifty years in advance of my time in that respect. I suppose honourable members will recognise that in my remarks to-night I have not dealt with the scheme before us, and I have not done so because I find that my ideas have been given utterance to already. Nearly all the remarks I have made have gone rather in the direction of a diagnosis of the disease than in the direction of pointing out a remedy. Now, I may say in regard to the Bill itself that there is one very great omission from it, in my opinion, and that is that no guidance or direction is given to these Commissioners as to what principles they are to work the lines upon. In that matter, I say that the Government have not risen to the occasion, because this is the most difficult portion of the problem. I am not going to enter into an analysis of the question, but I believe, in the first place, that we should endeavour to run the railways on commercial principles, giving the Commissioners direction—if such a thing is possible—to keep in view the encouragement of our industries, in which, of course, settlement is included. There is one clause, and one clause only, that I thought of criticizing, but I have heard another honourable member allude to it, and any amendments I shall propose I shall propose in Committee, if this Bill arrive at that stage, as I suppose it will. I may say that I have very great pleasure in supporting it—although it is an experiment—because I think that a great deal of the dissatisfaction that has been expressed has arisen on account of bad management of our railways. And I think, looking to the way in which the Bill is drafted—provision being made for every contingency—that it reflects very great credit on the Minister for Public Works, and I shall support it with my whole heart.

Mr. FERGUS.—Mr. Speaker, I have been somewhat amused at the very authoritative manner in which some honourable members who have preceded me have spoken in antagonism to this measure, and especially was I amused with the amount of assurance that characterized the utterance of the honourable member for Mount Ida. Sir, he spoke in a somewhat similar strain to that of the honourable member for Ponsonby when he said that we required proof that the Victorian Bill had been a success, as that had not been clearly demonstrated to the House.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Hear, hear.

Mr. FERGUS.—The honourable member for Mount Ida says, "Hear, hear." I hold in my hand the last report of the Victorian Commissioners, and it gives a tabulated statement of the cost and the receipts per train-mile for the last sixteen years. I shall quote the whole table, to show more clearly what the earnings of the Victorian railways have been since 1871-72 to 1885-86:—

Years and Half-years.	Main-tenance.		Locomo-tive.		Traffic.		General.		Total Working Cost.				Net Earnings.			
	Amount.	Per Cent. of Gross Receipts.	Amount.	Per Cent. of Gross Receipts.	Amount. *	Per Cent. of Gross Receipts.	Amount.	Per Cent. of Gross Receipts.	Amount.	Per Cent. of Gross Receipts.	Per Train-mile.	Per Average Mile open.	Amount.	Per Average Mile open.	Per Train-mile.	Per Cent. on Capital Cost.
	£		£		£		£		£		s. d.	£	£	s. d.		
1871-2	69,180	10.85	85,739	13.45	110,843	17.38	14,042	2.20	279,804	43.88	4 9.23	1,048	337,828	1,340	6 1.18	3.57
1872-3	72,083	10.25	97,822	13.90	132,594	18.84	18,792	2.67	321,291	45.66	4 8.94	959	382,437	1,142	5 7.78	3.54
1873-4	74,959	8.81	121,878	14.32	161,245	18.95	16,593	1.95	374,715	44.03	4 5.94	905	476,327	1,150	5 8.57	4.12
1874-5	130,435	14.18	148,999	16.19	182,042	19.79	20,241	2.20	481,717	52.36	4 8.35	890	438,290	810	4 3.27	3.53
1875-6	128,679	12.94	153,617	15.44	196,195	19.72	20,916	2.10	499,407	50.20	4 4.57	821	495,369	815	4 4.14	3.74
1876-7	54,430	9.86	81,206	14.71	107,828	19.54	9,939	1.80	253,408	45.91	4 0.16	389	298,557	459	4 8.74	4.56
1877	106,581	14.66	181,078	15.94	230,125	20.26	14,697	1.29	592,481	52.16	4 3.03	753	543,318	690	3 10.79	3.73
1878	155,410	12.77	204,806	16.83	248,519	20.43	16,964	1.40	625,699	51.43	4 0.52	647	590,976	611	3 9.82	3.85
1879	153,514	12.56	211,479	17.31	256,300	20.97	19,331	1.58	640,624	52.42	3 8.40	587	581,483	533	3 4.30	3.58
1880	199,042	13.33	258,491	17.32	333,248	22.32	23,294	1.56	814,075	54.53	3 8.60	682	678,842	569	3 1.19	3.76
1881	219,599	13.19	256,990	15.43	412,336	24.76	24,647	1.48	913,572	54.86	3 11.32	752	751,637	619	3 2.93	4.04
1882	244,626	13.73	284,713	15.99	544,886	30.59	24,374	1.37	1,098,599	61.68	4 4.01	845	682,479	525	2 8.31	3.46
1883	376,187	19.82	334,091	17.60	514,259	27.09	49,385	2.60	1,273,921	67.11	4 5.62	890	624,389	436	2 2.28	2.91
1884-5	167,607	14.98	195,362	17.46	294,139	26.29	21,641	1.93	678,749	60.69	3 8.97	425	440,274	276	2 5.17	2.01
1884-5	281,475	12.90	402,175	18.43	547,445	25.09	46,330	2.12	1,277,425	58.54	3 8.75	772	904,507	547	2 7.69	3.95
1885-6	275,609	11.84	415,525	17.84	567,409	24.35	51,905	2.23	1,310,538	56.26	3 7.34	775	1,018,589	602	2 9.69	4.18

\* Including repairs and renewals of carriages and wagons.  
 Bay Suburban lines included since 1880.

† Six months only.

‡ The Hobson's

You will thus see that, while the earnings per train-mile have fallen very considerably, the percentage on capital employed has gone up wonderfully, and this, too, in the teeth of cheaper rates charged by the Railway Board. Any one acquainted with the Colony of Victoria, with the public men of Victoria, with the working of the Victorian railways, as I happen to be, and very familiarly too, must know that there is but one opinion in the whole colony in favour of the system as it at present exists, and the working of the Railway Board as at present constituted. And so patent has that been to the rest of the colonies that the Government of New South Wales framed a measure almost entirely on the Victorian lines for the working of their railways. The South Australian Government framed a measure likewise on those lines. And it is an undoubted fact that the people of the several Australian Colonies recognise that the Victorian system is worked now to a very considerable extent, but not entirely, as I should like to see it, free from political control, and that it has been a very great improvement on the condition of things which formerly obtained in that colony. If the honourable member for Mount Ida had been present when the late Minister for Public Works was addressing this House, he would have found that that honourable gentleman admitted exactly the contention I hold. He was of opinion that the reason why the administration of the Victorian railways had deteriorated, and why the appointment of a non-political Board was absolutely necessary, was on account of the fact that political corruption existed to so large an extent as to render it altogether impossible to administer the railways economically. Year by year the pressure from the various constituencies

was getting greater and greater,—just the same as it is in this House at the present time. What has occurred here since we have been in session? Three hundred and fifty-five questions have been asked in this House; and, out of these, no fewer than sixty of them appertained to railway matters, from the employment of a boy at 4s. 6d. a day on the Waimea Plains Railway to the entire revision of the railway tariff.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why should it not be?

Mr. FERGUS.—There is every reason why it should not be so. It is impossible for the Government or the managers of the railways in this colony to discharge a drunken or incapable workman without his finding some honourable member in this House to assert his claim, move the adjournment of the House, and bring the matter up as one of colonial importance. It is degrading to this House that it should be occupied with such matters. There ought to be some other tribunal to which they could appeal. I always acknowledge the right of the meanest citizen to have recourse to the highest tribunal in the land—that is, the Parliament of New Zealand; but I say it is not right that every petty little detail, such as is too often dragged up here by some honourable members in order to please some of their constituents, should be brought continually before the members of this House. I say that during the six or seven years I have been in the House this thing is growing, and has grown now almost past endurance; and, if it is to continue, instead of being in session two or three months we shall be sitting here for the whole of the year discussing petty details which, if we were in command of extensive businesses, we should leave to the control of our foremen or managers. It is beneath the dignity of the House to do

such a thing, and leads to political corruption, and is not in the best interests of the men themselves; and I speak from extensive knowledge of the workmen employed on the railways. I think I have disposed of the argument of the honourable member for Ponsonby. The honourable member for Christchurch North said we were putting the construction and reconstruction of these lines into the hands of this Board. Yes, Sir, we are doing so, and justly and wisely too, and not before it is time. What has obtained in the past? What has been the condition of things? We have got two departments doing virtually one and the same work. The Public Works Department is the one which this House authorises to construct the lines, to get out the details and specifications; and contracts are let by the Minister for Public Works. The contractor fulfils his part of the work by completing his contract; but how often does it occur that when the lines are completed they are found to be utterly insufficient, or not according to the wishes of the Working Department, and that a great deal of the work has to be reconstructed! We have two separate and distinct engineering staffs in the employment of the country. Is this as it ought to be? If we do amalgamate the two staffs, and have one staff of engineers who would lay down railways, make such curves and gradients as they think best, provide such platforms as they consider necessary, and afford such accommodation as the public require, there will be no necessity for another department to go in and re-do that which has been done in the first place, as under our present system. I could give the House some personal experience in this matter. I say that if you had one instead of two departments you would considerably reduce the cost that exists at the present time. I do not wish to say anything in disparagement of the men who are in charge of our railways; and the honourable member for Kaiapoi paid a just and well-merited tribute, I think, to the integrity, honesty, and capacity of the men who have been working our railways in the past. He said that, if they could be only more untrammelled than they are now, and less under political control, they would be able to work the railways to very much greater advantage: and so they would. This measure is to free the men from many of their trammels. At present they have ninety-five masters in this House, and, if we could give them three masters instead of the great number they now have, there is not an intelligent workman who is worth his salt who would not hail with joy the appointment of such a Board, as it would be to his best interests and to the ultimate gain of the colony. We cannot get away from the fact, try to blind ourselves to it as we may, that there is a very large measure of dissatisfaction in the colony as to the way in which our railways are worked, and very justly so; and I tell this House that that dissatisfaction is not on account of the management, but is owing to the many barriers which this House places in the way of the

efficient management of the railways. What are we to say of the Minister for Public Works at the present time! He is now in office, but his term of office will expire sooner or later, and he must give way to some other man, who is selected not on account of his capacity, or his knowledge of the working of railways or their construction, but on account of the exigencies of the political situation; and then this man will come in with new ideas, and may overturn and render nugatory any reforms which a just and wise Minister may wish to effect. I say it is utterly impossible for any body constituted as we are to manage our railways to the benefit of the country, efficiently and well; and we must entirely sever them from political control, and give men a certain term of office to effect the necessary reforms. To do that, our railways must be removed entirely from the political demagogues who are continually interfering with the details of their management. The honourable member for Rangitikei has asked, What should our railways do? There are two classes in this House, one of which thinks that the railways ought to be made to pay interest on the cost of their construction, and the other party thinks they should be run for the benefit of the settlers, without regard to their paying. I hold that it is the duty of the State to try to attain both of these things. In the first place we should endeavour to work the railways in such a manner that they shall return as much as possible in the way of interest; and in the second place we should afford facilities to settlers in far-outlying districts to get their produce to market so cheaply that they will be able to live on their farm sections: and I believe that by putting the railways under the management of such a Board as we here propose you will get the maximum amount of profit to the colony and the minimum of cost. I never saw, nor is it recorded in history, that in any country politically-managed railways are a success. I do not wish to say for a single moment that the measure introduced by the Government is absolutely perfect, and we are willing to amend it in such a way that it shall be of the greatest benefit to the country. I am pleased, indeed, to hear the remarks of such men as the late Minister for Public Works. I have not yet heard a single argument against making it law. We know the colony is looking for it, and I know that it has been a success in other colonies, and that the management can be much more efficient than it is under the present system if you take away political control, and enable men to work in the best interest of the railways of the State and of the employes on the various lines. I trust, indeed, I have no doubt, the House will agree to the second reading of this measure.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Sir, although I disagree with much that is in this Bill, I shall vote for the second reading. It is not my intention to go through the Bill or offer any lengthened remarks, because all that can be said has already been said by one speaker or another. My object in rising is to express surprise at some of the

remarks made by the honourable member for Te Aro with regard to the locomotives which are being manufactured in the colony. He made some statements which were so gross as almost to amount to libel. He said they cost 40 per cent. more than they could be imported for from Home. The fact is that, when they were contracted for, the price in excess of what they could be imported for was 27 per cent. Since then the price of material has fallen very much.

Mr. STUART-MENTEATH.—The late Minister for Public Works said they cost 27 per cent. more than they could be imported for from Victoria or New South Wales, not from America or Great Britain.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—If the honourable gentleman will look at the report of the answer which the late Minister for Public Works gave to a question put to him in this House, he will see that that honourable gentleman stated most distinctly that they cost 27 per cent. more than they could be landed for from England. I have asked the late Minister for Public Works since the honourable member for Te Aro made the statement, and he corroborates what I say. Then he went on to say that the workmanship of those locomotives was so bad that it was dangerous for people to sit behind them, and their lives were risked; but I should like to tell the honourable member that Mr. Robert Wilson, who is the engineer in England to inspect the material sent out to the Government here, chancing to be in New Zealand through his connection with the Midland Railway, said that the work done here is quite as good as, if not better than, that done in England. As for the danger of sitting behind them, I may tell the honourable gentleman that none of these engines have been placed on the line yet, and no engine is to be taken over by the Government until it has run 1,000 miles; so that the statement of the honourable gentleman is incorrect in every part.

Mr. STUART-MENTEATH.—They were tried, and broke down.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—They have never been out of the shops yet, because they have not been finished. There is no doubt that the work is being excellently done. In what the honourable gentleman said with regard to the timber used, owing to political pressure, in the construction of some bridges, I presume he was referring to bridges between Wanganui and New Plymouth. But that occurred many years ago: the bridges have been rebuilt and are as good as ever; so that argument falls to the ground. I should also like to reply to the remarks of the honourable member for Auckland North with regard to Mr. Vaile's system of railway management, and his hope that a clause would be inserted in the Bill compelling the Commissioners to give that scheme a trial. I have taken the trouble to read the whole of the evidence taken by the Select Committee which sat in 1886; and to any one who has read that evidence it must be quite plain that the scheme is futile. Mr. Vaile had no evidence to offer, and merely stated that he

believed such-and-such would be the case; while it is shown conclusively by the evidence of experts that the scheme is a very bad one. The honourable gentleman tells us that petitions signed by twenty thousand people have been forwarded to Parliament in favour of this scheme. To any one who has been a member of Parliament for some years, it must be patent that in Auckland they are very good at getting up petitions. The Auckland people actually got up a petition to save the murderer Caffrey from the gallows. Surely, if people can do that, they can get up a petition on almost any subject. We are also told that at the late election Mr. Vaile's scheme received a great deal of support. I say the people of Auckland are very easily led. A number of people who know nothing whatever about a matter are always ready to take up almost everything they are told. We have had cases where a man was elected simply because he had a grievance, and he happened to be in gaol at the time. A great deal has been said, notably by the Minister of Justice, as to why we want this Board, and one reason was that if any one has a grievance he goes to his member, who brings up the question in the House, and that thus a great deal of time is wasted. I admit that that is the case; but that is chiefly because our whole system is bad, and not because the management is bad. If we had Boards to investigate grievances there would be an end of it. There are no such Boards, and inquiries conducted by the department have often been of such a character that it was quite right the cases should be brought before this House. A few years ago I had a petition myself which I brought before the House, and I may say I was very successful with it. This was a case where an employé at Taranaki had been disrated, and the authorities had refused to give him a character, and treated him very badly indeed. It was admitted by the General Manager, Mr. Maxwell, that the man was entitled to a good character, and that he had been dealt with very badly. Some of the officers of the department investigated his case at New Plymouth. The man was not asked to be present, nor was he given an opportunity of bringing forward any evidence: in fact, he was condemned unheard. Surely we do not want a Board of that kind to deal with cases in that way. I shall not oppose the second reading of the Bill, because there appears a general desire throughout the country that there should be some change. When the Bill goes into Committee, there are several clauses which I shall try to get amended.

Mr. KERR.—I feel that this Bill is a big leap in the dark. I shall vote for it because I think any system would be better than the one we have got, for it is made of red-tape. I feel satisfied the present system lies with the Minister for Public Works. If we gave our present Railway Managers a little more latitude than they have got they would make the railways pay very well. Their hands are tied down now in such a manner that they can do nothing to help the railway at all. A tariff is sent to them and they must adhere to it. If

Mr. Levestam

a man comes to them with a hundred tons of stuff and offers to send it at £1 a ton, and the tariff says it must be £1 0s. 1d., the Manager is bound to refuse the stuff. Although I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, I am satisfied it would be much better if the Minister for Public Works would give the Railway Managers a little latitude. If this were done the Managers would make money with the railways. If the Minister said to them, "We want you to make the railways pay 2 or 2½ per cent.," I am sure we have the men in New Zealand who are capable of doing that. It seems to me that it is the opinion of this House that there are no men in New Zealand capable of doing anything, and that we must import men. If you import men at big salaries you will find they are unused to the kind of work they will have to do here. The managers of the railways at Home have not got to consider the red-tape system at all. They have to run against other companies, and, in order to be successful men, they have to run out the other companies, whether they make money or not. Here there is no opposition; we have the railways in our own hands. As it is the wish of the House that the proposed system should be tried, I am willing to support the Bill, but I am satisfied that it is a mistake.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I do not intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill, because I think we can put it in a better shape in Committee. The Minister of Justice referred to the necessity for these Boards in consequence of the political influence of members of this House who represent constituencies in which there are a few railway employes. I contend that, if the railway employes had a Board to which they could apply and get their grievances rectified, there would be no complaints. I hope a clause will be inserted in Committee, making provision for that. I have personal knowledge as to men who have been very unfairly treated. Numbers of men have spoken to me about their grievances when they have been discharged, and I have simply told them that I could do nothing in the matter. I said, "I cannot use my influence, because if I do, and you are taken into the service again, it will not be long before they will find fault with you again, and you will have to go." The General Manager, where he found that these men had been wronged, has had them taken back again. I give him credit for that. I say that every man, however humble his position, has a right to have his grievance ventilated. I am sure the Minister for Public Works will admit that there is no method by which these men can get their grievances honestly considered. If they are discharged, and the matter is referred back to the men who discharged them, the report received is not of a favourable character—it is generally of a prejudicial character—and it is only when these men get to the head of the department, to an officer like Mr. Maxwell, that they can get fair-play. I want to see something in this Bill to meet that phase of the question.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I think the line taken up

by the honourable member for Mount Ida is not very far from the mark. If you intend the railways to pay, there is no need to appoint a Board to raise the rates and to work them on a different style from the present. What you want to do is to settle the land through which the railways already run. On one line running through the best land in the colony you will sometimes go ten or twelve miles and see nothing but sheep. There ought to be a large population settled there. The best-paying line in the colony was the Duntroon line before it was interfered with. It was a light line, built by the Provincial Government, and would have paid well for many years to come if it had been left as it was. I suppose the intention was to make it uniform with other lines. The railways we have already would pay if we had a population there. The population being such as I speak of, that would mean bringing the land into cultivation; it would increase the traffic, and it would mean work for the unemployed. The express-train from Dunedin to Christchurch is run simply to please a few merchants and their travellers. If you sit in that train, as I do sometimes, you will hear people grumbling at the train stopping so often. You will find that these men have season-tickets, and they would like to run through in half an hour. It would be necessary to get some system of balloon-travelling to please these people. If the expense is not too large, I should like to see a return showing how this express between Invercargill and Christchurch pays. In my opinion it does not pay at all. If it pays, certainly the slower trains must be paying handsomely. I do not think there is an average of more than five through passengers by this train. I see by the nod of the Minister for Public Works that he agrees with me. If it is our intention to make the railways pay, then we should devise some means of settling the land. If the land is settled, then not only will the railways pay, but the Customs revenue will be raised at the same time, and things will become prosperous. It would also do away with the "unemployed" cry. Raising the fares will not make the railways pay. Even relaxing the rules to enable concessions to be made in favour of large consignments will make very little difference. Even the last portion of the line completed in my district will not pay, in my opinion, unless something is done in the way of settling people on the land there. A few bales of wool or a few truck-loads of wool in a year will not make a line pay. If the Government are to make the railways pay, it will have to be done in the way I have indicated. I do not believe in this Bill, and I may as well say so. I believe the Government can conduct the railways as well as any Board, and perhaps better. I may just say a word or two on the direction in which I think the railways could be worked to pay. No discretion is now left with the local Station-master at all. He cannot put on an extra train on any special occasion, for fear that it may not pay. Though the circumstances are such that he knows it is pretty sure to pay very

well, he must not risk it, because he knows that, if it happened to bring a few shillings less than what will pay, the department would not like it, and consequently would grumble. On the other hand, if a train has been advertised to run specially it is run even if there is no traffic for it. If the local Stationmaster were given a little latitude, and allowed to use his own judgment and local knowledge, he would make his part of the line pay a great deal better than it does now, and the total number of such cases would make a very great difference in the total result. I know very well that in my district there might often be a special train run from Oamaru to various places, and it would pay handsomely; but, for fear of getting into disfavour if one time the train happened to not return quite its cost, the Stationmaster will not risk it. His instructions are to get a guarantee if he can, and unless he can get that he will not take the risk. I have known, myself, cases in which very large extra returns might have been earned if the Stationmasters were allowed a little discretion; but they are not allowed to take any risk in case the return should be a shilling or two below the cost, though the average would a good deal more than make up for it. I have had talks with Stationmasters, and I have asked them their opinions, and they are all of opinion that the General Manager should allow just a little reasonable latitude, and then they could work the lines a great deal better than they do now. Another thing that should be done is this: Those working the railways should be like other carriers: instead of waiting to have everything brought to them to be carried, they should, like other carriers, look up work. Now, there is one line in my district that would pay well during the summer months if it were properly worked. There is a gravel-pit where the line runs, with about 45ft. in the face; and a demand could be got for that gravel for forty miles along the line—because this is a sort of gravel that is suitable for walks, as it is fine, clean, and white—if it could be carried cheaply and conveniently. The way would be to make arrangements to take so many trucks at a time; but on this line trucks can often be seen lying for two or three weeks doing nothing. At the slack time of the year they might just as well be running if any traffic could be found for them, and I am sure it could be in the way I say. The men should be got to look after the traffic, and in this way, I believe, the lines would be made to pay handsomely—at any rate, I think they would pay 1 per cent. more than they are paying now; and I think they would be paying exceedingly well if they did that. If our railways returned 3 or 3½ per cent., surely we could consider them to be paying handsomely; for, if we take into consideration the cost that would be entailed in making and maintaining roads if all the traffic were done by road, we shall find that what is saved there far more than makes up any small difference between the net returns of the railways and the interest on the cost of construc-

*Mr. Duncan*

tion. Now, I think, instead of trying to shift the responsibility for the management of the railways on to a Board, the Government should themselves try, as an experiment for a short time, a better way of working in the directions I and other honourable members have suggested. Instead of sitting in his office here writing and receiving letters, the Minister should leave that to the General Manager, and should go about and see for himself how the lines are worked, and talk with the Stationmasters; and I am sure he would, if he went into the thing thoroughly, see that the best policy would be to give them a little latitude, and expect them to use their own judgment and discretion a good deal more than they do now. He might give them twelve months to work in that way, and let them understand that if the results were not satisfactory they might look for their dismissal at the end of that time. Let them be told plainly what was expected of them, and see that they do it. If you get a Board you will not find that questions of railway management will cease to come up and give work and trouble to this House. There will be complaints against the Board, and pressure will be brought on the House to abolish it before it has got a fair start. Let the Board do what it will, the chances are that it would make some mistakes before it got a fair start; and these very mistakes would get up a cry against it, and a demand to do away with the Board. I am convinced there would be the same results as with the Government Insurance Board, and I know I should not like to be one of those having seats at the Board, even if it were for five years. Now, I am sure the railways could be managed under the Government so as to pay much better than they do now. I do not know if it is known to the Minister that a rule is in force forbidding the employes on the railway, if they have anything to complain of, from bringing it before a member of this House. I do not think it is creditable to whoever issued that rule, because if the member for the district is a reasonable man—and if he is not he has no business to be here—he would be the most suitable man to hear any complaints there might be, and the one best fitted in helping to put things right. I certainly think that rule ought to be done away with. I do not believe in the Bill, because I think we could do better without it. I have nothing to say against the Bill as a Bill of its kind; but it is my opinion that the Government could manage the lines better than the proposed Board could manage them, and therefore I must oppose the Bill.

Mr. JONES. — Generally in the speeches which have been made in this debate honourable members have shown that they knew very well what they were speaking about; but I wish to call attention to one statement made by the honourable member for Te Aro, in which the honourable gentleman certainly was not accurate: indeed, he was so inaccurate that I feel bound to call attention to it. He said that the colonial-made locomotives are so badly constructed that they endanger the lives of



those riding behind them. Now, the fact is that not a single colonial-made locomotive has yet been run on a line. I happen to know the contractors for the colonial-made locomotives, and I know that up to now not one single locomotive has been taken over from the contractors and taken charge of by the Railway Department. Therefore the honourable gentleman's statement was an extraordinary one to make, and I trust he will see his way to apologize for having made it, as I think that is only due to the contractors, whom his statement is calculated to injure, and who are a well-known and honourable business firm. I trust that he will see his way to acknowledge his mistake. In reference to the Bill itself, I shall vote for the second reading; but it is a Bill of such magnitude that, I confess, I have not been able, up to the present time, to consider all the various points in it with the attention they deserve; and I am of opinion that it would be better, after the second reading has been carried, and after honourable members have had an opportunity of expressing their views, that the measure should not be forced through this session, so that the country may also have an opportunity to consider the measure and pronounce an opinion upon it.

Mr. MARCHANT.—The honourable member for Motueka professes himself a sceptic in regard to the Bill; but I think he used one of the strongest arguments in support of it when he said if more discretion were left to the local managers the lines could be made to pay. They could be made to pay, no doubt, if those in charge of them were allowed more discretion, and could make different charges on different sections, and if each case of reduction were strictly local; but the honourable gentleman must know full well what the result would be if the manager on one section lowered the rates on some particular article of produce in order to foster the carriage of it on his line. Instantly the settlers along other sections of railway would demand similar concessions. The managers would refuse, knowing that making the concessions there could not affect the amount of traffic; on which an agitation would be immediately raised against them, and the Minister would have to interfere to protect his servants, and then the whole power of Parliament would be brought to bear to force the Minister to give way and make the concession. It is only possible for a Board such as proposed, beyond political control, to make the differential rates necessary to make the different sections pay. The honourable member for Waitaki referred to the question of settlement: I think the Ministry we have now is one that is determined to foster settlement, if any Ministry could be so determined, and to give the people along the lines of railway the best facilities for using them. The honourable member also stated that the railway employes are forbidden to bring their grievances before members of Parliament: and that statement has been made more than once in this House. I do not think it is a fair statement to make, because only a short time ago the order under which this was said to be

done was laid on the table of the House, having been previously moved for. It is dated the 15th February, 1883, and reads thus:—

"The communication of official information to members of the Press or other persons relating to the public service or the official position of any employé is forbidden, except so far as it may be strictly within the official duties of employes to supply it. Breach of this rule will render employes liable to dismissal.—J. P. MAXWELL."

Now, I defy any one to say that this order—

Mr. DUNCAN.—That is not the order at all.

Mr. MARCHANT.—We are bound to assume it is.

Mr. DUNCAN.—Well, you can have your own way.

Mr. MARCHANT.—If the honourable gentleman is not satisfied, he ought to move for a further return; but, in the meantime, we are bound to assume that this is the only order issued.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I can find another.

Mr. MARCHANT.—The honourable gentleman ought to find it, then, and lay it on the table. But this order cannot be twisted into saying that it forbids railway employes bringing any complaints they may have under the notice of Parliament. As for the Bill, I intend to support it, as I believe it to be a good one, and, at all events, things cannot be worked under it worse than they are under the present system.

Mr. KELLY.—It is my intention to support the second reading of this Bill; but, at the same time, I think it is not right that the management of the railways should wholly leave the control of the Minister for Public Works. I think that when the Board is appointed there will be practically little or nothing for the Minister of Public Works to do, because he tells us, when we apply for funds to construct roads or repair them, that there is no money for that purpose; and so it appears to me that, if the Minister has nothing to do in the way of constructing new works for want of money, and if the management of the works already constructed is taken from him, there will be nothing left for him to do. His office will have to be shut up. The Government ought to consider well before they appoint this Board; but, if a Board is to be appointed, I think the Minister for Public Works should be a member of it. It has been said during this debate, with regard to the money spent in different districts in the different workshops, that the money should be distributed over the colony. Now, I find, by a return laid on the table, showing the work done at the different workshops for other places, that at Addington last year the work done was of the value of £44,823; at Hillside, £4,950; at Newmarket, Auckland, £1,553; and at Pitone, £432. There are large and expensive buildings at each of these places; a great deal of money is spent there; but I think that the money should be better distributed, for it is evident by this return that most of the

money is spent at Addington. The buildings at Pitone are large and extensive, and yet the sum spent there on works was only £432. I think that the members representing Wellington should see that they get a better share of the large sums of money spent than what they have got. I think that the members representing Auckland should also see that they get a fair share of the money voted for carrying on these works. But the case of Pitone is worse, for such large and extensive buildings should never have been erected if only £432 is to be spent there, against £44,823 at Addington. All over the colony, in my opinion, buildings have been erected that are not required, and in that way the present crisis has been brought on. We were told to-day that locomotives manufactured in this country cost 40 per cent. more than they would have cost if imported. I think that 40 per cent. should have been saved, or that these buildings should never have been erected. Although it is my intention to support local industries, and encourage the manufacture of our locomotives, at the same time I think that the money should be fairly distributed all over the country, and that such large sums should not be spent in one place, to the great disadvantage of others. With regard to the railways, it has been said here to-night that they were not made to pay. Now, we have 1,700 miles of railways; and I contend that, wherever these railways are, the people that have the advantage of them should be made to pay a certain amount to the taxation of the country. When the proposal to make railways was first brought before the House it was proposed that the lands through which they were to run should be rated to pay something towards the interest on cost of construction—that an area extending five or ten miles on each side of the lines should be rated on account of its enhanced value. I do not see why this should not have been done. The land has been enhanced in value by the construction of these railways, and I do not see why it should not pay something. The district I represent is a large one. We have neither railways nor proper roads, and in the winter it is impossible to travel over the roads even on horseback; and yet we are told that we cannot get a sum of £100 or £200 to construct or repair the road that was destroyed by the late Tarawera eruption. The position is, in my opinion, a melancholy one, because I contend that those who use the railways, or who have railways running through their property or through their district, should support them, and not allow the country to suffer any loss from them. At any rate those persons should assist, to a certain extent, other districts to get roads and bridges for the convenience of the people. There are many districts where there are neither roads nor bridges, not to speak of railways. There is no doubt that railways are a great benefit to the people when they run through their districts; and I think that something should be done to provide that those who ride in the railways and have the advantage of them should pay something extra towards

*Mr. Kelly*

the taxation of the country. The honourable member for Wallace spoke in a very gloomy tone of the position of the country. He said that we were practically bankrupt. I do not like to hear honourable members run down the country in this House to that extent. My own opinion is that if there were a policy in this country, a scheme of public works, a scheme of immigration, and the settlement of the waste lands of the Crown, and the encouragement of local industries, the country would soon be out of its present difficulty. The country is not bankrupt; it is not in such a bad state as that. No country can be bankrupt which has twenty millions' worth of railways, twenty million acres of land, besides other property worth at least another twenty millions. If we had a Ministry who would grapple with the question of our difficulties and bring forward a true policy that would protect local industries, in a short time the country would be relieved from its present financial condition, and I hope that when we meet next session some measures may be brought before the House in that direction. I hope that we shall have this great scheme which the honourable member for Christchurch North talks about. I hope that he will come down and give us a scheme which will push the country ahead and secure progress and prosperity in the future. Until we have a Government which will do something in that direction we shall not get out of our difficulties. I intend to support the second reading of the Bill, but I am not very favourably inclined towards the Board. A number of honourable gentlemen have intimated that they will move amendments in Committee, and I, too, have certain amendments which I shall endeavour to get carried, and if I cannot get them carried I shall hold myself free to oppose the Bill at its third reading.

Mr. HOBBS.—In supporting the second reading of this Bill I do so with great misgivings. I regret to say that I have noticed an utter absence, during this debate, of sympathy with the settlement of the people on the lands of the colony. I notice that one or two speakers have not lost sight of this matter, but a majority of the speakers have advocated making the railways pay by managing them on purely commercial principles. Sir, if it is the intention that this country shall prosper, you may depend upon it that prosperity can only be secured by going on with roads and bridges and railways; and, if members representing cities intend to so thoroughly ignore the question of the settlement of the people—I mean as they seem to be doing during this debate—then, I say, the country will never prosper. It is all very well to have eloquent speeches, but we want something more than that. I do not, like the honourable member for Rangitikei, look forward to a time when we shall be able to ride on the railways free of cost, just as we do over our roads and bridges. He may live to see that, but I do not expect to see it. But I do feel that there is a great principle underlying all this talk about making the railways pay; and I fear that, in talking of this as we are doing to-night, we are losing



sight of what is more necessary for the permanent prosperity of the colony—the settlement of the people upon the land, and facilities for their getting their produce to market. I was glad to hear the honourable member for Waitaki speak as he did upon that point, though I was sorry he again adopted a line of argument which he often adopts in this House. He talks of there being sheep upon the land—nothing but sheep! There may be a good deal in that; but, as one who is not at all interested in sheep, I should like to ask the honourable gentleman, where should we be to-day if we had not sheep upon the land? How should we fill the steamers which come to our ports for mutton and wool, and how should we get on in these times, if it were not for the sheep industry? I feel that it is a fatal mistake this continually harping upon the subject of sheep upon the land. I think we may be thankful to God that we have sheep, the wool alone from which so largely augments our exports, and I say that we must turn our land to account if we want to revive our prosperity. That is why I am anxious about the settlement of the land, and we cannot expect the people to go upon the land unless we have railways or roads and bridges. Do not let us ignore these matters. Let us look at the whole question fairly. If you hand over these railways to a Board whose only duty it will be to make the railways pay, I am afraid the best and most permanent interests of the country will suffer.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—I just wish to say that I hope the honourable gentleman in charge of this Bill will be satisfied with taking the second reading, and then letting the matter stand over so as to give honourable members an opportunity of considering the matter a little more closely, of looking at the *pros* and *cons*, the advantages and disadvantages which may be expected to arise from the passing of such a measure as this. I hope the honourable gentleman will study the full working of the system of a Board in Victoria. He must remember that Victoria is the only colony which has adopted this system. The Minister of Justice spoke of "other colonies;" but only one has so far adopted it, and I do not know that it is entirely satisfactory there. If we are to believe the public Press the Chief Commissioner there is already rather anxious to throw up his billet, for he seems disgusted, finding that it is impossible for him to resist the political pressure that is brought to bear upon him. I think, myself, that the honourable gentleman in charge of the Public Works Department here is a sufficiently clear-headed man, a man of sufficiently strong mind, to see that things are properly carried out in his department, and I do not see the necessity for a Commission to take the matter out of his hands. You may depend upon it that, if power is taken out of the hands of the Government, there will still be political pressure brought to bear, just as there has been in the past. A large number of members would like to make the railways simply a commercial concern, but I think we should look beyond the mere question of the direct

advantages of the railways. We should look at the collateral advantages arising from them. If they do not pay in one direction they pay in another. I will not say more at this late hour; but I hope that the honourable gentleman will be content with taking the second reading of this Bill for this session, and defer further consideration until next year.

Sir G. GREY.—I do not wish to detain the House many minutes, but I think it right to make a few remarks on the subject of this Bill. Firstly, I would say, in regard to the past management of the railways, I believe that the past management of the railways has been good. Accidents have been surprisingly few. I believe that the comfort of the railways is very great, and I am perfectly certain that the attention of the public servants employed on the railways is very remarkable indeed. I am acquainted with railways in many parts of the world. I have seen no railways which have a more respectable class of officers than the railways of New Zealand can boast of at the present time. Therefore, so far as the management of the railways goes, I myself desire no reform. Then comes the question of price, and we can rely that these gentlemen whom it is proposed to appoint would insist on that being maintained. I should be anxious to know where the persons appointed to this Board are to be taken from. I contend that in New Zealand we have men perfectly capable of filling every position required to be filled in this colony; and it is an entire mistake and a most unfair proceeding to ignore our own population in new appointments of this kind. If I am told that the railways do not sufficiently pay, my answer is this: The real question is, in what manner can the railways be made really most serviceable in promoting the prosperity of the country? I think it is an entire mistake to say we must look only to profits from the railways. Our real duty is to render them serviceable to the whole community. I am quite satisfied that, if we ceased to hold the railways ourselves, in any manner whatever, we should lose that control over them which is requisite to secure the prosperity of the entire community. That is, if we were to lose the control of our railways, we should injure the whole population of New Zealand. If we were to sell them, and put them into the hands of other persons, we should deal as great a blow at the future prosperity of New Zealand as it would be possible for our greatest enemies to achieve; and I think that by taking them out of the hands of this Parliament we should achieve exactly the same object. If they were leased, we should do an injury to the people of New Zealand. The whole of the arguments that have been used upon that subject, to my mind, amounted to this: They said that the railways must be managed by a non-political Board;—and I believe that almost everything done in New Zealand ought to be managed by a non-political Board, and it is that aspect of the subject that induces me to say this: that the only manner in which we can attain that end

is by constituting a Ministry which shall be in office for a certain number of years, and cannot be turned out. In that case you will have a non-political Ministry—a Ministry not dependent on the votes of Parliament, but on the will of the people of the country. If a Government knew they were only in for four years, and that the only way in which they could be turned out would be by a vote of the whole people of New Zealand, they would necessarily have carefully to study the good of the country, and the position in which they stand in the estimation of the people of New Zealand: if they carefully attended to this they would have a prospect of another tenure of office for an equal period of time. That is the way to attain the object which the present Ministry have in view. The railways and all other things would then be under a non-political Board. But I contend that to place the railways under a non-political Board would only attain the object in part, not wholly. A Board would look, I believe, solely to the sums of money which they could show they had obtained for the country. Honourable gentlemen have pointed out what is the real fact of the case, that the railways belong to the whole of the people of New Zealand. We form one great company for that purpose. In that company every inhabitant of New Zealand is a shareholder, and he does not look for a dividend, as people do in a company, but looks for certain advantages from the railways. And what I long to see, though, of course, I shall not live to see it, is the time when the railways of New Zealand will be worked at almost no charge whatever to the country for either passenger traffic or produce being dragged along the line. It is incalculable how this would add to the wealth of New Zealand. The present Ministers, if they had the will in themselves to do it, might enrich the greater portion, if not the whole, of the inhabitants of New Zealand to an extent which is almost inconceivable. For instance, take the case of any railway you please. Supposing that in a distance of two hundred miles from Wellington it cost no more to reach that point than it did a distance of ten miles, or to take your produce that distance, it would give to that distant place almost the same value for its lands which lands in the neighbourhood of Wellington have at the present time. How that would add to the welfare of a large number of persons! And yet I am certain that at no very distant date that really will prevail in New Zealand. If you once let your railroads pass out of your hands you lose all possibility of attaining such an end. Then, I ask honourable gentlemen to recollect this: that at the present moment in the United States the one great question occupying many minds is the manner in which the United States can purchase the railroads from the present private possessors and make them the property of the nation. They say that the cost will be so great that they hardly know how to venture upon an undertaking of that kind. We have the railways in our possession, and I be-

*Sir G. Grey*

lieve this Bill is the first step to giving up that advantage, which I prize, myself, so highly. Therefore I shall feel it a duty that I owe to the inhabitants of New Zealand to record my vote against the measure. I have heard honourable members saying that they are opposed to the Bill, but, nevertheless, will vote for its second reading, and try to make alterations in it in Committee. Being opposed to the Bill, I feel that I ought to oppose it from the first. Not that I wish to create any embarrassment whatever, but I believe if a majority of the House are opposed to the measure they will less embarrass the Government by at once voting against it than by voting in favour of its second reading and then wasting time in Committee. Therefore, with no intention of causing unnecessary embarrassment, but from a conviction that the measure itself is opposed to the interests of the inhabitants of New Zealand, I shall feel it my duty to give my vote against the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—I think the House is to be congratulated upon the manner in which this proposal has been received. I am quite satisfied from the expressions that have fallen from honourable members during this debate that it will be made a workable measure in Committee. In regard to the remarks of the honourable member for Auckland Central as to a non-political Ministry, I hope to see the day when such a thing will be the case. If such a Ministry were to be appointed for a fixed term of years there would be no necessity for this Bill; but, seeing that under our present Constitution the Ministry of the day are subject to the will of the House, the only course we can in the meantime adopt is to appoint a non-political Railway Board—which will, I believe, give a great deal of satisfaction to the country as a whole, and also to the members of this House. I quite agree with the honourable gentleman also that the railways are the property of the people, and should be worked for the advantage of the people, the opening-up of the country, and the prosperous settlement of our lands. He must know, however, that a great deal of pressure has been brought upon Ministries in past years, which has acted detrimentally to the best interests of the country. Without doubt a large expenditure has been incurred in the construction of what is known as political railways which ought never to have been incurred, and the lands which it was supposed they would open up for settlement have remained unsettled to this day. That is a question which ought to be very carefully considered by the Board, for without prosperous settlement there is not much hope for our railways. With reference to the remarks of the honourable member for Waitaki, I have myself visited some of the lands which he alluded to, and can to a certain extent bear out the statements that he made. I do not wish to detain the House at this late hour, as my honourable colleague the Minister of Mines has an important Bill relating to the mining industry which he is anxious to have read a second time before half-past twelve, in

order that it may be sent to the Committee. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

#### AYES, 51.

Allen	Izard	O'Callaghan
Anderson	Jones	Ormond
Atkinson	Kelly	Peacock
Beetham	Kerr	Perceval
Bruce	Lance	Pyke
Cadman	Larnach	Reeves, W. P.
Cowan	Lawry	Richardson, G.
Dodson	Levestam	Russell
Feldwick	Loughrey	Seymour
Fergus	Macarthur	Steward, W. J.
Fisher	Mackenzie, T.	S.-Menteath
Fitchett	Marchant	Thompson, T.
Fraser	McGregor	Wilson
Fulton	Mitchelson	Withy.
Goldie	Moat	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Monk	Tanner
Hamlin	Newman	Whyte.
Hobbs		

#### NOES, 6.

Barron	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Buxton	Seddon.	Mackenzie, M.
		Moss.

#### PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan	Reeves, R. H. J.
Hodgkinson	Grey
McKenzie, J.	Fish
Mills	Joyce
Pearson	Duncan
Rhodes	Samuel
Richardson, E.	Gunniss
Ross	Turnbull
Walker.	Blake.

Majority for, 45.

Bill read a second time.

#### MINING BILL (No. 2).

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said that, looking to the fact that this Bill had, after its second reading, to go to the Mines Committee, he would not speak at any length upon it, but would shortly recapitulate its principal features. The first important provision was to allow the Government to take land under the Public Works Act for tailings and sludge-channels. The second was to prevent the parting with riparian rights in disposing of lands in mining districts in the future. The next important provision in the Bill, which principally affected the Thames and Coromandel, was to give the right to mine under the foreshore and under the sea. Legislative provision was made to allow mining in State forests; and it was proposed under the Bill to legalise the position of the Thames Drainage Board. That Board at present was acting without power to enforce its regulations. "The Drainage of Mines Act, 1884," which had been repealed by the Mining Act of 1886, had rendered the regulations of the Thames Drainage Board inoperative, and the provision in clause 8 of the Bill introduced a remedy for

that defect. The rest of the Bill consisted of clauses providing for the remedy of technical defects in the existing Mines Act. He might say that the Bill had been introduced by the Government at the suggestion of those concerned in the important industry of mining, and he hoped the House would allow it to be read a second time and referred to the Goldfields and Mines Committee.

Mr. SEDDON intended to support the Bill, but thought that, where retrospective legislation was intended, it was only fair to take the House into confidence, or otherwise, when a sum of money was required, it might be afterwards said that the goldfields members had permitted the principle of the Bill to be agreed to without pointing out to the House what the effect of the legislation would be. It was proposed in the Bill to take land for the deposit of tailings under the Public Works Act. That was a new thing altogether, and it was a thing also that was contrary to the law at the present time. Land purchased before 1873 could not be resumed or taken back for the purpose of depositing tailings, &c., upon it. Therefore to that extent this Bill was a reversal of the existing law, and he thought it only right and fair to the House to say that this Bill was going behind the existing law; and no doubt those who purchased land before 1873 would think they were now being unfairly treated. The second part of the Bill was in itself of sufficient importance to justify the House in passing the measure. It provided what obtained on the goldfields in the other colonies—that, where land was sold in close proximity to gold-workings, the owner of that land should have no right to recover damages against miners who polluted streams. It did away with riparian rights. In mining districts, but for the goldfields a man's land would be of little value to him for settlement; but under the existing law he had power to recover damages for the pollution of a stream, notwithstanding that the working of the mines gave all the value to his land. It was found on the West Coast that settlers who received great benefit from the working of the goldfields sued in the Supreme Court for damages in this respect, and unless something was done to deprive them of this right the result would be to stop gold-mining altogether. The Legislature had no right to deprive any person of his property without paying fair compensation; but for the future, in the interest of mining, it was necessary that this Bill should pass, more especially as the House was now giving away large tracts of country for the construction of public works. The provisions for mining on the foreshore applied more particularly to the North Island; but these would be inoperative if the Bill were passed in its present shape. In the first place, £20 was demanded for survey, and one could not mine at a depth of less than 150ft. from the surface. Why should it be 150ft. below the surface? There was no necessity for stipulating that great depth. If gold was to be got at a depth of 20ft. from the surface, why should miners not be permitted to work at that depth?

An Hon. MEMBER.—The sea might come in upon them.

Mr. SEDDON said the miners would take all precautions against the sea coming in. There was a very large power in this Bill which the Minister had not mentioned—that, where the Natives had ceded land for mining purposes, and had made a contract and conditions as to the ceding of that land, the Governor was to have the power to alter and vary that contract without the consent of the Natives. That was taking advantage of those who had given the Government power to take their land for mining purposes, and he would be no party to the passing of such a law. There ought to be consent, and a mutual give-and-take between the two parties. It was in the interest of mining that there should be an alteration of the existing contracts; but, at the same time, where a contract was made between two parties both should be consenting parties to the varying of that contract. There was another question raised, which was of importance to the South Island, that persons holding residence sites had to pay licenses. Now, he did not think that would be agreed to. The goldfields members had always insisted that residence area was a man's tenure, and he paid £1 a year for it; and he (Mr. Seddon) failed to see why a man should pay £3 a year because he carried on business on that particular site. The total area he could hold was one acre, and the payment of £1 for it was quite enough, without being called on to pay £3 a year for a business license. Then, there was in this Bill another point. A man who worked for a miner would be called upon to hold a miner's right; and this meant that a double tax would be paid. One man, the employer, paid for holding the land; and why, therefore, should the man who was working for him on wages be called upon to pay a license-fee for working for another man on the goldfield? There was no reason why this man, any more than a man working for a road contractor, should be made to pay for a miner's right. He did not think the thing was at all right in principle, and consequently to that part of the Bill he took exception. It was considered by the late Parliament, when the present Mining Act was before the House, and it was unanimously agreed that the principle of charging wages-men for miners' rights was unnecessary. With the exceptions he had mentioned, he thought the Bill before the House one that should be passed. It would have his support, and in Committee he would endeavour to make the measure as workable as possible.

Mr. CADMAN said, the amendments of the law proposed by this Bill being mainly of a technical nature, there was little to be discussed, more especially as the Bill had to go to the Goldfields and Mines Committee. But he had hoped that the Minister would have taken some notice of the complaints that had arisen in connection with the new goldfield at Maritoto. In the working of a new Act there was certain to be a little friction, and he would have been glad to see some provision

made for rubbing off this little soreness. The objections raised on the northern goldfields were of a threefold character—first in respect to manning the ground, another in respect to the area to be taken up, and the third as to the time allowed for the completion of surveys. Under the regulations provision was made that one man should be allowed to man or work two acres. This was not independent of the tributers, and the provision should be made to apply independent of tributers. He knew of one licensed holding which had been working for some years by tributers only, and paying the holders dividends. This simply meant that a few speculators extorted a high percentage from the tributers, when the unfortunate men ought to be getting all the fruits of their own toil. Some amendments ought to be made with respect to the area. Now, it was proved that a man could take up thirty acres, and that in the North Island was regarded as a sheep-run; and, except under exceptional circumstances, this was too large for quartz-reefing. He thought that from five to ten acres was ample for any man, and gave a chance of opening up the country in a far better way. Then, in respect of the surveys, the Bill allowed a man three months to complete his survey, and the miners complained of such a provision, being of opinion that one month was ample. There was another matter smouldering now, but on which public opinion was going to burst out into a very strong flame unless something were done: that was in respect to mining managers' certificates. The Bill provided that mining managers should undergo a certain amount of examination before they were granted certificates. Now, it so happened that some men had received certificates whilst others as competent as they were refused certificates; and this had caused considerable soreness, and ought to be inquired into. He advised the Minister not to wrap himself up entirely in his Land Bills. A large section of the people of this colony had their welfare depending on the mining industry, and little matters, though appearing trifling to others, were of great importance to these people. He would therefore recommend the honourable gentleman to try and rectify little grievances that existed on the goldfields in the North Island while this Bill was in hand.

Mr. ALLEN said the honourable member who had just spoken had told the House that in this Bill there were only technical points raised.

Mr. CADMAN.—I said "mainly."

Mr. ALLEN maintained that one of the largest principles that could possibly be raised in regard to mining was contained in the 3rd clause, and he could not understand what had been going through the brain of the Minister who held the double portfolio of Land and Mines. In this 3rd clause, if he read it aright, "land," so far as the Minister of Lands was concerned, was entirely thrown in the background, and the mining interest received paramount importance. He was not going to grumble; he must confess that, so far as he himself was concerned,

mining interests were of very great importance in his mind; but when an honourable gentleman said that no great principle was involved in this Bill, he (Mr. Allen) felt bound to rise and say that there was such a principle contained here. If any one read clause 3 he would see that a very large question was brought before the House. The question was, whether or not streams, and so on, even to drinking-water going to people's houses, and the water for their cattle, were to be polluted by the *débris* from mines being thrown into them, thus practically destroying the use of the river or stream so far as the watering of cattle was concerned, — whether all that should be destroyed or not. Now, that was a very large question. He knew it referred only to the mining districts; and if the House determined that mining, and mining alone, should in these districts be paramount, then they would be perfectly justified in passing this clause. But they had to consider this question: whether, in view of the preservation of agricultural and pastoral pursuits, so far as they could be carried out in mining districts, these were more to the benefit of the colony in the future, or whether the mining industry, which, after all—and he told the mining members this, and they knew it—was only a passing thing, here to-day and gone to-morrow, was in the future to be of more benefit to the colony. The mining interest in this and other countries would not last for ever, and the honourable member for Kumara knew it.

Mr. SEDDON.—You cannot point out a country where mining, once commenced, ever stopped.

Mr. ALLEN said the alluvial mines in Victoria were now comparatively few in number, and the honourable member knew it. And he knew also that the drifts in this country were day by day getting less, and that the reefs here and in Victoria were getting less. The time would come when there would be no drifts left here; and they could not continue mining for ever. He was not quite sure of the full bearing of clause 14. The whole Bill referred to silver- and gold-mines, and he did not know whether this clause referred to them only, or whether it referred to coal-mining as well.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—Yes.

Mr. ALLEN.—It was quite right that coal-mining or any mining should be allowed to go on underneath the sea; but he did not know that sufficient provision was made by the Bill for accurate surveys of the sea-coast under which this mining took place. In the interest of the miners themselves that should be fully provided for, as mining under the sea was very dangerous; and it appeared to him that £20 was too small a sum to lodge on account of these surveys. It might be sufficient in some cases; but in large extended areas where coal-mining was carried on such a deposit meant nothing in comparison with the cost of the survey. That clause would have to be very carefully considered in Committee. He would not oppose the second reading, because, as he

had said, his feelings were in the direction of assisting the mining interests as much as possible; but he had thought it only right to say what he had said on behalf of other interests.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said the objections raised to the Bill were almost wholly Committee objections. He was aware of the matter to which the honourable member for Coromandel had referred, and the important principle he touched upon of not granting riparian rights on further sale of land in mining districts. That principle was not introduced into the Bill without serious consideration; but it was perfectly clear that, where there were two conflicting interests in the same district, one must be given a paramount importance, or there would necessarily be trouble. It was therefore considered that, where persons went to strictly mining districts for agricultural purposes, they should know that in those districts the mining interest must be paramount. With regard to the objections of the honourable member for Dunedin East as to the pollution of streams used for drinking purposes, and that mining must, in the course of time, come to an end, it was quite clear that, if such were the case, there was no impropriety in introducing the principle contained in the Bill, for if mining ceased the streams would become clear. He would make no further remark.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to one o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 2nd December, 1887.

Third Reading—Scripture-lesson Books—Municipal Corporations Bill—Slaughterhouses Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### THIRD READING.

Proclamation Validation Bill.

### SCRIPTURE-LESSON BOOKS.

The Hon. Mr. HART.—It is not my intention to occupy the time of the Council at any length in reference to the motion standing in my name; but the number of petitions, the increasing number of petitions which have been presented to this Council in relation to the subject of the Education Act in force in this colony attests the existence of a growing dissatisfaction with some of its provisions—dissatisfaction which, in the nature of things, will grow and extend, and may lead to what I think will be an ill-advised proceeding—namely, the reading of the Bible in schools without limit or without selection. There can be no doubt that a system of education established by the State which occupies the whole of the time of a young person at school, and requires him to give his mind to the study of lessons in his evening

hours, and at the same time ignores the cultivation of his moral faculties and, except incidentally, the cultivation of his physical faculties, is not a complete system of education. In fact, we have only to refer to a very old passage in one of those lessons which I hope will be established in the State schools—namely, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it"—and compare it with the education of a boy who has arrived at the Sixth Standard and, if his parents can afford to give it to him, the higher class of education—we have only to look at what is contained in the one and compare it with what is contained in the other, and we shall see that in the one there is a depth and breadth of meaning which is not in the other. It is evident that there is an impression in the minds of many that the existence of Bible-reading in schools will meet a considerable part of the difficulty. I think that is rather a lazy way of looking at the matter. The Bible is not one book; it is many books translated and bound up in one; and, because it has much that is excellent in it, and appropriate to all periods of life, we make almost a fetish of the book, and treat every part of it alike, when, in fact, we ought to discriminate and use those parts which are applicable to the different periods of life for their proper and practical purposes. There are some of those books which are not only not needful but are not befitting to be read in school to children at an early age, and therefore it is necessary there should be a selection made. Efforts have been made at different times to make such a selection. Two highly-respected Archbishops in Ireland, one of the Roman Catholic Church and the other of the Anglican Church, gave their attention to the subject, and compiled school-books which were for years used with much success in Irish schools, until a change took place in the headship of the Roman Catholic Church. The Education Boards in England have seen the necessity of making selections of that kind and having them introduced in schools. They intrusted the duty to laymen to make such selections, and whose instructions were to omit from the lessons they compiled all texts which had any bearing on sectarian or denominational differences. The result was a compilation or a selection of Biblical lessons which has been used in the Board schools of England and Wales. In an address to the London School Board some years ago Mr. Mundella spoke of the results of that system, and he said he spoke with knowledge, because he had been appointed the head of the Sunday-School Union of England and Wales. He said that the attendance of the Sunday-schools of England and Wales, which had been, before the institution of these Biblical lessons in the Board schools, three millions, was, evidently consequent on the selections used in the Board schools, increased to five millions. So that the existence of those lessons in the Board schools of England and Wales gave a very great impetus to religious teaching in England and Wales in the Sunday-schools—a result which, I think, must be

*Hon. Mr. Hart*

accepted with congratulation by all who desire the cultivation of the whole human being, and not merely of the intellect alone. It is to these Biblical lessons for school use that my resolution refers. While on this subject—and I may not, probably, be likely to deal with it again—I think it is desirable to point out that in a book in which I have found much that is eminently practical, and a book which should be in every library subsidised by the Government, appears the following. That book is "The Health of Nations," by B. W. Richardson. It is a book which ought to be studied by every man who calls himself a statesman, and who wishes to direct and influence the well-being of the people. I will read one passage on "Outcomes of Highest-class Schools." He says,—

"Frequent accounts are received of the inaptitudes engendered or left by the teaching in superior schools, from the heads of manufactures who require science and art in their processes, and so also from the heads of large commercial establishments. Both complain that from the great classical schools, which have their annual recitals and displays of eminent scholarship, the scholars come to the counting-house with arithmetic that is worthless; that they must re-teach themselves if they would get on; that, although they may have been taught modern languages, they have been so ill-taught that they cannot write correctly a foreign letter; and that, though they may know good Latin, there are few of them who write good English. Hence they are frequently beaten by the boy whose education has been in an infant or in a large national primary school. This unfairness as towards the middle classes will be only prevented, at all events as to the greater proportion of them, by a common start, in large primary and secondary schools, kept in close relation with the demands of art and science, the manufactory, or the counting-house, by constant communication with them from the school."

Then, in the same chapter, he refers to another question, which, as time goes on, in this colony will probably be well worth considering by those who have to do with the State schools. He places earning and learning hand in hand. He says,—

"Having regard to the hard necessities of common life, and the economical condition and welfare of the many, one great object for saving school-time as early as practicable is to let earning and learning go on, as much as possible, together. The great practical object of school-teaching is not to make superior scholars, but superior artisans; not to impart to the middle classes the accomplishments of the leisure classes, but applied science and productive art for actual service. It is desirable, for the progress of arts, manufactures, and commerce, to make the school itself primarily a manufactory and a labour mart for available service."

"Brain-work and Hand-work: The half school-time principle, and all reductions of school-time, is conducive to this end. It is now proved that the capacity of the beneficial

attention and mental labour of children is exhausted in the good primary schools in less than three hours of good sustained teaching, and that all labour beyond that is detrimental and pernicious. The combination of book-instruction with physical exercise, or with actual productive avocations, is proved to be advantageous to both; and this is true of middle-class, or superior, as well as inferior teaching."

What has appeared to me, on the whole, with regard to the subject of my motion is this: that there will be a greater readiness on the part of the people of the colony to have Biblical lessons selected by laymen than to permit the Bible at large to be used. Under these circumstances it is that I have called attention to the subject, because I feel it to be the consideration of a matter of great importance. I move the motion standing in my name.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this Council, it is desirable that the Government should obtain copies of the Scripture lesson-books in use in the Education Board schools of England and Wales, with the view that, if, upon examination, those lesson-books be found suitable, their use may be adopted in the State schools of this colony."—(*Hon. Mr. Hart.*)

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I was not aware, when I saw the motion of the honourable gentleman, that he intended to make of this an opportunity to attack one leading principle of our education system, although it must be admitted that the words of the resolution amply admit of such belief. My honourable friend's remarks make it quite clear that he does intend to attack the secular principle of the Education Act of 1877; and I venture to say—if he will excuse me for saying so—that I think he might have selected a very much more convenient method of doing that. I think it would have been better altogether, and would have led to more practical results, if he had proposed the repeal of a very few words of the Act of 1877, section 84—that part which lays it down in a complete manner that the time spent in the public schools in public education shall be entirely occupied by teaching of a secular character. That would have raised the whole question in the most convenient form, and in the very widest possible manner in which it could be discussed. But, since we have it in its present form, I may just venture to make one or two remarks upon the proposition. It is very likely, if we did repeal that provision of the Education Act, the book particularly specified by my honourable friend might be found to be as good a book for the purpose of imparting Scripture teaching as any other; but it is equally probable that, if the country decided upon accepting that immense change which he proposes, it would wish to take into consideration the most satisfactory method by which that education could be imparted, and would make a very careful selection from all books and from other means of imparting that teaching. This subject must always be one involving the greatest possible difference of opinion. The country has now worked

under the system in operation, and it has been accepted, I suppose we may assume, by a considerable majority of the people, because otherwise they would by this time have succeeded, considering its importance, in making the change which my honourable friend aims at. So far as my own opinion is concerned, it would be better to leave things as they are; but, as I have said before, it will be a matter of difference of opinion probably for all time. I do not propose to make any lengthened remarks on the subject. I merely thought it advisable to point out, what perhaps did not require much pointing out, the immense scope of my honourable friend's motion. I may say, once more, that it is a subject which requires to be dealt with from the point of view of perhaps as great a change in the Education Act as it is possible to make; and I merely say that, as far as my own vote is concerned in this matter, I shall certainly consider it my duty to oppose it.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—I think there can be no doubt as to the motive of the honourable gentleman in bringing forward this motion. I think the Hon. Mr. Stevens has hit the right nail on the head. I am really astonished that the Hon. Mr. Hart cannot see that it would be impossible that any set of Scripture-lessons, however well drawn up, could be introduced into the schools. We have adopted a contrary principle. How are we going to put New Testament lessons, for instance, before the children of Jewish parents? How are we going to put any Scripture-lessons according to our version of the Bible before the children of Roman Catholic parents, seeing that the Roman Catholics have got their own translation of the Bible, which differs very materially from ours in many points? I deny altogether that the children of this colony who attend the Government schools are a bit worse than the children in England, where these Scripture-lessons are read in the schools. Let us have statistics to show that they are not so good as children brought up in schools where the Bible is said to be read. The truth is that at the bottom of all these petitions in favour of Bible-reading in schools we can see the hand of the clergy. They see that the young people are slipping away from them in this colony; and no wonder! The fact is—I am sorry to say it, but it is perfectly true—that religion has become such a worldly-minded thing in New Zealand that the rising generation have lost all confidence in those who are called its teachers. Look at the ministers in the colony, what they submit to! They preach Christ, it is true. "They preach Him," as has been said by an author, "and there they leave Him." There is too much conformity to the world, the flesh, and the devil. They have suffered religion to become—I dare say it is much against their wish that it should be so, but there is no doubt that it is so—a mere affair of the senses. What with bazaars, fancy fairs, organ recitals, and services of song, it is all nervous excitement and sensationalism; and the services are even duly advertised, like theatrical representations. Is there any vital Christianity in any Church in

New Zealand? I deny it. I am sorry for the clergy. I do not say it is their fault. They are the victims of circumstances. They are obliged too much to enter into competition with the Press. It is the pulpit against the Press, and the Press against the pulpit. I am sorry also to have to say that in my opinion the Press of this colony is an infidel Press. I think we must leave this system of education alone. In my opinion, it is a very wise thing to place religion outside of the school altogether. Give it such a place of honour that it shall not be degraded by being introduced into the schools. I had hoped that we had seen the last of these motions and petitions. If you want to do away with the secular system of education, do away with it in an open manner, and do not attack it in this way—by side-winds, trying to shake its foundation in order to destroy it altogether. Go to work in an honest manner, discuss the thing on its merits, and perhaps the country may see the error of its way and give it up; but, in my opinion, if the country is wise it will adhere to the present system. I am not at all afraid that Christianity will not be able to hold its own against the powers of darkness; and if this secular system is of the devil it will come to naught.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—I may say I have listened in vain for any arguments which can be called effectual against the motion which has been brought forward by my honourable friend. It seems to me that the Hon. Mr. Hart has done a great public service in bringing this question before the country, and I only wish it could be discussed properly, impartially, and thoroughly from one end of New Zealand to the other. I believe, myself, that it is the one sole means of getting rid of the conflict which we must all know is impending between what is called the denominational system and the present system. It is all very well to talk about the clergy, and about what is the object of education, and about the habits and the tone of mind which prevail amongst the rising generation of New Zealand. I say, with regard to the clergy—I do not wish to speak disrespectfully of that very important class of the community, but I say that, if the whole truth is told about this great question, it is the clergy themselves who have rendered religious education impossible. If the clergy would only agree upon what ought to be taught to the children the thing would be done at once; but directly the point is raised we are met with this difficulty: "Oh, if I do not teach it, then the teaching will be wrong." I rose to support the honourable gentleman on the present occasion because I find that this resolution exactly embodies the views which I held in 1883. Honourable members will remember that there was a Joint Committee of the two Houses upon this very question; and I shall take the liberty of reading a question which I put at that time to Bishop Hadfield. Honourable members will recollect that Committee well. A great deal of evidence was taken on that occasion, and there were examined at that Committee Bishops Hadfield, Redwood, Moran,

*Hon. Mr. Scotland*

and Luck, and many other clergymen. We went into the thing pretty exhaustively; but the result, of course, was that the thing came to nothing; the Committee reported nothing. Here are a few questions I then asked:—

"Hon. Mr. Miller.—Do you say you would not consider mere reading of the Scriptures of any value in the schools, supposing all parties could agree to read selected portions at certain times without explanation? Would that be of no value in the event of the system you propose being impossible?"

"Bishop Hadfield.—I should object to that, because I do not believe any person could be appointed to select passages that would satisfy all denominations. Who would you have? Should it be the Minister of Education?"

"Hon. Mr. Miller.—You think it is not possible to agree upon passages?"

"Bishop Hadfield.—I think not. It would exclude the Roman Catholics."

"Hon. Mr. Miller.—Are there not passages of Scripture to be met that all might agree upon?"

"Bishop Hadfield.—There are, but, I think, not to satisfy everybody—certainly not us, and, I think, not the Roman Catholics."

"Hon. Mr. Miller.—If passages could be agreed upon, do you not think that would be better than nothing?"

"Bishop Hadfield.—I do not think it would, because, in my opinion, it would be a sham. It would not satisfy the people more than the present system."

"Hon. Mr. Miller.—Surely the children would go away with the texts imprinted upon their memory, and they would recur to them in after-life?"

"Bishop Hadfield.—I do not think it would be of any real benefit. It would, moreover, be in the power of the master to use Scripture in an improper and irreverent way."

"Hon. Mr. Miller.—Then, in the event of the State refusing this denominational system, there would be no alternative."

"Bishop Hadfield.—I do not know of any."

"Hon. Mr. Miller.—Except, of course, the various denominations having their own schools?"

"Bishop Hadfield.—Yes."

To tell me that such a passage as "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" cannot be agreed to by all sects is nonsense. There are hundreds of passages which any member of this Council could select that all classes, however sectarian, could agree to; to say that such is not the case is nonsense.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It is dangerous.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—These are the questions I asked, and these are the answers given then. I have listened to a great many debates in this Council and elsewhere, and I have heard all sorts of things about this religious education, and I believe that I have thought about it as much as anybody could think about it; and I have never been able to understand what possible objection there could be to such a course as this. I could understand a person full of prejudice and bias, who would listen to nothing; but for men who



desire the good of the children to say that they cannot agree upon certain texts of the Bible to be learnt by children, so that they may be imprinted on their memories, and live with them for the rest of their lives, to stand by them perhaps in the hour of temptation and trial, when probably nothing else would save them—that seems to me the most extraordinary idea that ever any sensible man took up. What is the object of education? The honourable gentleman has read us an extract in which he stated that the object of education was to make good artisans. Well, of course it is a part of the object of education to make good artisans. We in this colony feel—and we very properly feel—that if we do not keep pace with the rest of the nations in the progress made in all the arts and sciences we shall lag behind. We are quite right in fostering education to the very utmost of our power; and there is no doubt it is a race between the nations. We see enormous strides being made in almost every department of science, and, as a matter of fact, if we want to hold our position we cannot afford to lag behind, but must keep up to the mark. Great as these results are, I say that is not the great end of education. I say that the real and true end of education is to nurture a citizen who shall be thoroughly conscientious in all his doings, one who in all his doings throughout his life shall refer his actions to some tribunal beyond the influences of this mortal life, one who shall look to a judgment that will come not from man, but from a Power above. I say that is the true end of education, and until education results in the training-up of men of this kind you will not have a nation that will fly its flag in your naval battles as Nelson did, with the words, “England expects every man this day to do his duty.” What do we see in the case of nations which have not recognised religion? The very reverse. I say their generals, their statesmen, are actuated, very frequently, by no conscientious motives; and the consequence is that there is not that stern regard for duty which has made our own country so famous. Although I do not wish to place myself in opposition to this movement for Bible-reading in schools, dictated as it is, I believe, by very proper motives, still I do feel, and have always felt, very great doubts as to whether the mere reading of the Bible can make children religious in the proper sense of the word, though perhaps I do not understand religion in the same sense as other people. I do not want to make out that our children are worse than others, but it cannot be denied that there is in the rising generation not only of this colony, but, I believe, throughout the world—at any rate in all parts of the civilised world—an absolute want of reverence which can only be explained by this absence of religious education. You want to find more reverence. Honourable members will remember the character of Hannibal: the very worst charge which could be brought against him ‘by the Roman author was that of “*nulla religio*.” That will be the

charge that will be brought against us: there is no religion. The children need to be taught some reverence, and it is the duty of every one to cast aside all sectarian views, to ignore every consideration but that one; and it appears to me you cannot possibly get a better means of teaching the great principles of religion in the public schools than by a process such as the honourable gentleman recommends. We have always to remember in this colony that we have to choose between the secular and denominational systems of education. One of these two systems must prevail. Looking at the strong agitation against purely secular education, together with the overwhelming expenditure which is being incurred, I think it would be scarcely rash to say that a day may come when we shall see the whole fabric tumble down. I shall support the motion of the honourable gentleman.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—The honourable gentleman who last spoke began by telling us that he had heard no argument that in the least induced him to disapprove of the motion now before the Council; but I cannot agree with the honourable gentleman in that statement, because I think the arguments used by the Hon. Mr. Stevens were very much to the purpose. They were simply to the effect that any interference with the existing system of education would involve us in great difficulties; and he took the business line of preferring to see such large questions discussed with a full knowledge of all its bearings than to see it meddled with by what I think he called a sidewind. Yet supposing that argument was not sufficient to convince us that the present resolution would interfere with the system, the honourable gentleman has himself adduced a sufficient number of arguments to prove that we should not be wise to support the resolution. The contention of the honourable gentleman was that there was a certain division of opinion amongst the clergy and the people of this country, and that it was only by obtaining a complete rationality amongst the people—a wonderful amount of intelligence and fairness, such as it is very difficult to find—that the system which he proposes could be adopted with any chance of success. If he can tell us how we can implant that fairness, that intelligence, as well as the existing religiosity, if I may use the expression, it is possible that such proposals to change the existing system might be carried into effect. But he has been far from showing this; he has shown the very contrary. He has in all his arguments shown that not only is there a great division of opinion among the clergy themselves in matters of religion, but that this is really a conflict between the secular system and the denominational system. That question has been well fought out in the country. It was talked about the other night when the Bible in Schools Bill was considered, and defeated by a very large majority; and, looking at it in this way, it would be exceedingly unwise to introduce an element of discord in reference to the education system at the

present moment, without a full knowledge of all that may result from what is proposed in this resolution. Sir, I will not go into the question that has been very ably raised by the honourable gentleman, who spoke with the greatest possible enthusiasm as to the benefits of religion, and of the ancient feeling that "*nulla religio*" was an expression used to designate an exceedingly bad man. I will not go into that further than to say that the meaning of religion was very different then from its meaning now. Philologically it was that set of ideas which bound men together; it was all those sentiments of patriotism and virtue, and all those beliefs, which bound men together for the common good. I think it would be quite easy to see that we may have all these admirable qualities perfectly free from anything in the nature of the supernatural, although the honourable gentleman says there is nothing to restrain men but a reference to the supernatural, the judgment to come, and so forth. It is quite certain that in this colony, at least, there are an enormous number of persons who would oppose any attempt to base our educational and social system upon any approach to the supernatural. I shall oppose the motion of the honourable gentleman.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—There can be no doubt that the motion, if adopted by the Council, would involve the expression on our part of the opinion that the Bible should be read in schools. It affects only to express an opinion that certain Scripture-lesson books should be obtained and examined, and that if the lessons are found suitable they should be adopted for the use of State schools in this colony. This, of course, raises the whole religious question as against the so-called "godless system" which prevails amongst us at present. For my own part, my mind is very much unsettled on this subject of late. I have hitherto supported the secular system, and I am not yet prepared to abandon this system; because, in thinking of the problem, it is found by me to be an extremely difficult thing to propound any scheme which should properly, in the circumstances in which we are placed, replace that system. I think it must be admitted that the reverential feeling which is the very essence of religion is somewhat absent in this colony; and if we could devise any system by which this defect would be remedied I am sure every good citizen would rejoice at it. I have always maintained that, although, primarily, the duty of imparting religious instruction to the children devolves on the parent, it also devolves on the clergy. They are peculiarly set apart for the purpose of imparting religious instruction, and we find they confine their labours to the adult portion of their congregations. The impressionable time is in the child's early days. I think it is a mistake to designate the present system as entirely "godless." I have taken some trouble quite recently to acquaint myself with the character of the school-books in use in the State schools. I obtained from the Secretary to the Education Board in Dunedin

*Hon. Mr. Pharasyn*

a complete set of the schoolbooks used in that district. I examined every one of them from beginning to end, with the view of ascertaining whether they are open to the accusation of being godless; and I find that that is an entirely false accusation, for they are full of references to God, to heaven, and to religious feeling. However, I do not go so far as to say that the teacher could not so use the books as to ignore the Bible or religion. It seems to me that any system which ignores religion and the Bible is a most defective one. References to the Bible—its phrases, and the sentiments contained in the Bible—are so strewn through the whole of our literature that any boy who is brought up without a tolerable knowledge of the Bible, in my opinion must be considered, in an English community, an uneducated person. Even for that reason, and if there were no question of religious teaching, I think that the Bible ought not to be excluded from the schools. I am not prepared with any scheme; but possibly, the public mind being exercised upon this subject as it is from day to day, something may be evolved that will be satisfactory. I am not quite sure that I ought to vote for this motion, because it appears to me that, if we were resolved to adopt the teaching of religion in the State schools, we ought to say so in a manner altogether different from this motion.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT.—I rise to say that, if I stand alone, I shall vote against this motion. It is a motion which is quite extraordinary to me. I know not its reasons. It appears to be a very mysterious motion. Is the honourable gentleman going to convert the Roman Catholics to Protestantism? Does he want to convert the Wesleyans to his own religion, the Presbyterian? I object very much to interfering with the religious education of the country. If I had my option I would burn every commentary upon the Bible. The Bible stands alone. It is a sacred book. Go from Wesleyans to Presbyterians and Plymouth Brethren, and so on, and they pervert that Godly-written Word. I shall oppose this motion with indignation.

The Hon. Mr. ACLAND.—I am rather astonished at the burst of indignation that has just been displayed by my honourable friend; but, while it is perfectly true that this aims now at Bible-reading in schools, I certainly think that, as there has been a book which has been agreed upon to be used in the English schools, we ought to take some steps to get it out here, to see if any possible agreement can be arrived at about it. Considering how the Bible is woven up in all literary work, it is a very sad thing that it should be so absolutely excluded from our schools as it is. Of course we know very well that we accept the idea that our children learn religion at their mother's knee. But mothers are sometimes very hard-worked, and many children have not got mothers; and, I think it is very desirable we should have an opportunity of seeing this book, and seeing whether it cannot be used here.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—The remarks of the last speaker very greatly represent the ideas that

have been passing through my own mind. As has been said by the Hon. Mr. Miller, a great deal of the difficulty of introducing the system of reading the Bible in schools is due to the inability of the clergy to agree among themselves on the selections to be used. But here we have an opportunity of showing those gentlemen what, in our opinion, can be safely adopted, and ask them to consent to the adoption of a book such as I believe the one referred to in the honourable gentleman's motion to be. I think we shall make a great mistake if we refuse to accept this motion. By accepting it we do not commit ourselves to the matter, as the motion is carefully worded—I do not think it could be more carefully worded; and I do not think we should refuse to inquire upon such a very important subject—a subject which we know, from the petitions laid before this Parliament, has been agitating a very large and important section of the community; and we should not refuse to accept the opportunity of getting a book which may be perhaps the very means of removing a difficulty which exists in so many of our schools. In my wish to see the introduction of Bible-reading in schools, I also wish to see the present system of education retained. I believe it is a great boon to the people of the colony. But I feel it is a monstrous shame to exclude the Book which of all books is the foundation of our moral code, to which we go for our legislation, and for a knowledge, besides, of all that is right and wrong: to exclude that from our schools is simply monstrous. Do we do it here? I say No. Do we not commence our proceedings by prayer in this very Council? And why do we refuse to allow the Bible to be recognised in the schools where our children are educated? There is not one of us who, from our experience of the world, does not know the value of those passages of Scripture that are instilled into our youthful minds, whether they are grasped or not at the time, when, in times of temptation and trial, such passages of Scripture learned in our youth perhaps come to our mind and save us from destruction. We have repeated instances of this even among very hardened criminals who have been taught religion in their early days. Are we to deprive our children of this? I think not. The only question is, How are we to get over the sectarian differences? It seems to me that this book is what has solved the question at Home. Why not get it out here? and let us see whether, after examination, it may not be introduced with advantage to ourselves and our children.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I am rather surprised at this motion, seeing that my honourable friend has invariably, in bygone sessions, opposed the idea of Bible-reading in schools. He has done so systematically, and I should hardly have expected the proposal to introduce into our schools selections from that book would come from him. As to the resolution itself, it would appear to harmonize with views I have expressed on former occasions here; but the remarks of the honourable gentleman in moving

the resolution do not harmonize with mine. The honourable gentleman dwelt upon the propriety of making selections from that book, and also upon the fact that the volume consisted of many books, and that some of those books contained very objectionable records. My honourable friend will not deny that the book is the Word of God, and yet, instead of desiring to see placed in the hands of school-children that Word which God himself gave to man, the honourable gentleman objects to its being so placed in the hands of any classes of the community, or of a special class of the community. He says man must make selections; man knows better than God what selections to place in the hands of children. That Word abounds in promises which are real and full, especially to that class to whom many desire to give the Bible to read. And shall any of us dare to say that we can make selections better than the mind of the Almighty as to what should be given to the children? I regret that, on a resolution of this character, I cannot so far agree with it that I should desire not to see it turned aside. I do not think it is desirable that the resolution should be passed in its present shape. It seeks to intercept what the members of this Council know very well is the desire of a large portion of the community. The honourable member has referred to the petitions which have been presented to this Council. They have come from different quarters, and from men holding different opinions; but in no case have they emanated from those who desire to see only parts of the Scriptures placed in the hands of children. Where the petitions come from other quarters the people desire to see that the teaching of the Bible shall be under the direction of their own clergy: that is the only difference. But the bulk of the petitioners do desire to have the Bible alone read in schools. We have heard in the course of this discussion—which has extended further than I anticipated—opinions expressed from opposite points of view,—from those who, like the Hon. Mr. Miller, have full confidence in Bible-teaching, and from other honourable members who distrust altogether its value and validity, who distrust its supernatural revelation, and therefore consider it a delusion. I do not think it is desirable to agree to this resolution in its present shape, seeing that it will suit no part of the community which desires to see a change, and it will frustrate the desire of those who have been the most numerous class of petitioners. I believe the community as a whole would be better satisfied if we refrained from giving any decision upon this particular resolution; and, holding that view, I shall conclude my remarks by moving “the previous question.”

The Council divided on the question, “That the question be now put.”

AYES, 17.

Acland	Bonar	Chamberlin
Baillie	Brett	Fraser
Barnicoat	Campbell	Hart

Johnson	Reynolds	Taiaroa
Lahmann	Scotland	Williams.
Miller	Shepherd	
NOES, 19.		
Buckley	Peacock	Shrimski
Dignan	Peter	Stevens
Grace	Pharazyn	Swanson
Holmes	Pollen	Walker
McLean	Reeves	Waterhouse
Menzies	Richmond	Whitaker.
Oliver		

Majority against, 2.

"Previous question" agreed to.

#### MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said that the Municipal Conference which recently sat in Wellington resolved that it was desirable that in future the Mayors of towns and boroughs should be elected by the members of the Councils from amongst their own number. The earlier clauses of this Bill were to give effect to that recommendation. A number of other clauses which followed immediately upon that were, for the most part, mere machinery clauses. In some cases they provided for a better audit and control of the expenditure of the boroughs. He did not propose to take up any time in discussing these audit-clauses, because they were mostly of a technical character, and he had no doubt honourable members would like to read them very carefully with the view of dealing with them in Committee if the clauses should require any amendment. There were certain provisions with regard to the width of streets, which, he thought, generally carried out the recommendations of the Conference. There was a special provision with regard to a part of the Borough of Napier, which he would give an explanation of in Committee. He thought the most important point, next to that of the election of Mayors, was the question of electric lighting. It had been considered that it was not desirable that there should be any difficulty in the way of Municipal Corporations in future establishing, if they thought fit, a system of electric lighting for streets and for buildings in the municipality, if they considered it was to the interest of the ratepayers to do so. This clause would give effect to that view. There were full powers given by this Bill to supply a system of electric lighting exactly in the same way as gas might be supplied by Corporations to ratepayers. Everything necessary as a matter of law for the establishment of a system of electric lighting was supplied, subject, of course, to the Electric Lines Act, which, as honourable members probably were aware, made provision for the proper control of electric wires and the system generally, and the establishment of electric lighting either by public bodies or private individuals. He did not think there were any other points of great importance to mention.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said, although he would support the second reading of the Bill,

he might just as well indicate several clauses in it to which he took strong objection. The Hon. Mr. Stevens had stated that this Bill was introduced in consequence of a conference of Mayors from different parts of the colony which had lately been held in Wellington. Because a few gentlemen who had been appointed to the office of Mayor for the time being took upon themselves to make a recommendation, it was now proposed that Parliament should revolutionise the system which had hitherto existed. He thought the colony ought to be made aware of the proposed sudden change of the election of the Mayor by the Councillors instead of by the citizens. That was his first objection. There was a very important point in the Bill to which the honourable gentleman did not refer. One section of the Bill was rather dangerous. He referred to that clause which provided that officers in the employ of a Corporation should, at the desire and will of three-fourths of the members of the Corporation, be entitled to retiring-allowances. That was a serious question, and he thought that, before the ratepayers were placed in such a position, they should be made aware of this proposed legislation. He thought the Bill ought to be read a second time, and then withdrawn, so as to let the public have an opportunity of judging on this and other important parts of the measure. Was it simply because officers had been a number of years in the service and had had very good pay that the taxpayers should be taxed further in order to make provision for them thereafter? There were many municipalities at the present day which had quite enough struggling to meet their liabilities, without having to make provision for the retiring-allowances of their officers. The Bill also contained a provision to the effect that the Councillors might, by resolution, incur the expense of coming to Wellington to interview Ministers or to attend Parliament, or something of that kind. If that were allowed they would have these municipal representatives frequently in Wellington—in fact, much oftener than Ministers would wish to see them. All that he asked of the honourable gentleman was that, as this measure proposed great changes in the constitution of municipal bodies, it should be read a second time and then dropped, so that the public might have an opportunity of saying whether they would accept it. Because a few Mayors came to Wellington and made certain recommendations, that did not prove that those recommendations were desired by the people. He thought that no tyranny should be exercised over the people because of the meeting of a few gentlemen in Wellington. If the Bill went into Committee he would oppose the section he had just referred to, but he trusted that the Bill would be withdrawn after the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS hoped this Bill would be read a second time and would be committed. He quite agreed with the Hon. Mr. Shrimski that certain clauses were very objectionable. For example, there had been no call, as far as he was aware, by the general

public, or by any one except a small number of municipal representatives who had met in Wellington lately, for an alteration to be made in the mode of election of Mayors. He felt perfectly satisfied, from inquiries he had been making from representatives from different parts of the colony, that it was not a general desire that such an alteration should be made. The rate-payers wished to retain in their own hands the power of electing their Mayors; they were not willing that the election should be confined to the members of the Council, but they preferred to select the best man they could possibly get to occupy the position, whether a member of the Council or not. It was not long since Parliament passed an Act doing away with pensions to members of the Civil Service; yet by section 4 of this Bill it was provided that Corporations might grant compensation to their officers on retiring from their service. His impression was that this clause might have been inserted to meet a case in which a corporate body had made an allowance to one of its retiring officers and now found it was illegal. He might say that the Press of the locality had complained bitterly of the action of the Corporation, and the citizens held meetings on the subject. The Hon. Mr. Shrimski would know to what Corporation he referred. Then, as had been stated by the Hon. Mr. Shrimski, section 3 of the Bill provided for the payment of travelling and hotel expenses of the Mayor or any Councillors who might be deputed by the Council to attend at the seat of Government to wait on any Ministers of the Crown, or on Parliament, on any business affecting the borough. He would guarantee that, if this clause were passed, Wellington would have the benefit of frequent visits from Mayors and representatives of municipal bodies, especially when Parliament was in session. With reference to section 4, subsection (2), he thought that if an officer of any Corporation met with an accident in the actual discharge of his duty the Corporation should have the power to grant him an allowance; but, otherwise, he thought that the whole of this section could very well be done without. Section 10, he thought, would require some alteration; it was arbitrary. In the event of one powerful or wealthy body wishing to have gas passing along a road possibly dividing the district under its administration from another small borough which had enough to do to pay its way, this smaller borough would be compelled to contribute to the lighting of the roads adjoining. The objectionable clauses in the Bill might be struck out or otherwise dealt with in Committee. There were some things in the Bill which he thought were absolutely necessary, especially in these days, when there was such a desire to utilise the electric light instead of gas. Under the present law boroughs would not have the power to secure electric-lighting plant.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND thought the 2nd clause was highly objectionable. The great body of the ratepayers desired to have the best men in the place for Mayor; and it was proposed in this Bill that the power of electing a Mayor should be taken out of their hands

and put in those of the Council. When these municipal bodies were sitting it was almost impossible to take up the newspapers without reading an account of most disgraceful scenes and most abominable language being used. Many members of these bodies were utterly unfit to occupy the positions which they held. He would not trust the selection of a scavenger or a lamplighter to many of these men; yet the important power was to be given into their hands of choosing the Mayor, and the selection limited to their own body!

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN thought the objections to the Bill stated by the Hon. Mr. Scotland were really reasons why the proposed change in the election of Mayors should be made. It would be an inducement to persons of a superior class and character to become members of municipal bodies. Before the Mayors were elected by the popular vote it was always a consideration, on entering a Council, that a member might be elected Mayor. There was always an opportunity given to the man who, in the opinion of the Council, was the best man for the office of being elected Mayor by the Council, instead of that civic officer being elected by the rate-payers generally. He thought if honourable members would look back to that time they would see that members of Corporations generally were better than they were at present, and there was certainly less conflict between the Mayors and Corporations then than was often the case now. They frequently found that, in consequence of the Mayor being elected by the whole body of the people, he assumed to himself a sort of power of representing the whole community, and thought therefore that his opinion ought to be deferred to much more than would be the case if he were merely elected by the municipal body itself. They had the experience of England to guide them. The Mayors there were elected by members of the Council, and he did not see why a change had been made here. He thought it was a misfortune for the people themselves, and that public opinion was very much in favour of returning to the old system of election.

The Hon. Mr. HART thought it was unfair that notice of the proposed change in the mode of election had not been forwarded to the rate-payers of the different Corporations throughout the colony, as he believed they were ignorant of the intention to bring in a Bill of this important character. So far as he was aware, they had not had any opportunity of knowing what was to be introduced; otherwise they might have petitioned against it.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said that notice of this Bill had been given some time ago, but he was under the belief that the Bill itself only came before them on the previous day. He thought it would best suit the convenience of the Council to adjourn its consideration till the next sitting-day, so that in the meantime the Council and the public would have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the nature of its provisions. He moved the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS did not think any object was to be gained by the adjournment of the debate. This might very well suit the convenience of the people of Wellington, but it would be of no convenience to people at a distance. It would be far better to read the Bill a second time that day.

Debate adjourned.

### SLAUGHTERHOUSES BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 12.

Barnicoat	Holmes	Shrimski
Dignan	Johnson	Swanson
Frasor	Lahmann	Taiaroa
Hart	Richmond	Williams.

NOES, 16.

Bonar	Peacock	Shepherd
Campbell	Peter	Stevens
McLean	Pharazyn	Walker
Menzies	Pollen	Waterhouse
Miller	Scotland	Whitaker.
Oliver		

Majority against, 4.

Motion negatived.

Clause 2.—Conditions of license.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON moved the addition of the following words: "Provided that nothing herein contained shall apply to any slaughterhouse licensed or requiring a license from any Town Board or Borough Council under the said Act."

The Council divided.

AYES, 7.

Barnicoat	Scotland	Swanson
Johnson	Shrimski	Taiaroa.
Reeves		

NOES, 15.

Bonar	Menzies	Pollen
Brett	Oliver	Stevens
Grace	Peacock	Walker
Holmes	Peter	Waterhouse
McLean	Pharazyn	Whitaker.

Majority against, 8.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes past nine o'clock p.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 2nd December, 1887.

First Reading—Third Reading—Ngatikua and Rangitane Natives—New Hebrides—Special Settlements—Taramaramu Survey District—Railway Workshops—Masterton—Eketahuna Telephone—Kalapoi Cadet Corps—North of Auckland Roads—Paeroa Registrar of Births—Middle Island Half-caste Claims—"Unemployed"—South Island Native Reserves—Maori Hill Postal Delivery—Wiremu te Aho and Others—Engineers on Foreign Steamers—Teremakau Railway Bridge—Arahura Railway Bridge—Auckland Mining

Companies—Chinese—Legislative Expenditure—Auditing Local Bodies' Accounts—Midland Railway—Government Railways Bill—Governor's Salary and Allowances Bill—Ministers' Salaries and Allowances Bill—Parliamentary Honorary and Privileges Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Public Works Bill.

THIRD READING.

Governor's Salary and Allowances Bill.

NGATIKUIA AND RANGITANE NATIVES.

On the motion of Mr. PARATA, it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a copy of Mr. Alexander Mackay's report on the claims of the Ngatikua and Rangitane Natives to land in the Marlborough District.

NEW HEBRIDES.

Major STEWARD asked the Premier,—(1.) What steps, if any, have been taken to give effect to the recommendation of the Pacific Islands Committee in respect to the Island of Rapa and the islands of the Cook Group, as contained in the report presented on the 4th September, 1885 (see Paper I.-8, Vol. III., Appendices, House of Representatives, 1885)? (2.) In view of the settlement of the New Hebrides question which has been arrived at between the Governments of England and France, does not the Government consider that a favourable opportunity is presented for further efforts with a view to giving effect to the above-noted recommendation? (3.) If so, will the Government take steps in that direction? During the session of 1885, it would be remembered, a Committee was appointed, of which the Premier was a member, to "consider the petition from settlers and colonists of Fiji, and the general position of the Western Pacific Islands in their relation to New Zealand." That Committee brought up a report; and, after making a recommendation as to the Fijian and Samoan groups, it went on to make the following recommendation:—

"That, in view of the probable early completion of the Panama Canal, it is of the utmost importance that the Island of Rapa (Opara), which lies in the direct route of steamers between Panama and New Zealand, and also the islands of the Cook group, should be brought under British control; and that urgent representations to that effect should be made to the Imperial Government."

The matter was one of considerable importance, and he hoped that every effort had been made, and would be made, to secure this very desirable result, more especially as the difficulty with reference to the New Hebrides appeared to be removed out of the way.

Major ATKINSON replied by reading the following memorandum:—

"This matter has been continually urged on the attention of the Colonial Office, as will

be seen by the correspondence laid before Parliament, A.-3 and A.-5, 1886. On the 23rd November, 1885, the Secretary of State for the Colonies informed the Governor that Her Majesty's Government had given the fullest consideration to the question of the annexation of Rapa; but it did not seem possible to acquire the island unless Her Majesty's Government should be in a position to assent to France obtaining some valuable equivalent (meaning the New Hebrides). The Secretary of State at the same time observed that the Cook group possessed, apparently, no safe harbour; but he had communicated with the Foreign Office and the Admiralty to be supplied with more detailed information. Since this nothing has been heard on the subject. In February, 1886, came the French offer to cease transportation altogether in the Pacific if allowed to have the New Hebrides, when it was suggested by the Secretary of State that the proposal might be more acceptable if Rapa were given up to England. This fell through, through the opposition of the Australian Colonies. There does not seem any likelihood of the French giving up Rapa, and it is not known whether any opposition would be given to England annexing the Cook or Hervey group, or, indeed, whether England would annex, although it has been represented to the Colonial Office that the natives are willing."

#### SPECIAL SETTLEMENTS.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister of Lands, if he will make the same concession to all special settlements as was made to the Wellington and Birmingham Associations—namely, to allow married women to take up sections?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON must answer the question in a decided negative. The concession had been made previously, but it was entirely a mistake, and contrary to the Land Act. No further similar concession would be made.

Mr. WILSON would ask the Minister if he would object to state the reasons. Was it because the Government could not do it under the Land Act?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said the concession that was made should never have been made. There was no right to make it.

Mr. WILSON would move the adjournment of the House. The land taken up in some cases was very rough, and the settlers found that they required more than a hundred acres. In order to extend their holdings, married women had been allowed to take up land under the special-settlement regulations, and in that way the settlers' areas had been increased. He hoped the Minister would further consider the matter. The Land Bill said that an area of a hundred acres was too small; and, if it was too small under the Land Bill, it was reasonable to assume that it was too small in these special settlements.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said that if the question had been put in a different form he might have answered it differently. He would consider the question regarding area, and en-

deavour to meet the point the honourable gentleman had raised.

Adjournment of the House negatived.

#### TARAMARAMU SURVEY DISTRICT.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Native Minister, Under what circumstances and by what authority 100 acres of Crown land, being portion of Section No. 111 in the Taramaramu Survey District, Wairoa County, were lately withdrawn from sale, and handed over to certain Natives in that district?

Mr. MITCHELSON, in reply, said that on the 9th October, 1875, the late Sir Donald McLean, as Native Minister, promised that Maraki Koha and Rewai Rangimataeo should have 100 acres of the Taramaramu Block. In November, 1886, it was represented to the Native Office that the Auckland Land Board had made a promise that this land should be offered for sale; and it was decided to allow the promise to be carried out, and provide the Natives with other land. It was, however, brought under the notice of the Native Department that the piece promised to the Natives was specially valued by them, as it had been the site of an old settlement and fishing-ground. It was, moreover, pointed out that the portion intended to be selected for the Natives was of inferior quality, and that no old associations were attached to it which would make it valuable to the Native mind. Under the circumstances of the case, the Native Minister—the Hon. Mr. Ballance—authorised the selection for the Natives of 100 acres of Section 111, Taramaramu. Legislation would be required before the land could be granted.

#### RAILWAY WORKSHOPS.

Mr. FISH asked the Minister for Public Works,—(1.) If he has perused the return laid before this House showing the value of work performed in the Government railway workshops for the two years ending the 31st March, 1887, for districts other than those in which such workshops are situate, and which return shows the value of work so performed as follows—namely, Hillside (Dunedin), £4,950; Addington (Christchurch), £44,823; Pitone (Wellington), £432 15s. 2d.; Newmarket (Auckland), £1,534 17s. 11d.? (2.) If he will explain the reason for such apparent unfairness in the distribution of works in the various districts, and if he approves of same? (3.) Will he undertake that, in the future, there shall be a fairer distribution of such works to the various districts? He had been induced to put this question on the Order Paper by having perused a return furnished on the motion of the honourable member for Auckland West, in which it was shown that the expenditure was as stated in the question. He recollected perfectly well that the Atkinson Government, when in power, made a distinct promise, and he believed it had been rigidly adhered to, that works required in various districts should be done in the workshops of those districts. But he found now, by this return, that in two years no

less a sum than £45,000 had been expended in the Addington workshop in respect of work required for other districts. He had been informed that in order to do this work men had been sent from Dunedin and from Auckland, and that the work had been then sent back to the places from which the men had been taken. This state of things was most discreditable to the Government of the day.

Mr. SPEAKER said that was a matter of argument, and the introduction of argument was not allowed when members were asking questions.

Mr. FISH would then merely ask the question.

Mr. MITCHELSON said he had perused the return, and, upon inquiry, found that the reason given for such a large expenditure at Addington was that the machinery and appliances were much superior there than at other places, consequently the railway stock could be manufactured more cheaply there than elsewhere, the principal stock that was manufactured being carriages and wagons. No doubt there had been a very large sum of money expended in the erection of workshops and machinery in various parts of the colony sufficient to manufacture stock enough to supply three countries as large as this; but, seeing that the shops had been established in various towns in the colony, it was only right that all stock that was required in each district where shops had been established should be there manufactured, if the appliances would admit of it. This question should, no doubt, have been carefully considered by the Government before consenting to such a large outlay. He would carry out the promise made in replying to the question upon the same subject some days ago by the honourable member for Auckland West—namely, to give instructions that all stock should be made in the districts where required, provided that it could be done without having to provide extra machinery. By giving effect to that promise it would most probably mean that a large quantity of machinery would remain idle in some of the shops.

#### MASTERTON-EKETAHUNA TELEPHONE.

Mr. SMITH asked the Postmaster-General, If he will have the telephonic communication between Masterton and Eketahuna *via* Mangamahoe completed at an early date? He would point out that the railway-line to Eketahuna would be finished within a reasonable time. It was necessary that this wire should be stretched, and, if it were done at once, he believed it would pay interest upon the cost.

Major ATKINSON said the matter should be inquired into and, if possible, done; but he could not give any positive pledge until he knew what the railway authorities were doing in the matter.

#### KAIAPOI CADET CORPS.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON asked the Minister of Defence, Whether the department will be prepared to supply the Kaiapoi Rifle Cadet Corps

*Mr. Fish*

with suitable carbines? He had been requested to ask this question. He believed the oldest cadet corps was at Kaiapoi, and the members felt aggrieved that they had not been supplied with carbines in the same proportion as some of the younger corps.

Mr. FERGUS regretted that there were no carbines available at present. He was informed, however, that some Enfields were being converted into carbines, and when this was done he would take care that the Kaiapoi corps was supplied.

#### NORTH OF AUCKLAND ROADS.

Mr. R. THOMPSON asked the Minister for Public Works, If it is his intention to make provision for roadworks north of Auckland, in districts where there are no railways?

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that the Government did not intend to place any sum upon the estimates this year for roads north of Auckland.

#### PAEROA REGISTRAR OF BIRTHS.

Mr. CADMAN asked the Colonial Secretary, If, in view of the growing requirements of the Ohinemuri district, he will make arrangements to appoint a Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages at Paeroa? He knew that the department, as a rule, objected to these appointments; but he thought the Minister would recognise that the growth of the Ohinemuri district had been such as to make this necessary, and that the distance to the nearest Registrar's Office was too great. He trusted the request would be granted, more especially as he was informed that the County Clerk was willing to perform the duty.

Mr. HISLOP replied that arrangements would be made if the fees were sufficient for the purpose.

#### MIDDLE ISLAND HALF-CASTE CLAIMS.

Major STEWARD asked the Native Minister, When he proposes to introduce a Bill to provide for the settlement of the land claims of Middle Island half-castes? The Minister, in answer to a question early in the session, had intimated that it was his intention to bring in a Bill. The session was drawing near its close, and no Bill had yet made its appearance on the Order Paper. He should like to hear from the Minister whether it would be proceeded with this year.

Mr. MITCHELSON said it was true he promised to introduce a Bill this session; but since then he found that claims were continually coming in, and Mr. Commissioner Mackay thought it would be advisable to hold the question over until next session; otherwise there would be a necessity for bringing in a second Bill. If there was any finality about the matter, a Bill might be brought in before the close of the session.

Major STEWARD.—It may be depended upon that a Bill will be brought in next session?

Mr. MITCHELSON.—Yes.



### "UNEMPLOYED."

Mr. GOLDIE asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether there are any "unemployed" at present engaged on relief-works; if there are, how many, and in what districts are such persons employed?

Mr. MITCHELSON said that, unfortunately, there was a large number of men out of employment in the country, and it was necessary that work to a certain extent should be provided for them. He had a list in his hand showing the number of men employed, and specifying the locality and class of work that they were engaged upon, which he would, for the information of honourable members, lay upon the table. Those words marked with an asterisk were those which were considered purely relief-works:—

"The following is a list of the works on which 'unemployed' are engaged, and the number of men in each case who were at work last Monday:—

"Marlborough—		
1. Kaikoura—Clarence Road ..	109	
Canterbury—		
*2. Kaituna Quarry ..	17	
3. Drainage, Addington workshops	9	
*4. Irrigation reserve, levelling, &c.	19	
*5. Hagley Park improvements ..	30	
6. Mt. Somers Railway extension	10	
*7. Stonebreaking at Addington ..	12	
Otago—		
8. Completing formation, Otago Central Railway ..	7	
9. Hindon Road, formation ..	48	
10. Catlin's River Railway, formation ..	79	
11. Seaward Bush Railway, plate-laying ..	40	
New Plymouth—		
12. Railway works, Sentry Hill ..	12	
Total ..	392	

### SOUTH ISLAND NATIVE RESERVES.

Mr. PARATA asked the Government, When the new Bill relating to South Island Native reserves, which appears on the Order Paper, will be placed in the hands of members? He wished to make an explanation. His reason for asking the question was this: The notice of this Bill had appeared on the Order Paper for a considerable time, and he was anxious the Bill should be circulated, in order to be translated, so that the Natives affected by it should have an opportunity of studying it. Now, the time remaining this session was so short that the Natives had no opportunity of becoming acquainted with the Bill. Therefore it ought to be postponed until next session. This was a very important matter. It affected the Natives in that district very deeply, and it seemed to him to be wrong that an important measure like this should be hurried through the House without giving the people affected by it an opportunity of becoming cognisant of its provisions. This Bill was different in some respects from the Bill brought before the House last session. He hoped the honourable gentle-

man in charge of the measure would not be offended at the suggestion he was making.

Major ATKINSON said the Bill was distributed yesterday. It was, he believed, translated, and ought to be in the hands of the honourable member. He quite agreed with the honourable member that an important Bill should not be hurried through the House; but this Bill was the same as that brought in last session, with the exception that, instead of four or five valuers, it was proposed to appoint only two. Under the Bill of last session the expense of valuation to the Natives was very great, and the alteration was made in the interests of the parties concerned, inasmuch as it would reduce the expense. In all other respects the Bill was the same, and it would be necessary to pass it this session, as great injustice was being done both to the Natives and to Europeans.

### MAORI HILL POSTAL DELIVERY.

Mr. ROSS asked the Postmaster-General, If he will take steps to expedite the delivery of letters in the Borough of Maori Hill; and if he will afford greater facilities for posting letters and newspapers in that borough? The residents of Maori Hill, which was a very populous suburb, complained that there was only one postal delivery in the day, that frequently taking place not before one o'clock in the afternoon, and sometimes not until two, and often not till three and four o'clock. Letters arriving in Dunedin by steamer early on any morning were not delivered at Maori Hill until the afternoon of the following day. There was a further complaint that there was no post-office or pillar-box in the district, and that in order to post their letters people had to go either to Roslyn or to Dunedin. This might be remedied at little or no expense by having a receiving-box attached to some convenient place; and the postman, while delivering letters, might clear this box without any additional expense to the department. He hoped the Minister would give a favourable reply to his question.

Major ATKINSON said inquiries would be made, and if it were found that what the honourable gentleman wanted could be done it would be done. He should feel obliged if the honourable gentleman would supply the department with the information at his disposal on the subject.

### WIREMU TE AHO AND OTHERS.

Mr. TAIPUA asked the Government, What steps they intend to take in the matter of the petition of Wiremu te Aho and others, which was reported upon by the Native Affairs Committee during the session of 1886? In asking this question it would be necessary for him to make an explanation. His question referred to some land that was set apart for the Ngatitipa Tribe. It was set apart by the Government for the loyal Ngatitipa Natives on account of their taking part in the war. When the Crown grant for this land was issued the lands were Crown-granted to Waata Kukutai and Nini. Now, the people for whom the land was set apart were

left out of the grant, and a great injustice had therefore been done them. They asked Mr. Fenton to give some explanation of the matter. Mr. Fenton, who was a Judge of the Native Land Court at the time the land was Crown-granted, wrote to these people a letter, stating that the land was set apart for the whole tribe. Last year, when the Native Affairs Committee inquired into this matter, Mr. Fenton's letter was produced before the Committee. The present position was this: Many of these people were living on the land and occupying it, but had no right there unless they were put in the Crown grant. He hoped the Government would be able to give him a favourable answer. He thought it would be admitted that a wrong had been done these people.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the circumstances in connection with this case had been forwarded to the Government Agent, at Waikato, and he had not yet supplied a report. As soon as his report was received the Government would consider it very carefully. They had received a communication from the agent stating that he would at once make inquiries and report, and in that letter he stated that, up to the time of writing, he had not met with Hori Kukutai, one of the Natives whose names were in the Crown grant. He would let the honourable gentleman know the decision of the Government in the matter as soon as the Government were placed in possession of the report and had time to consider it.

Mr. HAMLIN said if the Minister wrote to Mr. C. Marshall, at Port Waikato, they would get all the information they wanted on the subject. That gentleman was directly on the spot and knew the whole circumstances of the case. He believed, too, that the letters written by Mr. Dickie and Mr. Fenton were in Wellington and could be seen. It was fully shown to the Native Affairs Committee that this land was intended for sixty Natives who had served the colony as Volunteers, and the land was granted to them as a reward for their faithful services.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the information supplied to him was to the effect that there was not sufficient information in Wellington to enable a decision to be arrived at.

#### ENGINEERS ON FOREIGN STEAMERS.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Marine, —(1.) Is he aware that foreign-owned steamers have for some time been plying to and from New Zealand ports solely without having on board the number of certificated engineers as required by law? (2.) If, on inquiry, it is found that unqualified persons are engaged and acting in the capacity of engineers on board the said vessels, will the Minister take the necessary steps to have the law complied with, and penalties imposed for the infringement thereof? His attention had been called to the fact that on one or two steamers engaged in the West Coast coal trade, which were foreign-owned vessels under charter, there were uncertificated engineers. Seeing that these vessels carried passengers, and in the interest

of the trade to which he belonged, and seeing the law was infringed, it was only right that the Government should make inquiries and insist on compliance with the law. He did not see why an exception should be made in the case of foreigners, especially as machinery was provided by which these engineers could easily obtain certificates.

Mr. FISHER said the law only required that the chief engineer should pass an examination under the regulations, and, of course, that was insisted on. Information had been sought as to what was the custom in regard to examinations in Germany and other places, and the German Vice-Consul had stated that in Germany engineers of any nationality were allowed to be examined in their own language; and it would be rather hard to make a foreign engineer pass an examination in English in New Zealand. There was only one vessel to which the honourable gentleman's question could apply. Our regulations rendered it necessary that the examination should be in English, and the chief engineer of the steamer referred to could not speak a word of English. There was a conflict between the Customs Regulations of New Zealand and Germany in this respect, and this officer had not yet been examined. As soon as further information, which the department was seeking, had been obtained it would be decided what to do in this case.

#### TEREMAKAU RAILWAY BRIDGE.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister for Public Works, —(1.) What progress is being made with the erection of the bridge across the Teremakau River on the Grey-Hokitika Railway? (2.) What is the date fixed for the completion of such bridge, and is fair progress consonant with such period for completion being made? (3.) What are the penalties provided in case of non-completion of contract within contract time? It was some months since the contract had been let, but when he left the district for Wellington nothing had been done in connection with the work on the proposed site. It was only fair to the district and to the public generally that contractors should be kept to the specified time, and he therefore asked for this information.

Mr. MITCHELSON said, beyond ordering the materials from England, and other preliminary work, nothing had yet been done to the bridge. The date for the arrival of the ironwork in the colony, as fixed by the contract, was the 18th December. The date for the completion of the bridge was the 18th March, 1889, and, as above shown, the progress made was in accordance with the contract. The penalty was £15 per week.

Mr. TAYLOR asked if the ironwork could not have been got in the colony. Was that the cause of the delay?

Mr. MITCHELSON said he had not looked at the specifications; so he could not say. The contract was let before he took office. His predecessor (Mr. E. Richardson) would perhaps be able to reply to the question.

*Mr. Taiapu*

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said the contract provided that all the ironwork should be manufactured in the colony, only the raw material being imported.

#### ARAHURA RAILWAY BRIDGE.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will, in accordance with the wishes of the Westland County Council, have the railway bridge across the Arahura River altered, so as to make it available for dray-traffic, provided the Westland County Council defray the expense of such alteration? The bridge was so made that it could be easily planked so as to allow of dray and foot-passenger traffic as well as the railway. The present traffic bridge lower down the river was made sixteen or seventeen years ago, and was now very shaky. To renew it would cost about £20,000, which the local body had not at its command. The river was changing, and the old bridge was so decayed that it would soon be unsafe. The late Government had stated that they could not allow the new railway bridge to be used for dray-traffic on account of the expense; but that difficulty might be got over by the County Council defraying the additional cost, for which, however, a slight alteration of the law was necessary, as it could not now legally be done. As the railway traffic would not be large, there could be no danger to life or property by allowing the bridge to be used for dray-traffic as well.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the Government did not see their way to incur the expense of making this bridge a combined one, as the cost would, he understood, be about £2,000. Seeing that the bridge was so conveniently situated for ordinary traffic, the Government offered no objection to the county doing the work at its own cost; but he understood that the county had no legal power that would permit it to undertake the work.

Mr. SEDDON asked, as it would be impossible for a private member to get a Bill passed this session for the necessary alteration of the law, would the Government bring in a Bill for the purpose?

Mr. MITCHELSON said he would consider the matter.

#### AUCKLAND MINING COMPANIES.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Mines,—(1.) Why the law as to furnishing and publishing the half-yearly statements by mining companies in the Auckland Mining District has not been complied with, and more particularly the Union Company, Waihi? (2.) Will the Minister take steps to compel defaulting companies to conform with the law, or otherwise inflict the penalties provided? He had received a letter from a party interested in some mines, and who resided in Wellington, and represented a number of Wellington shareholders, saying that there had been a clear evasion of the law in the non-publication of these statements. In the interest of the mining industry and of mining investors it was absolutely necessary that the law in this respect should be complied with.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said many of the mining companies in the Auckland District had complied with the provisions of the Mining Act in this respect, but the Union Company, Waihi, had neglected to do so. The Inspector at Te Aroha had been instructed to take the proper steps to enforce compliance with the law.

#### CHINESE.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Government, Whether they will cause inquiries to be made as to the truth or otherwise of the rumour that a large number of young girls are in the habit of frequenting, for immoral purposes, the Chinese quarters in Wellington and other large cities in the colony? (2.) Will the Government cause strict inquiry to be made into the sanitary condition of the Chinese quarters in Wellington and the other large cities in the colony? (3.) Will the Government take precautionary measures to have strict supervision kept of all vessels arriving at the various ports in the colony which have on board Chinese sailors or passengers, with a view of preventing evasion of "The Chinese Immigrants Act, 1881"? He had information from a reliable source that what was stated in the first part of the question was correct, and the Minister could easily verify it by a question to the detective department. As to the second part of the question, it was of course to the interest of the colony to see that proper sanitary conditions were maintained among the Chinese here. As to the third part of the question, he was informed, and he also could state it from his own knowledge, that when vessels with Chinese sailors arrived the crew were allowed to mix freely with the Chinese on shore, no supervision apparently being exercised, and the consequence was a great risk of the law being evaded, which provided that a poll-tax of £10 should be paid by every Chinaman remaining in the country.

Mr. FERGUS said his attention had been directed to the subject of the first part of the question some time ago by a letter written by the honourable member for Thorndon, but, from information at his disposal, he found that the number of girls was not nearly so large as the wording of the question might suggest. The police had no power to interfere unless a complaint was lodged by the parents or guardians of the girls. As to the sanitary condition of the Chinese quarters, that was a matter which pertained more especially to the municipal authorities; but he would issue instructions to the police to see whether those quarters were in a sanitary condition. As to the third part of the question, he was informed by the Minister of Marine that the supervision was sufficient to prevent the landing of Chinese sailors in the colony without paying the poll-tax; but inquiries should be made, and, if necessary, instructions should be issued that a still stricter supervision should be exercised, if that were possible.

#### LEGISLATIVE EXPENDITURE.

Mr. O'CONOR asked the Premier, Whether, in connection with the proposed readjustment

of the Civil Service, the Government will adopt clause 9 of the recommendations made by the Legislative Expenditure Committee of 1886, to wit, "That Government should be directly responsible for all parliamentary expenditure, and that all officers should be under the direct control of Government"? The Committee had made several proposals which had been very well entertained by the House, and the proposals of the Government showed that effect would more or less be given to them. But there was one very important clause in the Committee's report as to which they had received no intimation from the Government, and it was to this that his question was directed. He hoped the honourable gentleman would be able to give a satisfactory answer, as the Committee had been unanimous in this recommendation, and were very desirous that it should be given effect to.

Major ATKINSON said he was not able to give the honourable gentleman a positive answer that day, but when the estimates came on he would explain the position the Government proposed to take up in the matter.

#### AUDITING LOCAL BODIES' ACCOUNTS.

Mr. O'CONOR asked the Premier, Whether the Government will, during the recess, inquire into the efficiency of the audit system as now established in regard to the accounts of the local governing bodies, with a view to making the audit more efficient in preventing illegal expenditure? It had come to his knowledge on several occasions that the system of audit of local bodies' accounts was not such as would check illegal expenditure. The Audit officers were generally satisfied if they found a voucher corresponding with the payment, and some authority under which the payment was made. His opinion was that the Audit officer should go much further, and ascertain whether the payments were legal or not. He knew of several instances where the funds of public bodies had been expended improperly, and yet they had passed the audit, though the payments were in defiance of the law. He thought the audit system should absolutely prevent illegal expenditure, or it was simply a farce.

Major ATKINSON said the honourable gentleman was quite right—the audit of local bodies' accounts was far from satisfactory in many cases. He had prepared a Bill on the question, but he was afraid it would be impossible to get it passed this session. He had some hope yet that it might be, and the Audit Office was anxious that it should be passed; but he was afraid that the time at their disposal would not allow of it.

#### MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Sir G. GREY.—Before proceeding to the orders of the day I should like to ask the Premier a question. A return was laid on the table the other day, in answer to a motion which I made, which purported to give a return of the lands north of the Rakaiā which it was proposed to give to the Midland Railway Company, and it was only this morning that I ascertained

that there is every reason to believe that this is an exceedingly imperfect return—that one great tract of country has been omitted from it. I think that is a most important thing, and, if such is the case, I presume the Government will not go on further with this railway question until we have a complete return. I believe that this land has been omitted, and that that will cause very considerable difficulty.

Major ATKINSON.—The Government do propose to go on with the consideration of the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the contract, and I shall ask the House to agree to them. I am very sorry if this return is incorrect, and will, of course, make full inquiry. It is a return about which there has been some difficulty. It was made out originally by the last Government, and was lost, and no copy was retained of it. I understand that was the cause of the delay in supplying the return. The information was supplied by telegram from the officer in Christchurch, and it was supposed to be correct. The honourable gentleman was a member of the Committee which sat for a very long time over this question, and, if it was necessary to inquire into this particular block, that was the time for him to have brought it up. I cannot see that that would in any way alter the judgment of the House, and therefore I propose to go on with the motion.

Mr. TURNBULL.—This is rather a serious question, because when an honourable member asks for a return it ought to be a faithful one. Unfortunately this is not the only instance, for there was the return with respect to the property-tax, which was laid on the table and had to be taken back because it was incorrect. It is a very serious matter, when a Minister is asked for a return and he lays it on the table with the impress of his name, that it should be unreliable. Perhaps the honourable gentleman could tell us the acreage of this block and the rental, for that is one of the most important matters in connection with this land which is omitted from the return.

Major ATKINSON.—I am not prepared to admit that any land has been omitted from the return; and, in the case of the other return to which the honourable gentleman alluded, it is not admitted by the department that it is wrong. I will, of course, cause search to be made, but honourable members must understand that unless sufficient time is given for making up these returns there is possibility of error. The departments are anxious to supply the information because honourable members desire it, and if the returns have to be made up hastily there is possibility of error. Of course, if ample time is given for making out the returns and a department fails to furnish them correctly, the Government would have to take serious notice of the matter.

Sir G. GREY.—I move the adjournment of the House. I have to say that the answer of the Premier has been evasive and not satisfactory. I believe that a very large quantity of land, I cannot say how much, has been omitted from this return. I believe that the

*Mr. O'Connor*

honourable gentleman knows this, and that he could immediately have correct information given to the House. There should be some person here capable of saying what are the causes which led to the omission.

Major ATKINSON.—The honourable member has not proved that there is anything omitted. I do not admit that anything is omitted.

Sir G. GREY.—That, I must say, is not an answer which the Premier should make on a grave question of this kind. It is a question which will affect two and a half million acres of land, and throw an immense debt on the people, on which they will have to pay both principal and interest; and I think we have a right to be told distinctly what is the reason why this return is not correct. Either let it be affirmed that it is correct, or let us be given all the information possible why it is not correct. If it is incorrect, that fact has been kept back from the House.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes, by the honourable gentleman himself, who is the only one who appears to know it.

Sir G. GREY.—That is a remark which the honourable gentleman should not make. I distinctly stated that I knew nothing about it till this morning.

Major ATKINSON.—I knew nothing about it till the honourable gentleman mentioned it just now.

Sir G. GREY.—I say, if the Government know this to be a wrong return, the House should at once be informed of it, and a correct return be laid on the table of the Legislative Council; and they should not have been led to carry on the business connected with so vast a transaction in ignorance of the quantity of land to be given to this company.

Major ATKINSON.—I quite agree with the honourable gentleman.

Sir G. GREY.—I say we should have that before us before we proceed with this particular business; and I ask to have that information given to myself and to the House, and then we shall be able to resolve on the course which it is necessary to pursue. I think the Premier has not met me fairly on the question. He tried to laugh it down, and spoke in a very unpleasant way, and his answer was not suited to the gravity of the occasion.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—I think I can explain the matter satisfactorily. I do not think there is anything incorrect in the return laid upon the table. But, apparently, from what the honourable gentleman told me to-day, he expected the return to contain more information than it does contain. The return gives accurately the areas opposite the names of the pastoral tenants and the rents they pay, so far as regards lands held within the area which has been selected by the Midland Railway Company; but, apparently, the honourable member for Auckland Central wished that the pastoral leases in Nelson and Marlborough should also be included. When the return was laid on the table I supposed that it covered all that the honourable gentleman wished to

know. There was considerable urgency in getting it laid on the table, and the information that was laid on the table was apparently correct — perfectly correct to the extent I have stated; but, if a further return of the pastoral land held in Nelson and Marlborough is required, I will give instructions to have it added, though I may say that it does not bear on the question of the Midland Railway.

Sir G. GREY.—Will the honourable gentleman state when he knew that the return was not complete?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—It is complete so far as I understood what was asked for. After the return had been laid upon the table it was mentioned to me by one of the officers of the department that it did not include the Nelson runs; but I said that I thought it was all right. It was only to-day that I understood that the honourable gentleman laid stress upon obtaining this additional information. However, the further information shall be obtained at once, and a supplementary return laid on the table.

Mr. SAMUEL.—Do I rightly understand that the present return does not include all the leases within the authorised area as provided for in the contract?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—I am not quite sure upon that point. I think there are runs in the Nelson District not included; but it includes all areas of pastoral land within the land selected.

Sir G. GREY.—The return purports to be a return of all land which it is proposed to hand over to the Midland Railway Company, and not of land selected by the Railway Company. There is a play upon words there that ought not to have been made. This return is not that which was asked for; it is not the return which it declares itself to be.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I think that the honourable member for Auckland Central is perhaps as indefinite in his words as the Minister of Lands. The authorised area, as mentioned in the contract, does not purport to be land which we propose to hand over to the company, but rather land within which they may select.

Major ATKINSON.—I understand now that there is no error in the return. Of course I have had nothing to do with the return, for I have had plenty else to do; but the return, as I understand, includes the whole of the pastoral land included in the 2,804,000 acres selected by the company, but does not include the pastoral land within the authorised area. That is a very reasonable mistake to have occurred, owing to the inaccuracy of the language used by the honourable gentleman himself. There was no desire on the part of the Government to keep back information. If the honourable gentleman had only done his duty, as directed by the House, and served on the Committee, he could have had full information upon this and every other subject. His remark as to my unpleasant voice and disagreeable manner was not called for. The honourable gentleman wanted the House to believe that I had put a cooked return upon the table. The

honourable gentleman evidently wished the House to believe that something of the kind has been attempted. I do hope the House will not defer the consideration of this matter for the production of such a return as this, which cannot possibly affect the question.

Mr. GRIMMOND.—If the area marked green on the map is supposed to cover all the runs, I must say it does not do so. There are, to my knowledge, several runs in Westland which are not included.

Sir G. GREY.—I wish to say, in reply, that I think the House cannot require an honourable member to serve on a Committee when he knows he cannot be of any use, and ask him to sit there for several days to no purpose, and to give the authority of his name and presence to resolutions over which he can exercise no influence. That would be unreasonable, and certainly, unless under duress, I shall not attempt to fulfil such a duty. Then, I submit that this is not a correct return; and I believe that the Government must have known for some time that it was not a correct return. I cannot see how it could have escaped their notice that it was not correct. And I say that this House and the Legislative Council and the whole country have a right to be in the possession of the information which the motion for this return called for, as I believe, in my own mind, that a great crime is about to be committed in taking this land away from the people of New Zealand in the manner in which it is proposed to be taken. It is a very serious thing, and I believe that the Home Government would interfere if they knew of the wrong which is being done. I think we ought not to proceed further with this matter until we have this additional information. It ought to be supplied in a short time. It might be in our hands this evening. And I believe that it is indelicate that persons interested in lands which they may possibly purchase from the colony on easy terms should sit, or vote, or take any part in the proceedings in this House in reference to this matter—especially vote. I think we have a right thoroughly to understand our position and to possess that information which I ask for, and which has certainly not been laid on the table of the House, though ordered to be so laid. It is possible that, unless we are very careful, large sums of money may be demanded as compensation in reference to these lands. I therefore ask for that information before we go further. If the Government will not give it I can move for it in the House, and certainly I will raise my voice against going on with this matter until we have this information.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

Major ATKINSON.—I now beg to move, That this House doth concur in the amendment made by the Legislative Council in clause 3 of the proposed contract with the Midland Railway Company. I may say that the addition made to that clause is in the shape of words which will put it beyond all doubt that no claim can be made against the colony by the company outside the power to select land

within the authorised area. The words are the same in their nature as those proposed to be added by the honourable member for Dunedin West when this matter was previously before us. This House did not agree with those words, but the Legislative Council has considered it wise to make the matter quite clear, and the Government recommend that the amendment be agreed to.

Sir G. GREY.—I move, That the further consideration of this matter be deferred until a complete return, such as was ordered by the House, is laid upon the table of the House—that is, a return of the runs, the names of the occupiers of such runs, and the rents paid by them within the area within which the company is authorised to select its land—not a return of the land that it has selected, but a return of all the lands to the north of the Rakaiā which it is authorised to select from. I think I am justified in asking for that, because the House has admitted the necessity for it by ordering the return; and I submit that a breach of privilege has been committed by making a wrong return to the House, and by refraining, as soon as the Government knew they had made a wrong return, from acquainting the House with that fact and supplying the additional information. I regard this as one of the most serious questions that have ever arisen in New Zealand, because this great extent of land which is about to be given to the company, two and a half millions of acres, is at the present moment a portion of the security that we have given for payment of our debts. The sum of money to be yielded by the sale of that land, at least £1,250,000, would pay off so much of our debt. Virtually, therefore, it is contracting a new debt of £1,250,000, the payment of which, capital and interest, is to be thrown upon the mass of the people of New Zealand. There can be no doubt that a new debt to the amount of £2 per head is being thrown upon every man, woman, and child in the Colony of New Zealand at the present time. Not only is that done, but this grievance is added, in my mind: that the land is being taken away for ever. And why is it taken away? It is taken away to enable the company to raise money to construct a railway; and when that railway is constructed it is to be the property of the company to which that land has been given. That is a thing that we can do ourselves as a Government as well as this foreign company. I say "foreign," because, although some gentlemen in the colony are interested in it—I believe some men are highly interested in it, even on the chance of getting their runs at a low rate from the company, and expect to make a considerable profit out of it—as I say, all that the company is to do we could have done ourselves; but, more than that, I say the very workmen who are to be put to work upon the railroad to construct it, who are to be put upon their own land, and to be paid for executing a work which shall give a great value to their land, and which is to pass from them when it is completed—I say the very workmen who are to lose for ever the

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property of themselves and their descendants, and to be subjected to the degradation of selling their birthright for a single job, might have been put in the position of this company, and have been allowed to manage it themselves, and to obtain all the advantages which we are about to give to foreigners. The more I reflect upon this, the more I have felt it is one of the most cruel things I have ever known done. What will be the result of all this? The men who are put to work on this railway are paid for their work on it, and they lose their land for ever; for, having received that payment for their work, they have to pay the new debt—£1,250,000—I have spoken of for which that land is supposed to find the funds. That debt and the payment of the interest on it are thrown upon them and upon their children, and they must hereafter become the tenants of the persons to whom this land goes. That is their probable fate. The House will be told, as we were told before, that these are benevolent gentlemen, and that they will do so-and-so. I say that some of them are not benevolent gentlemen. They have had large tracts of land already for something like thirty years in their possession; and, as far as I know, they have not offered any of their land to any other persons. Well, this country we are giving away is half the size of Wales. It would certainly carry from three hundred to four hundred thousand people, perhaps even many more than that, judging from other countries of a similar character; and these people must for ever, in my belief, be the tenants of the persons to whom this land is to be given. This will completely change the character of the future population of that country. I feel troubled in speaking upon this, because my sentiments upon the subject are so wounded and hurt by what I conceive to be such a grievous transaction that I quite dread to contemplate it. Then, I cannot help feeling in my own mind—I may be wrong, but I do not think it has been fairly done. I am certain that many of us would have had nothing to do with putting that Government upon those benches if we had known this. I could not have believed it. We have the admission made by several honourable members that if this new proposal had not been made the company would have fallen through, which is thought to be a serious disaster by those whose wishes carry them in the direction of wishing this thing to be done, but which to me would appear the greatest blessing to the people of this country. I had hoped in that way that the whole thing was got rid of; but here we have submitted ourselves to a Government who, I think, treat us very badly after the action that we took in reference to themselves. I believe, as I say, that nothing worse than this has ever been done. I declare that if I were a workman with a family and out of work, if I had companions similarly situated, I would join with them in refusing to go to work on that railway, and I should have a certain knowledge that the Government would be compelled to support us from their funds. I would say I would rather starve than injure

my fellow-workmen and all the poor of this country by taking these vast tracts of land from them for ever and subjecting them, as I say, to the probable destiny of being rack-rented tenants on the very soil that had been their own. Unhesitatingly I would take that course, and I believe my feelings are so strong upon the subject that I would rather die of want than help to injure my fellow-men in New Zealand. That would be my feeling, and I am certain that at last, if acts of cruelty of this kind do go on—for such I believe them to be—the attention of Great Britain will be drawn to the subject, and that some power will come in to insist upon justice being done. If we are compelled by the Government at Home to live under a Constitution which enables this sort of thing to be done, I ask, ought they not to repeal it? What can our future possibly be? How can men pay debt after debt in this way heaped upon them? We have had thrown upon us the debts of the district railways, and now we are to have this further debt of £1,250,000 thrown upon the people of New Zealand, and further taxation for interest upon it. Why not let us do all the proposed work ourselves? We have still time to drop the measure before us. We have still time to say to the company, "We are bound to you by a certain contract, and that we will faithfully carry out, but further than that we will not travel." What right have the Government, without the country knowing that a thing of this kind was to be done, to force this on? I say that the taking of land from the people in this way is a question which would justify another dissolution. Let the people of the country be appealed to. I am sure that from one end of New Zealand to the other they would return members who would not assent to such a deed as this being performed. I felt confident to-day, when I entered this House, that as soon as I pointed out that the House had been acting upon a wrong return—a return leading us astray—we should have the proper information given to us, and time afforded to all to consider it. I believe that when the Minister of Lands stood up he might have told us the exact number of acres that had been left out of the return, the exact number of persons that had been left out of it, and the exact amount of rental left out of it. I believe he was in possession of the whole of that information; and not a single word has been uttered about it. The Legislative Council have also been allowed to conduct all their proceedings without knowing that the Government had laid a wrong return upon the table, and that this information was withheld from them, as it has been withheld from us. I therefore move, as an amendment, That this House proceed no further with this question until a full and complete return has been laid upon the table.

Major ATKINSON.—As a Bill will have to come before us authorising the Government to sign this contract, the Government will see that the return is on the table some time before that Bill comes on for consideration; and then, Sir, if the House is made to alter its

opinion by the return, or by the honourable gentleman's eloquence, of course it will have an opportunity of doing so. In the meantime we may as well get on with the work.

Mr. LEVESTAM. — It appears to me that the argument brought forward by the honourable gentleman does not bear at all on the question, which is simply this: The Legislative Council have introduced an amendment which will make it absolutely certain that the company shall not be entitled to any money-compensation, or to any land outside the prescribed area. It has nothing whatever to do with the question the honourable gentleman has spoken of; and I cannot understand why he should have made the speech he has done, seeing that it has no bearing on the subject. I trust the House will agree to the motion.

Mr. MOSS. — I second the amendment of the honourable member for Auckland Central, because from the first I have held that the House is not in possession of information which it ought to possess to come to a sound determination upon this great question. Sir, I believe it is the haste with which we legislate that has been at the bottom of most of our troubles in New Zealand. We are satisfied with one honourable gentleman getting up and telling us that the land is not worth 6d. an acre, and another telling us that some of it is worth £10 an acre. That is the style of information upon which we have passed a great Bill of this kind; and that was a sufficient reason for voting against it. I am not going into the merits of the question; but I wanted to ask the Premier whether I understood him correctly just now, that there would be nothing binding done under this agreement until the information which it is proposed to lay upon the table is laid upon the table. I understood from the Premier, when he spoke on a recent evening, that what we are doing now is absolutely binding. I understood that the Bill to come before us was merely to ratify what we are now doing, and that in the meantime the Government will act on this resolution, and, if so, we shall be bound in honour to pass such an Act. Of what avail will it be to have the information laid on the table at a future date? I think that an important point; and I think also the Premier will feel that, although we are a small number, he owes us a duty quite as much as he owes a duty to those honourable gentlemen who are at his back. He will feel that he should not in any high-handed manner seek to bear down those honourable members who are aiming only to do what they consider their duty, as much as those honourable members who are at his back consider what they do to be theirs. I know that Premiers in this House have adopted this course in past times, and have thought that no consideration was due to those who opposed them, but only to those who gave them their support. I may hope the present Premier will not pursue that course, but will feel that, however small in numbers we may be, it is our duty to protect the interests of the country in the light in which we regard them. I hope, therefore, that the Premier

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will state clearly whether the contract we are agreeing to is a matter merely of form, and that we shall be free to accept or refuse the Bill which is to give it legality when that Bill comes before us. I should be very glad to have that important point made quite clear. My impression is that when the Bill comes down the contract will have been signed, and that the House will be bound in honour to pass the Bill.

Mr. FISH. — I am surprised that the objection raised by the honourable member for Auckland Central should be raised on the present occasion. If there could be the slightest good result gained, or any chance of the House going in an opposite direction to what it has done by having the information before the House, there would be some reason for his request; but, as far as I can gather from his remarks and the meaning of the House, the information in the detailed form he requires will make no difference whatever in the decision the House will come to. The honourable member for Parnell must know that the House, having ratified this course, or the amendment which is now sought to be made in the agreement sent here, will naturally be bound in honour to pass the Act to give legal form and effect to this resolution. When honourable members see so large a majority in favour of such a course, what is the use of their trying to force their own individual will against the will of the House? I could understand their fighting for a principle, but, when that principle has been decided, it appears to me to be presumptuous on the part of any honourable member to delay business in attempting to get that which he cannot possibly obtain. The honourable member for Auckland Central deserves every credit as a friend of the democracy, but I can hardly understand him when he says that a question like this should be interfered with by the Imperial Government. The tenor of the honourable gentleman's remarks from time to time has been in the direction of resenting any interference in colonial affairs on the part of the Imperial Government; yet he says on this occasion that he is sorry the Imperial Government cannot interfere with this matter, and he feels sure that if they knew the great wrong that is going to be inflicted upon New Zealand they would do so. Those views are entirely inconsistent with what the honourable gentleman has often before said about any interference by the Imperial Government. In so far as I can see, no wrong is going to be inflicted upon New Zealand at all, particularly in relation to the circumstances of the colony at the present time. I think the scheme now before the House will go a long way in conferring a great good on New Zealand. Whether certain lands within this area are owned by persons interested in this syndicate appears to me to be entirely beside the question. Whether it be so or not appears to me to have no relation whatever to the business we are discussing, and that is whether, as a wise or a politic thing, we should encourage the construction of this rail-



way in the way in which the House has determined by a large majority to do it. The matter was in the House last Parliament. It was carried then in a somewhat different form; and has been carried again this session by a large majority. I would say, with all respect, that it is time the proceedings were allowed to go through without further discussion.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—There is one aspect of this matter which probably the Premier will inform the House in reference to. It is proposed, I understand, to prepare a new contract and give it legislative force. Supposing the company does not agree to that, what is the position? Is the matter to be tied up until next session? Have we any knowledge that the Act which will receive legislative force will be accepted by the company?—because, if not, it seems to me we are adopting a very one-sided course, and one that will not in any way solve the difficulty that at present exists. No doubt the Premier will be able to inform the House on this question. I was somewhat struck with the tenor of the Premier's remarks with reference to this amendment. He seemed, impliedly, to reflect on the Legislative Council for introducing words which he did not think were necessary. I do not know whether he intended that, but his remarks evidently had that bearing; and I, for one, wish emphatically to state that, in my opinion, it was a most necessary precaution on the part of the Council to insert the words we endeavoured to get inserted here. I never pretended to say that, by strict legal right, the company could come against this colony for compensation in money, or for additional land. But what I did contend, and do still contend, is that, in the absence of these words, it is by no means quite clear that a Court of equity might not have given relief by holding that there was an implied obligation to have land there out of which the necessary land could be selected. And it is perfectly well known to every lawyer in this House that when a contract is ambiguous a Court of equity may give relief where a Court of law would give no redress. It was to obviate that that I conceived it to be necessary to move in the direction I did. There is, in addition, this important question: that in an ambiguous contract, if the company could establish a moral claim founded on deception on our part, then this colony could not take up the position of a private individual by resisting a strong moral claim which a company of this kind might press on the colony, and it is very much more satisfactory to be able to say to them, "There is the contract, and it expressly ignores and repudiates the suggestion which you wish to make that any guarantee was given as to compensation in money or land outside the authorised area." Sir, I think that the amendment, instead of being "pooh-poohed," ought to be hailed with satisfaction by this House, as it apparently has been by the other branch of the Legislature. It is only in consequence of the tenor of the Premier's remarks that I felt induced to say what I have done. I must

say that I appreciate the efforts of the honourable member for Auckland Central in endeavouring to get at the bottom of this matter. I think I may safely say that, beyond the general information which every member of this House has, when we are called upon to deal with a very important question, I may say—a question of such magnitude as this—we ought to be able to satisfy our minds that we are adopting a course which is in the interests of the colony. What I was about to say was this: There are three Acts with reference to this matter—the Act of 1881, the Act of 1884, and the further Act of 1886—and now it is proposed to have another Act. What I should like to see would be the whole of these Acts consolidated, and the essence of them, so to speak, put into the Act, and then this contract given legislative force to on terms that have been assented to by the company. I did not go beyond that stage when I opposed this measure, because I realise that the colony has decided to carry it out. But we should make the terms so explicit, so emphatically distinct, that on no future occasion could we be asked for fresh legislation on account of any well-grounded or ill-founded claims put forward by the company. That, I think, should be arranged. I should like to know whether there is any assurance that the terms of this contract, as arrived at by this House and the other branch of the Legislature, have been, or are likely to be, accepted by the company.

Mr. SAMUEL.—The honourable member for Dunedin West is only pleased to find that the amendment, which he proposed when this report was being considered, has been adopted in another place. But I do not think the opinion of this House has changed on account of that being done. I think the same majority as before are still of opinion that it would be just as well had the contract been not altered in the slightest degree. It is well, as a compromise, to assent to it now; but that does not alter the opinion of this House. Although no great harm can be done by the insertion of this amendment I cannot see that there is any necessity for it. To what has fallen from the honourable member for Parnell, and to some of that which has fallen from the honourable member for Auckland Central, I think some attention might be given. The honourable member for Parnell has asked, "What is the intention of the Government in regard to the execution of a contract?" and I should like to know what the Government intend to do in this respect, and whether they really do intend to postpone the execution of the contract until the House has passed an Act such as the Premier has told us of. Turning to the report of the Committee, adopted by this House, we find the recommendation is,—

"That, in the opinion of the Committee, a new contract should be prepared, embodying the several provisions of the Acts of 1884 and 1886, the contract of 1885 legalised by the Act of 1886, and the further contract amending the contract of 1885; and that an Act should be passed empowering the Governor

to execute such new contract. Such new contract should, so far as practicable, contain provisions in the same words as are used in the said Acts and contracts, and when any deviation is necessary in order to render the new contract consistent throughout, the alterations required should be to the same purport and effect as the draft contract hereunto annexed."

Now, that seems to me to indicate an entirely new contract; and the question I should like the Premier to answer is, whether it is really intended to prepare an entirely new contract, embodying all the provisions mentioned in this report, before any contract is signed; and whether any such contract, before being signed, will be authorised by an Act of this House. If so, it does seem to me that it will be a work of very great length, and will give ample time to the honourable member for Auckland Central, the honourable member for Parnell, and any other honourable members who so desire, to discourse upon the policy of this contract and the Acts by which it is authorised—plenty of time to further debate this matter to their hearts' content. In asking this I do not wish it at all to be considered that I think the honourable member for Parnell is likely to be bullied by anybody, or that the honourable member for Auckland Central will be prevented from freely discussing this question. Neither of these honourable gentlemen is likely to be bullied. Whether they be bullies or not is another matter. We ought to have it clear whether the contract is to be executed in something like the form we have it, or whether it is to be an entirely new contract, embodied from the contract as now before us and the other Acts which have been passed and the other previous contract which has been signed.

Major ATKINSON.—I shall be happy to reply to the questions that have been asked, as far as I am able, if the House so desires. As to that raised by the honourable member for Parnell, I take the position to be this: that the Council has now authorised the Government to make a contract on the basis of this proposed contract, and the Government will proceed to do that at once if this House agrees to the Council's amendment. Whether we shall be able to get the contract signed before Parliament rises I am not able to say. If it can be done, we should then make it a schedule of the Bill to be brought in. If the new contract has not been signed before Parliament adjourns, the Bill we propose to bring down will authorise the Government to sign a contract on the basis of the present one. With regard to a further contract, it is proposed also to take power in the Bill to sign another contract which shall include all the others; but that will take some months to do, and I understand the object of the House is to get the company to work as soon as possible. Of course the House can, if it chooses, throw out the Bill when it comes down; because, although these resolutions are passed, agreeing to the proposed contract, the contract will not be law

*Mr. Samuel*

at all until a Bill authorising it is passed. But, although honourable members will be free to decide as they choose when the Bill comes down, and no doubt those whose consciences have impelled them to oppose the present proposals will then be impelled to oppose the Bill, yet I think the great majority of the House will still approve of the proposals of the Government and pass the Bill. With regard to what was said by the honourable member for Dunedin West, I would point out that I have not the slightest intention of throwing ridicule on the Upper House. What I did was to say that I still believe these words are unnecessary. The honourable gentleman thinks differently, and, of course, he is entitled to so think. But, having been put in, let us keep them in and satisfy those people who think they are necessary. Sir, I do not think any other point was raised on which I need touch.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—Sir, I beg to lay the altered return on the table. Directly the honourable member for Auckland Central mentioned the matter I asked that a supplementary return should be prepared as soon as possible. The order of reference for the return is thus worded:—

"That a return be laid upon the table showing the names of the tenants of the Crown, and the extent of each of their holdings, who hold land in any portion of the lands north of the Rakaia which it is proposed to give up to the Midland Railway Company."

I read that to mean what had been selected by the company; but this return gives the balance of all within the authorised area.

Amendment negatived, and motion agreed to.

#### GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

Mr. O'CONOR.—Sir, I ask to be allowed to make a personal explanation. I had occasion to leave the House yesterday before the division on the Government Railways Bill, and I exchanged pairs with the honourable member for the Dunstan, who, at the time, was paired with the honourable member for the Thames. On getting that protection I left the precincts of the House. I find, since, that I have been recorded as having paired with the honourable member for the Thames, and therefore my vote counts in the way I did not intend it to go. I desire to make that explanation to show what really took place on the occasion.

#### GOVERNOR'S SALARY AND ALLOWANCES BILL.

On the motion, That the House go into Committee on this Bill,

Sir J. VOGEL said,—May I ask the Premier if he will agree to the suggestion I made that the salary should be reduced by £1,000, and a travelling-allowance of £1,000 be made?

Major ATKINSON.—The Government are unable to agree to that suggestion. We think the provision will be just as effective in the way we propose. The Government at first were disposed to put it as the honourable gentleman proposed; but, after fuller consideration, it

was determined to propose it in the form in which it now stands. There is a precedent for it: as far as I can understand, it has been done in this way in other colonies.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The Bill is so drawn that it is almost impossible for me in Committee to move an amendment to do what I suggest, and therefore I shall leave the responsibility of the matter on the Government. I undertake to say that passing the Bill as it stands will be no measure of retrenchment at all. It will come to this: that a Governor will be appointed to New Zealand at a salary of £5,000, out of which he has to pay his staff, while he will ask the Government to pay such travelling-expenses as he may incur. It would be utterly unreasonable to ask that a Governor should make it his business to visit Dunedin, Christchurch, Auckland, or the West Coast at his own expense. Whenever he is asked to go about the colony there will inevitably be in future years what we had in a former period, and which rendered necessary the passing of the present Act in 1872. A vote used to be proposed in the House which always caused disagreeable discussions, and we shall have those discussions again when similar votes are proposed in the future. We may be quite sure that when Governors come to New Zealand, especially while they are new Governors, the country will not be contented unless they visit the different districts; and it would be quite unreasonable to ask them to make those visits at their own cost—the colony would have to bear the expense. I asked the Premier to accede to my proposal; but he declines to do so, and prefers to pass the Bill as it stands. If that be done I am sure it will not be a measure that will effect any retrenchment whatever. Before the present Act was passed in 1872, the expenditure under various heads connected with the Governor amounted in one year to over £2,500, and in another year to nearly as much; and it was to stop the unpleasant discussions that these votes occasioned that a Bill was brought in. Instead of this Bill being a measure in the direction of retrenchment, I am afraid it will prove one in the contrary direction, although, of course, I do not mean to say that it is brought in by the Government with any such intention. The experience I had before the present Premier joined the Government in 1874 was as I have stated, and my statement can be confirmed by others, members of the Government at that time—the honourable member for Selwyn knows the great pressure that was brought on the Government to find travelling-expenses for the Governor. Now, suppose we make the salary £4,000, we shall not get a Governor working out his pension, but we shall get a younger man with a longer career before him. But if we got a gentleman nominally receiving £5,000 a year, out of which he has to pay his staff, and is supposed to pay his travelling-expenses, it would be called a first-class Governorship; but it would not be a first-class Governorship as compared with some other colonies. The consequence will be that the Governorship here will be used to enable elderly Governors to

work out the balance of the time during which they require to serve before they can take their pensions. There are always difficulties in that way; the Colonial Office has to provide posts for gentlemen who have shown that they are getting too old to work, and cannot be sent to some of the higher posts; and the Colonial Department does not want them to lose their first-class pensions, and some place is chosen where they can work out the balance of their time for their right to pension to accrue. If the Bill is passed as it now stands the New Zealand Governorship will be used for that purpose. I would not grudge the full payment for a really first-class Governor. I would much sooner see the salary made smaller, say, £4,000, which would attract plenty of gentlemen of high abilities and ambition, and then a maximum sum for travelling-expenses should be fixed. I shall not move an amendment in Committee, though I strongly advise the Premier to consider the question.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I should like to ask the Premier if he believes that the sum fixed by this Bill will not be exceeded in respect of future Governors.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Then I am satisfied with that. I think too much is being made of New Zealand being made a first-class colony, and this, that, and the other thing, when it cannot afford it. I hope that will be borne in mind when a motion comes on for us to vote £20,000 in that direction. Fancy a young country like this presuming to imitate the Old-world system, in keeping an army of useless members of the community. I trust the present Premier will not countenance anything of the kind. The Premier assures us that the sum stated in this Bill will not be exceeded for the Governor, and I take his word for it, and I know he will endeavour to keep it.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—This Bill is not to come into operation until the next Governor is appointed; and I want to ask the Premier this: Suppose the present Governor left the colony, and the office were filled by a *locum tenens*, would the lower scale apply to the latter at once?

Major ATKINSON.—No; I think not. It is a rather nice point, and I cannot say what the Colonial Office might think. I must confess that I am rather astonished at the argument used by the honourable gentleman opposite, because a very short time ago, when a Bill to reduce the Governor's salary was introduced, the honourable gentleman opposed it for fear it would make this a second-class colony. That was the argument then used; but now, when we bring this measure down, it seems it does not matter whether it makes us a first-class colony or not. I agree with that; but I say that if we can obtain the object we are aiming at, and at the same time remain a first-class colony, it will be all the better. He tells us in very strong language that if we pass this Bill it will not effect economy, and tries to make the House believe that a similar Act was in force up to 1873. But that is not the case. At that time

the Governor's salary was simply a salary, and it was the custom for the House to vote travelling-allowance; and a great many disputes arose in the House in consequence. At that time travelling was very expensive, and the allowance voted was £1,000 a year. The honourable gentleman is wrong in saying that the Governor does not draw that allowance; for, as I am informed, he does draw, monthly, the commuted allowance for travelling and other expenses.

Sir J. VOGEL.—By the terms of the Act he ought not to draw the allowance. The salary then was £4,500 a year, and it was reduced in 1872.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; I have the Act before me. The salary was £4,500, and, as I say, it was entirely outside the travelling-allowance which the House regularly provided. Now we propose to make provision that the Governor shall pay his own travelling-expenses. We have no right to assume that a Governor will not do his duty when he comes here, or that the Government of the day will not do their duty. I take it that it is the duty of the Ministry to advise the Governor to travel, and, if he does not travel, the Government know what is the constitutional course to take. The Government have given this matter quite as careful attention as the honourable gentleman, and have as much experience as the honourable gentleman, and have brought this measure down as the best way of meeting the question. However, as I understand, it is in no way a party question, and I shall be happy to give the honourable gentleman every facility in Committee to move any amendment on the point he has raised, so that it may be considered in a friendly way.

Bill committed.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Repeal of certain sections of "The Governor's Salary and Allowances Act, 1873." Establishment-allowance and travelling-allowance to cease to be payable.

Dr. FITCHETT moved, That, after the word "Act," in the first line, the following words be inserted: "there shall be payable to Her Majesty every year, out of the Consolidated Fund, the sum of four thousand pounds."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 19.

Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Fish	Monk	Thompson, R.
Fraser	Parata	Vogel.
Goldie	Perceval	
Kerr	Richardson, E.	Tellers.
Larnach	Seddon	Barron
Levestam	Taiwhanga	Fitchett.

NOES, 41.

Allen	Fergus	Hobbs
Anderson	Fisher	Jackson
Atkinson	Fitzherbert	Lance
Blake	Fulton	Lawry
Bruce	Graham	Macarthur
Buchanan	Hall	Mackenzie, M.
Cadman	Hislop	Mackenzie, T.

Major Atkinson

McGregor	Rhodes	Thompson, T.
Mitchelson	Richardson, G.	Turnbull
Newman	Ross	Whyte
O'Connor	Samuel	Wilson.
Ormond	Seymour	Tellers.
Peacock	Stewart, W. D.	Cowan
Reeves, W. P.	S.-Menteath	Russell.

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Guinness	Tanner
Steward, W. J.	Beetham.

Majority against, 22.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

#### MINISTERS' SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES BILL.

##### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 3.—Amount fixed for Ministers' salaries.

Mr. BARRON moved, That, in the words, "five thousand eight hundred," the words "eight hundred" be omitted.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words 'eight hundred' be retained."

AYES, 52.

Atkinson	Lance	Ross
Bruce	Larnach	Russell
Cadman	Lawry	Samuel
Carroll	Macarthur	Seymour
Cowan	Mackenzie, M.	Steward, W. J.
Dodson	Mackenzie, T.	Stewart, W. D.
Duncan	Marchant	S.-Menteath
Fergus	McGregor	Taiwhanga
Fisher	Mitchelson	Taylor
Fitzherbert	Moat	Thompson, T.
Graham	Newman	Thompson, R.
Guinness	O'Callaghan	Valentine
Hall	O'Connor	Vogel
Hislop	Ormond	Whyte.
Hobbs	Parata	
Izard	Peacock	Tellers.
Jackson	Richardson, E.	Reeves, R. H. J.
Kerr	Richardson, G.	Reeves, W. P.

NOES, 25.

Allen	Grimmond	Seddon
Blake	Hodgkinson	Smith
Buchanan	Jones	Ward
Feldwick	Levestam	Wilson
Fitchett	Loughrey	Withy.
Fraser	McKenzie, J.	
Fulton	Moss	Tellers.
Goldie	Perceval	Barron
Grey	Rhodes	Fish.

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Anderson	Turnbull
Beetham	Joyce
Tanner.	Buxton.

Majority for, 27.

Words retained.

Number of Ministers.

Mr. BARRON moved, That the word "six" be struck out, with the view of inserting the word "five."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word 'six' be retained."

AYES, 50.		
Atkinson	Larnach	Richardson, G.
Bruce	Lawry	Ross
Cadman	Levestam	Russell
Carroll	Macarthur	Samuel
Cowan	Mackenzie, T.	Seymour
Dodson	Marchant	Steward, W. J.
Fergus	McGregor	Stewart, W. D.
Fisher	Mitchelson	S.-Menteath
Fitzherbert	Moat	Taipua
Graham	Newman	Thompson, R.
Hall	O'Callaghan	Thompson, T.
Hislop	O'Conor	Valentine
Hobbs	Ormond	Vogel
Izard	Parata	Whyte.
Jackson	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kerr	Reeves, W. P.	Reeves, R. H. J.
Lance	Richardson, E.	Seddon.

NOES, 24.		
Allen	Grimmond	Smith
Blake	Hodgkinson	Taylor
Duncan	Jones	Ward
Feldwick	Loughrey	Wilson
Fitchett	McKenzie, J.	Withy.
Fraser	Moss	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fulton	Perceval	Barron
Goldie	Rhodes	Fish.
Grey		

PAIRS.		<i>Against.</i>
<i>For.</i>	Anderson	Turnbull
	Beetham	Joyce
	Tanner.	Buxton.

Majority for, 26.

Word retained, and clause agreed to.

Clause 4.—Appropriation of moneys. Proviso for reduction in number of Ministers if number of House of Representatives reduced.

Mr. BARRON moved to omit the word "five," with a view to insert the word "four."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word 'five' be retained."

AYES, 55.		
Atkinson	Jackson	Reeves, W. P.
Blake	Jones	Richardson, E.
Bruce	Kerr	Richardson, G.
Cadman	Lance	Ross
Carroll	Larnach	Russell
Cowan	Lawry	Samuel
Dodson	Levestam	Seddon
Duncan	Macarthur	Seymour
Fergus	Mackenzie, T.	Stewart, W. D.
Fisher	Marchant	S.-Menteath
Fish	McGregor	Taipua
Fitchett	Mitchelson	Thompson, R.
Fitzherbert	Moat	Thompson, T.
Fulton	Newman	Vogel
Graham	O'Callaghan	Whyte.
Hall	O'Conor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Parata	Steward, W. J.
Hobbs	Peacock	Valentine.
Izard	Reeves, R. H. J.	

NOES, 17.		
Allen	Grey	McKenzie, J.
Feldwick	Hodgkinson	Moss
Goldie	Loughrey	Ormond

Perceval	Ward	<i>Tellers.</i>
Rhodes	Wilson	Barron
Smith	Withy.	Fraser.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Anderson	Turnbull
Beetham	Joyce
Tanner.	Buxton.

Majority for, 38.

Word retained, and clause agreed to.

Clause 8.—Operation and construction of Act.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause as printed be agreed to."

AYES, 56.

Allen	Hodgkinson	Reeves, W. P.
Atkinson	Jones	Richardson, E.
Barron	Kerr	Richardson, G.
Blake	Lance	Ross
Buchanan	Lawry	Russell
Cadman	Loughrey	Seymour
Carroll	Macarthur	Smith
Cowan	Marchant	Steward, W. J.
Dodson	McGregor	Stewart, W. D.
Fergus	McKenzie, J.	Taipua
Fisher	Mitchelson	Taiwhanga
Fitchett	Monk	Taylor
Fitzherbert	Moss	Thompson, T.
Fraser	Newman	Valentine
Goldie	O'Callaghan	Wilson
Graham	Ormond	Withy.
Grey	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Peacock	Fish
Hobbs	Perceval	Ward.

NOES, 16.

Bruce	Izard	Vogel
Duncan	Levestam	Whyte.
Feldwick	Mackenzie, T.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fulton	Moat	Rhodes
Grimmond	Samuel	Seddon.
Hall	Thompson, R.	

Majority for, 40.

Clause agreed to.

Dr. NEWMAN moved a new clause providing that, if a Ministry be defeated on a direct no-confidence motion, and do not resign within one week thereafter, they shall cease to draw any salary.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 14.

Barron	Russell	Whyte
Fraser	Stewart, W. D.	Wilson.
Macarthur	Taipua	<i>Tellers.</i>
Monk	Taiwhanga	Newman
Perceval	Thompson, R.	Seddon.

NOES, 46.

Atkinson	Fitzherbert	Lawry
Blake	Graham	Levestam
Bruce	Guinness	Mackenzie, T.
Buchanan	Hall	McGregor
Cadman	Hislop	McKenzie, J.
Cowan	Hodgkinson	Mitchelson
Dodson	Izard	Moat
Duncan	Jones	Moss
Fish	Kerr	O'Callaghan
Fitchett	Lance	Parata

Peacock	Ross	Valentine
Reeves, R. H. J.	Samuel	Vogel.
Reeves, W. P.	Seymour	
Rhodes	Smith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Richardson, E.	Steward, W. J.	Feldwick
Richardson, G.	Thompson, T.	O'Connor.

Majority against, 32.

Clause rejected.

Mr. R. THOMPSON proposed a new clause providing that Ministers should not be allowed to draw travelling-allowances during an election.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 16.

Allen	Mitchelson	Stewart, W. D.
Barron	Newman	Whyte.
Fisher	Ormond	
Goldie	Reeves, W. P.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hodgkinson	Rhodes	Monk
Macarthur	Russell	Thompson, R.

NOES, 44.

Blake	Guinness	Richardson, E.
Bruce	Hislop	Ross
Buchanan	Jones	Seddon
Cadman	Kerr	Seymour
Carroll	Lance	Smith
Cowan	Lawry	Steward, W. J.
Dodson	Levestam	Taipua
Duncan	Mackenzie, T.	Taylor
Feldwick	McGregor	Thompson, T.
Fergus	McKenzie, J.	Valentine
Fish	Moat	Vogel
Fitchett	O'Connor	Ward.
Fitzherbert	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fulton	Perceval	O'Callaghan
Graham	Reeves, R. H. J.	Samuel.

Majority against, 28.

Clause rejected.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

# PARLIAMENTARY HONORARIUM AND PRIVILEGES BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1.—Short Title.

Mr. SEDDON moved to strike out the words "Parliamentary Honorarium," with a view to insert "Payment of Members."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 60.

Allen	Goldie	Marchant
Anderson	Graham	McGregor
Atkinson	Hall	Mitchelson
Beetham	Hislop	Moat
Blake	Hobbs	Monk
Bruce	Hodgkinson	O'Callaghan
Buchanan	Izard	Ormond
Cadman	Jackson	Parata
Cowan	Kelly	Reeves, W. P.
Dodson	Kerr	Rhodes
Duncan	Lance	Richardson, G.
Fergus	Lawry	Ross
Fisher	Macarthur	Russell
Fraser	Mackenzie, M.	Samuel
Fulton	Mackenzie, T.	Seymour

Smith	Tanner	Wilson
Steward, W. J.	Thompson, R.	Withy.
Stewart, W. D.	Valentine	<i>Tellers.</i>
S.-Menteath	Ward	Barron
Taipua	Whyte	Peacock.
Taiwhanga		

NOES, 15.

Buxton	Guinness	Perceval
Feldwick	Levestam	Taylor.
Fish	McKenzie, J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fitchett	Newman	Seddon
Fitzherbert	O'Connor	Turnbull.
Grimmond		

Majority for, 45.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 2.—Alteration in amount paid to members of General Assembly. Legislative Councillors resident in Wellington to receive nothing.

Mr. PEACOCK moved to omit words in order to insert others with a view to fixing the honorarium payable to such members at £50.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 54.

Anderson	Hislop	Rhodes
Atkinson	Hobbs	Richardson, G.
Barron	Izard	Samuel
Beetham	Jackson	Seymour
Blake	Kelly	Smith
Buchanan	Kerr	Stewart, W. D.
Buxton	Lawry	Taipua
Cadman	Loughrey	Taiwhanga
Cowan	Macarthur	Tanner
Dodson	Mackenzie, T.	Taylor
Feldwick	McGregor	Thompson, R.
Fergus	McKenzie, J.	Turnbull
Fisher	Mitchelson	Ward
Fish	Monk	Whyte
Fitchett	O'Callaghan	Wilson.
Fitzherbert	Ormond	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	Parata	Reeves, W. P.
Fulton	Perceval	Valentine.
Hall		

NOES, 21.

Allen	Lance	Seddon
Bruce	Levestam	Steward, W. J.
Duncan	Moat	Thompson, T.
Goldie	O'Connor	Withy.
Grimmond	Reeves, R. H. J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Ross	Marchant
Hodgkinson	Russell	Peacock.
Jones		

Majority for, 33.

Amendment negatived.

New clause.

Mr. BRUCE moved the addition of a new clause limiting the operation of the Act to the present Parliament.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 25.

Anderson	Fish	Grimmond
Blake	Fitzherbert	Guinness
Carroll	Fraser	Kelly

Lance	Reeves, W. P.	Turnbull
Levestam	Seddon	Wilson.
Marchant	Steward, W. J.	
Moss	Taipua	<i>Tellers.</i>
Parata	Taiwhanga	Bruce
Reeves, R.H.J.	Taylor	Perceval.

NOES, 46.

Allen	Hodgkinson	Ross
Atkinson	Izard	Samuel
Beetham	Jackson	Seymour
Buchanan	Jones	Stewart, W. D.
Buxton	Kerr	S. Menteath
Cadman	Lawry	Tanner
Cowan	Macarthur	Thompson, R.
Dodson	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson, T.
Feldwick	McGregor	Valentine
Fergus	Mitchelson	Ward
Fisher	Moat	Whyte
Fulton	Monk	Withy.
Goldie	O'Callaghan	
Graham	Ormond	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Rhodes	Fitchett
Hobbs	Richardson, G.	Peacock.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Vogel.	Hall.

Majority against, 21.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past one o'clock a.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

*Monday, 5th December, 1887.*

First Reading—Representation Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### FIRST READING.

Slaughterhouses Bill.

### REPRESENTATION BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, it is not out of any disrespect to the House, or from any want of appreciation of the importance of the measure, that, in asking the House to read this Bill a second time, I do not propose to make any lengthy remarks on this occasion. My reasons are these: During the last session of Parliament the matter was very fully discussed, and during the late election also, Sir, this question was before the country very prominently, and, in fact, was almost talked threadbare. It seems to me, therefore, looking at these facts and at the period of the session, that it is better that I should move the second reading of this Bill without bringing forward many arguments in its favour, leaving those few honourable members—I believe they are in fact but few—who are opposed to its passage to raise such objections as they may think necessary, and I hope then to be able to answer them when I reply,

I might just point out that the number of population to representatives proposed by this Bill is still very small compared with the numbers of population in various other countries. I have made out a few statistics on this subject, which I will read, with your permission. In the United Kingdom there are 56,280 inhabitants to each member; in France, 76,287; in the United States, 174,724; in Canada, which approaches nearest to our proportion, 20,888 to each member; and, if this Bill is passed, including the Natives there will then be only 10,000 inhabitants in New Zealand to each representative. So that we shall actually be half under Canada, and much below the other countries I have cited. With regard to the population and area, there are in England 290 inhabitants to the square mile; in France, 180; in the United States, 14; in Canada, 1; in New Zealand, 5½. So that, looking at these facts, honourable members will see that most of the arguments which have been adduced against the Bill as to disfranchising the country districts cannot be true, or must have operation in the countries I have referred to. That, to my mind, is a complete answer to the arguments which have been brought forward against this measure. For the reasons I have already given, I do not intend to speak at any length, but shall content myself with moving the second reading.

Mr. TAIWHANGA.—I think it is a great shame to take off one Maori member. The Maori representation is small enough as it is. I should not mind if the House would only pass my Maori Relief Bill. If that were done we might have a chance. If my Bill is taken no notice of by the Government and the House, and they pass this Bill reducing us to three, I think it is a great shame. I think this Bill should be referred to the Native Affairs Committee, so as to give us time to consider the matter.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I wish to say, Sir, that, whilst I recognise that during the election a large number of constituencies expressed themselves in favour of a material reduction in the number of the members of the House, and whilst, therefore, from the result of the elections, the measure may be held to be justified, still, in my opinion, the time will come, and that not very long hence, when a great deal of dissatisfaction will be felt throughout the country—especially in the country districts—at the very large reduction which this measure proposes. The Bill, in my opinion, does not sufficiently provide for anticipating a dissolution of Parliament—that is to say that, unless something is done in this matter, the elections, like those which have taken place, may be attended by a very considerable amount of inconvenience and loss of time. I shall not speak further on the measure.

Mr. CARROLL.—I fail to see the necessity for passing this measure at the present time, because it will not come into force until after the expiration of the present Parliament; and I think a matter of such weighty importance as this should have more time for its considera-

tion. I shall decidedly object to any reduction in the Maori members, on the simple ground that for a long time we have been under-represented upon the basis of population; and now we would be deprived of even some of that representation which we are entitled to if our numbers are reduced to three. If you are going to meddle with the special representation at all, I should be in favour of doing away with it altogether. Let all the Maoris have the same electoral privileges as Europeans,—place them on one roll. Either do that, or do not meddle with the special representation at all. I only rise to make these few remarks now, and at another time shall have more to say on the subject.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I was somewhat opposed to the reduction of members; but there is a very strong feeling in the South of this colony in favour of this reduction, and I shall support the Bill as it stands. I quite agree with the honourable member for Christchurch North that the Bill should provide for some immediate adjustment of the electorates, so that, should any emergency arise necessitating a general election, there should not be that delay which took place on the last occasion. However, I shall support the measure in its present form.

Mr. TAIPUA.—I must enter my protest against reducing the number of Maori members. I do not think it is right. At present the districts represented by the Maori members are very large indeed, and we have in each of those districts a population of something like ten thousand Natives to each member. That is above the European proportion. Now, the European members of this House only represent about six thousand persons each, and I think that the present measure is very unjust indeed. In my opinion, instead of reducing the number of Native members it should be added to, and the proportion to those they represent made the same as that of the European members. It ought to be admitted by this House that the Maoris require greater care and greater supervision than the Europeans, and for that reason they should be better represented in this House, for many of the laws passed in the House affect the Natives very injuriously, and that is due to their not being properly represented. Now, when all the troubles have passed away, and there is no longer any danger of Maori war, when we are living, as it were, as one people, I think we should have fair-play; we should work together, and devise laws for our mutual benefit. I am very angry, very wroth, that this special representation was ever provided for the Natives at all. I think it has been a delusion, and it would have been better if it had never been passed. I hope the Government will consider this Bill very seriously, for it is very stringent. Seeing that most of our lands have passed to the Crown, and have been brought under the operation of the Court, we should all be treated alike, the same as Europeans. Most of our lands having passed through the Court, they can be dealt with by the existing laws, and we should all work together with one object. I

Mr. Carroll

think this is a pernicious measure, for we are not being treated fairly. Our lands are being taken and administered by the English law, and yet we are being treated exceptionally. If honourable members and the Government object to our having to speak in Maori, then let that be stated—let there be no misunderstanding. I shall deem it my duty to oppose this measure in every way in my power. It would be better for the Native members to leave the House. They would be prepared to do that rather than support such a measure as this. It would be far better, instead of taking away a Maori member this year, and probably one next year, and another the year after, to repeal the special representation the Natives enjoy at once, and have done with it, and put the Native members out of the House.

Mr. SEDDON.—No more important question, I think, could engage the attention of this House than this question of representation, and my heart sank within me when I saw the little notice taken by honourable members when the Premier, in that short and empty speech, introduced the subject. I say in the question of representation the life and well-being of the people are involved. The question of cost is a secondary consideration. In the question of representation everything is involved that concerns the people. In my opinion the people are having their rights invaded by this Bill, and those who represent them in this House are not doing their duty to the people in the slight attention they are paying to this Bill. What will this taking-away of representation mean to the sparsely-settled parts of the colony? Does it not mean that the whole of the representation will be given to the large centres of population; and that in the outlying districts, where the good work of colonisation is going on, the wants of the people will not be attended to? And how inconsistent is the action of the Premier with regard to this question! In 1881, when we had a population of only some 450,000 souls in the colony, he was one of the leading spirits of a Government which introduced a Representation Bill and fixed the number of members at ninety-one, exclusive of Maori members. If then, in his opinion and that of his colleagues, it was necessary for the welfare of the people of New Zealand to have ninety-five representatives in this House, how can he now consistently say that New Zealand, with a population at the present time of six hundred thousand, should have only seventy representatives? The comparison made as regards Great Britain, Canada, and France does not apply in the case of a young country like New Zealand. The Premier must know full well that we are not only a legislative body but an administrative body. He must know also that we have a large public debt, and he must also know that in carrying out the public-works policy it is necessary that each part of the colony should have representation, so as to insure a fair expenditure on works of a profitable nature, and of such a nature that the colony as a whole will benefit from them. It is true that as to the moneys previously bor-



rowed the large centres of population have had the lion's share; and, what is more than that, it must be apparent to all that there can be very little further borrowing—it must be very limited; and, when future borrowing is limited, any surplus money that the colony thinks it necessary to expend in the work of colonisation will be expended in and about the larger centres of population, which will have a dominating political power in this House, and there will be no expenditure at all on public works in those parts of the colony which have not received justice in the past. The people in the outlying districts will not receive anything like the consideration that will be given to those parts of the colony that are more thickly populated. To prevent that occurring it is absolutely necessary that we should continue the representation which at the present time exists. If the Premier had come down with a proposal dealing with the question of local government, and decentralising our governmental system,—if he had proposed that this House should be purely a legislative body, and had taken from it the dealing with roads and bridges and public works,—there would have been a reason for reduction in the number of members. But, without doing that, and leaving the House, as it is, both an administrative and a legislative body, performing the chief functions necessary for the welfare of the colony, to say that the number of members should be so largely reduced, and to see the way the proposal is received by this House, has made me ask the question, “What are honourable members thinking about?” Surely the people know more what is to their interest than to allow the measure to go as this seems to be going. We have just come back from our constituents, and we know what has been the effect of the redistribution of representation under the Act of last session. Have we not honourable members here representing different districts with no community of interest whatever? As regards many of the electoral divisions which have been extended, there can be no doubt that the honourable member representing each of those districts has suddenly found himself having to do with different people, electors holding different views, and having no community of interests whatever with those he has represented hitherto. And this has been a serious difficulty; it has been objectionable both to the electors and to the candidates. It is owing to this that some of our best public men were rejected at the ballot-box, and not through any fault of their own, or because they had not done their duty to those they had represented. Their defeat was simply through that want of community of interest, and owing to local jealousies; and I undertake to say that the effect of this Bill would be the same. I look at it also from another point of view. The larger the number of members we have in this House the less danger there is of what is politically known as “log-rolling,” and of having legislation in the direction of benefiting particular classes. I was a member of this House when the number of members was considerably

smaller than now—but, still, more than it is proposed by this measure to reduce them to—and I know what it has cost the country in relation to the formation of parties, and as to the holders of seats on the Treasury benches. While you might save a paltry £10,000 by the proposals of this Bill, I undertake to say that if it came to a question of parties, and as to who should hold seats on the Treasury benches, for every pound saved by this Bill the colony would lose a thousand. I know that in 1879 if it cost the colony a penny it cost it a quarter of a million of money owing to this very cause. The great danger that I see in lessening the representation is that there will be a dominant party such as we have at the present moment on those benches, who are supported by the wealth of the colony, who are supported by the land-rings of the colony, and by absentees.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh!

Mr. SEDDON.—The absentees leave a power behind them. It is no laughing matter. Those on the other side of the House may jeer and laugh with the honourable member for Dunedin East, who—I say it without wishing to be at all personal—owes his seat in this House to the influence of wealth and intolerant bigotry. Those laugh who win, and I permit the honourable gentleman to smile. I question very much whether or not those who wish to do their duty to the great mass of the people in this country would care about being returned by such a power as I have described. Is it fair, I ask the House, while you have the property vote, to reduce the representation, and thus give a greater power to property than it has even now? I say that honourable members who vote for this Bill will be voting to give greater power to property. It is in the interests of property that this measure is brought in. This and their measures of the same tendency which have been brought in have been framed in the interests of property. The whole of this legislation we are asked to pass is on a par with this measure. The House has committed itself to a number of these measures, and I say that the people are blind to their own interests if it is permitted to go any further. I say it is panic legislation. Retrenchment has been thrown as dust in the eyes of the people, and the Premier and those who now dominate with him are, under that pressure, introducing measure after measure against the interests of the people. As one of the Liberals who have been in this House for the last ten years fighting for the rights of the people, I must raise my voice against those rights being swept away in one fell swoop. Is the work of ten years fighting for the rights of the people, I must raise my voice against those rights being swept away in one fell swoop. Is the work of ten years fighting for the rights of the people, I must raise my voice against those rights being swept away in one fell swoop. We find that it is being done, and yet scarcely a word is being said about it. Sir, this is the most Conservative House that has been sitting here since 1879; and I appeal to my honourable friend the member for Auckland Central to assist—honourable members may laugh again, but I ask him once more to come to the front and endeavour to stop, as he can by his powerful oratory and great knowledge, the torrent

that is sweeping away to destruction the people and their interests in this country. This is no laughing matter with me. It is a question of taking away the representation of the people; and I am not speaking personally on the point, for I do think that my services will be recognised in the part of the country from which I come, and that if there were a reduction in the number of members I should still be one representing that part of the country. When the provinces were swept away there was no proper system of local government given to the country. In fact, no attempt was made to give us a proper system; and if this Bill is passed we shall find that young politicians, having no means of making themselves known to the people, will have very great difficulty in finding their way into this Chamber. The choice of the people will be very considerably restricted. It will be only well-known public men, and those who have held positions in the past, who will come back. Young men will have no opportunity under the proposed widened representation. And what is the reason for this Bill? The only reason that has been given, the only reason that can be given, is that of saving a few pounds. But I undertake to say that for every pound saved by this Bill the colony will lose a thousand. We shall have class legislation; we shall have the few and the select legislated for; but the masses will not be legislated for. I undertake to say that this is purely a party "move," made in the interests of the particular party which dominates at the present time; and I say it is unfair for the Premier to ask this House now to pass a measure which will only come into force three years hence. What is the reason of this? Why are not honourable members to be allowed time for reflection? Why are the electors not to have time to think over what is being done? It is true that at the hustings the party which now dominates declared in favour of this Bill. I know it was one of the planks in their platform. And it is also true that the Press—nineteenths of which are under the influence of that party—advocated a reduction in the number of members. The Premier may think it his duty to his party to bring this measure in; but I say that before long the electors will awaken to the fact that their rights are being taken from them, and that a serious injury is now being done to them. Why should they not have time to think over this measure? Why should they not have time to think over it before it will come into operation? It is not to have effect until three years. The object, of course, is, in passing this Bill, to prevent electors and members from reconsidering the question. If at any time they attempt to review their decision they will be met by this statement: that when they came up to the House they voted for this measure; and the party now in power will decline to have the question reopened. There will be no chance during the next two sessions to go back. And what I say is that time should be given for reflection. If that time is given I undertake to say that this measure will never be passed by this House. Let the

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honourable member for Caversham insist upon his Limitation of Votes Bill being passed, and so put a restriction upon the property vote; let us insist upon having a proper system of local government, with a fair distribution of moneys: and then perhaps we may consider the question of reducing the number of members. What did the honourable member for Christchurch North say when he introduced the Bill by which he abolished the provinces—and the Premier was then a member of his Cabinet: he pledged himself that a substitute should be found for the local government which was then being taken away—a substitute which would be beneficial to the interests of the people. The rights of the people were taken away from them. They were given increased representation in 1881, because the present Premier and his party did not see their way clear to find a substitute for the local government which had been taken away; and now, when we have one hundred and fifty thousand more people than we had in 1881, the representation of the people is to be so reduced that they will have fewer members in this House than they had at the time when the provincial system was swept away. I hope, in the interests of the people, that this Bill will not be passed. As regards the Maori representation, I have said that some party feeling was shown in this Bill. I think the Premier will admit with me that in sweeping away a portion of the Native representation, as it is proposed to do, a wrong is being done to the Natives of the South Island, which part of the colony is no longer, under this measure, to have a representative. It is bad enough, in all truth, to have taken away from them the whole of their land, to have given them a mere pittance for it, to have made only a few paltry reserves; but it is far worse, having done that, to now take away from them their right of representation in this House, which they have enjoyed for years. It is an act of the grossest hardship, the grossest injustice. Why is it done? Is it because the present representative for the Southern Maori Electoral District, acting from an instinct and a desire to do what is right to the people, has thought it best to sit on this side of the House? Is it as a punishment for that that the Native people in the South Island are to be deprived of their representation? Could a greater wrong be done than is proposed to be done under this Bill? If I am a judge of Native character, if I am a judge of the honourable gentleman who here represents the Natives of the South Island, he will send in his resignation and leave the House, because, knowing that he cannot be in accord with the present Government or their legislation, he may hope by so doing to save the representation of the Natives of the South Island. I am sure he would rather do that than consent to become subject to the "hob-nailed-boot" process which honourable gentlemen have had time after time in this House to put up with unless they would change their side. I say that the honourable gentleman does not merit the punishment that is proposed to be meted out to him by this

Bill. He has done his duty to those who have sent him here; he is well liked by honourable members on both sides of the House; his vote has been given conscientiously; and, taking into consideration the small amount that will be saved by doing away with that representation, and knowing the soreness that would exist in the minds of the Natives who are to be deprived of their representation, I say it will be better for the colony that such a proposal should not be given effect to. The Maoris are a noble race. They are fast dying out. Let them not, in passing away, think that we are taking their land from them—putting them into a subservient position, and then taking away from them their rights of representation. I will put this to the Premier and to the Government: Have they not other measures of far greater importance that are necessary to be pushed on instead of this? We shall have Christmas here in about three weeks, we have only fourteen or fifteen more sitting-days, and yet he has never attempted to touch the question of finance. Why should this question of finance be lost sight of? Why should we be asked to pass measures that are not to come into force for three years, and, in the meantime, to pass over matters which are of the greatest importance at the present time? Here we have New Zealand bonds down to £94, and in two or three days perhaps we shall have them down to £90. Such being the financial position of the country, why should we be asked to devote our time to questions of this sort? I think that the Premier is playing with the House; he is playing with us as if we were a lot of schoolboys, not as men sent here to represent the people. It is the honourable gentleman's first duty to put the finances of the country on a sound footing.

Major ATKINSON.—Hear, hear.

Mr. SEDDON.—Then why does the honourable gentleman not do it? Why are we not allowed to express our opinions upon the financial proposals of the Government? Why is the honourable gentleman not in Committee on the estimates, showing us how he can carry out retrenchment in a fair and reasonable manner? Why is he not doing that, instead of dealing with questions which cannot affect the country for three years to come? If honourable gentlemen were of the same way of thinking as I am we should stop any further legislation, any further Bills, dealing with questions of this sort, or progressing one single step, until this question of finance was distinctly and decidedly dealt with. I cannot help wondering how it is that the honourable gentlemen behind him are allowing the Premier to run riot in the way that he is doing. There is nothing, to my mind, so important as the finance of the colony, nothing so necessary as placing it on a sound footing at once; and if the honourable gentleman would withdraw this Bill and allow us to deal with the question of finance he would be doing justice to himself and justice to the colony. I admit that he is pledged to pass this measure; that his party—that a majority of the House—is pledged to a

reduction of the number of members; that that was the pledge they gave on the hustings: but it was not at that time thought for a moment that we should get within ten or twelve days of the prorogation without the financial question having been touched. The honourable gentleman at the head of the Government has told this House and the country that retrenchment is the first question to be dealt with. What reason is there, then, why the honourable gentleman should not at once go into the estimates, and, taking each class, tell us exactly where he proposes to make reductions? Only this: that this Bill and others are to be kept before honourable members, our time is to be taken up in discussing these matters, until the last moment, and then the honourable gentleman's usual tactics will obtain, and we shall be kept the whole night, perhaps the next day, and then have to pass the estimates *in globo*, not having time to reason out the financial proposals of the Government, but being bound to pass them just as the honourable gentleman wishes. If other honourable members consider that that is the right way to treat the representatives of the people, or that it is treating the people of New Zealand as they deserve to be treated, I, for one, must demur to it. I protest against the Bill going further, and, if in order, I would move, That the further consideration of this Bill be postponed until the financial proposals of the Government have been dealt with as a whole. I have proposed that on another Bill, and I am consistent in proposing it now. The Government cannot take it as a no-confidence question, because they have not done so on another Bill. I do so simply as a protest. I do not think I shall be able to carry the amendment.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why not?

Mr. SEDDON.—Because there is a subservient majority following the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government rightly or wrongly; and, it matters not what the question may be, the honourable gentleman will tell them that if they carry an amendment it will mean that he will have to retire; and, under that threat held over them night after night and day after day, we find honourable members going into the lobby and passing measures against which they have conscientious convictions. I undertake to say that the majority of this House, if they vote for this Bill and leave over the question of finance, will not be voting in accordance with their election-pledges or according to their conscientious convictions. Sir, I move, as an amendment, That the further consideration of this Bill be postponed until the financial proposals of the Government are dealt with as a whole.

Mr. FISH.—I rise to a point of order. Is it right that members of this House should be going round to other honourable members and asking them how they are going to vote on this measure?

Mr. SEDDON.—I was going to say that it is an unusual thing to see one member of a party asking how other honourable gentlemen are

going to vote; and I, for one, object to private pledges being given when the debate is proceeding.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think there is any objection to one honourable member conversing with another on the subject of debate.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The amendment of the honourable member for Kumara raises a widely-different question from that which relates to the measure itself. I have already stated that I shall not oppose this Bill, although I am afraid its consequences will be very much lamented by the colony in the course of time. But, as to the question raised by the honourable member for Kumara, as to the session being so near its end without our having considered the financial provisions, I cannot help thinking there is a great deal of force in what the honourable gentleman said. Since I stated to the House last week that I would help the Government to push on this session to its termination, I have strictly kept to that determination. I have spoken very little myself, and I have preferred rather to see Bills go through with a hasty discussion than to raise a question as to whether it would be better to put off Bills until next session. But I cannot help thinking the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government must recognise the fairness of what I am about to say. If it be the case that the session is to end in about fourteen or fifteen days, the time has come when he should put the House in possession, as far as he is able to do so, of the intentions of the Government with regard to business during the remainder of the session; and I think the honourable member for Kumara should be contented—at any rate, I should be contented—if, say, to-morrow, or next day at the latest, he would give the House an idea of what is the course of business he proposes, so that honourable members may be able to give their attention to that part of the business which is considered to be of the most importance. I think the honourable gentleman might be able to give us an idea of when the Public Works Statement will be down, and when the discussion relating to the provisions for the year and the policy in relation to loans will be taken; and, further, if he will give us an idea of the measures he thinks he will be able to carry this session and what he will be content to leave for next session. I must express the hope that the honourable gentleman will understand that I am not speaking in a hostile manner; but I hope he will be able to give us some information on the points I have mentioned; and, if he will do that, I, for one, will not support the amendment now before the House.

Major ATKINSON.—The Government thought that after the second reading of this Bill we should be in a position to tell the House definitely when the Public Works Statement would be down, and what the general course of business would be. The request of the honourable gentleman is very reasonable. We have, though not from the honourable gentleman, met with a great deal of obstruction from some honourable members, and we have been

delayed many days in consequence; but I say that, if this Bill is read a second time to-day,—as I have no doubt it will be,—I shall be prepared to-morrow to state the course of business which the Government propose to follow.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I have very great pleasure in seconding this amendment. I am very sorry to find that the Government think it necessary to bring in this Bill at the present time. There is plenty of time to meet the present demand for retrenchment, and to remove to a certain extent the depression, and then we can see whether or not it is necessary to reduce the number of members of this House. I am one of those who hold that it will be a great injury to the country to reduce the number of members. Without prating about Liberalism or Conservatism, without using the word "liberal" in a way which has brought it to be a byword, I say that, for the good of the inhabitants of the colony, they should be amply represented in Parliament, and that the management of affairs should not fall into the hands of a few, and these to a great extent the moneyed class. It should be the object of every man who comes up here to represent his fellow-creatures to do his best for those who are weakest, and to try to do most for those who can do least for themselves; but if we are going to commit the government of the country into the hands of a few persons we shall be doing an enormous injury to the weaker classes in this colony. If the government of this country does fall into the hands of a few, I venture to say that we shall have those who come under the class of professional politicians too fully represented in this House. I am not casting any unworthy aspersion upon that class of politicians, for I believe that a country cannot be well governed without a number of professional politicians. We must have a number of able men to devote themselves to politics, to study politics, to find out how different systems of politics in other parts of the world work, and to devote themselves almost exclusively to the study of politics. I am not one of those who say, "Let us exclude those who look to politics for their reward in life—let us exclude them from the government of the country." On the contrary, I say if we do not have men who will make a study of politics we shall not have the nation well governed; but I also say we should not have that class unduly represented in the House of Representatives or the Legislative Council. We ought to have a class of men who have to work for their bread outside of politics, a class of men who find how these schemes agree or do not agree with the general well-being of the inhabitants of the colony; we ought to have a certain number of taxpayers, and we ought also to have a certain number of property-owners—men who find how the measures which are brought before us operate for the good or ill of different classes of the community. If we have a sufficient number of each of those classes, sufficient to hold the balance between the contending parties of professional politicians and experts, we shall have the country well

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governed. I am sorry to see so many members on both sides of the House uniting to pass this measure. I am afraid that, in the end, we shall have both parties agreeing to coalitions, and then we shall have what we have seen in the past, one of the worst examples of Government which could possibly be imagined—a Government without principles, a Government guided only by expediency. I agree with a great deal of what has fallen from the honourable member for Kumara. I consider that we ought to have such a financial proposal fully brought before us by the Government before we begin tinkering with such an important measure as we are now discussing. One by one the Bills are being brought before us; yet we have not had the particular Bill now being debated even mentioned in the financial proposals brought down. What are these proposals but cheese-paring? If you are going to put the colony in a sound condition financially, what is the use of reducing the number of members of this House; what is the use of thus curtailing the privileges of the people; what is the use of forcing on the people of the colony, who are now heavily taxed, and who have to be still more heavily taxed in the future—forcing upon them the necessity of being governed not by their own members, but by men who are elected by districts which have hitherto been looked upon as foreign to themselves? How many parts of this colony are there which will be disfranchised by this Bill? I say that from one end of the colony to the other there will be nothing but dissatisfaction—one widespread feeling that the people of the colony are being crushed by taxation, and that they have no control over the moneys they have paid in taxation. I shall vote against this Bill, and I do trust that before it is passed we shall have the financial proposals of the Government fully before us; and that, if we do not see that those proposals are likely to relieve depression without its being necessary to pass such a Bill as this, we shall then choose a better Government than the honourable gentlemen on those benches, and not proceed to the extremity of spoiling the good government of the colony for the sake of keeping those honourable gentlemen in office.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Will the Hon. the Premier also state what course he proposes to take with regard to the unfinished debate on the Financial Statement?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; I shall state that also.

Mr. FISH.—I beg to move the adjournment of the House, in order to protest against the remarks which have just fallen from the Premier. The honourable gentleman said that, although he had not received any obstruction from the leader of the Opposition, he had received considerable obstruction from other members of this House. I do not think honourable members ought to allow that statement to pass unchallenged. I defy the honourable gentleman to prove that there has in the slightest degree been obstruction in the passage of his measures. The obstruction to business has emanated from

the honourable gentleman himself, and I protest most indignantly against honourable gentlemen being charged with obstruction when such has not been offered.

Sir J. VOGEL.—If the honourable gentleman looks at the number of Bills which were passed through all their stages last week he must surely be convinced that there is no honourable member on our side who has purposely delayed business. As to any members who think they have something to say which the House or the country ought to hear, the honourable gentleman's experience ought to have taught him that attacks of the kind would not stop them. That there has been any organized attempt on the part of any two members to delay the business I entirely deny.

Mr. SEDDON.—I think if the Premier were to deal fairly with the House he would admit that he made a mistake in saying that he had met with obstruction. We passed three Bills on Friday—the Governor's Salary and Allowances Bill, the Bill reducing the payment to Ministers, and the Bill relating to the payment of members. I think to have got through those three measures in one week would have been good work, but to have got them through in two nights was an achievement which has never before been witnessed in the history of New Zealand politics. One of those measures was quite sufficient for one night. I ask the Premier to remember that those Bills were allowed to pass through their final stages, when that could have been delayed by objection being raised by one honourable member. Every facility was given to the Premier to advance those Bills to another place. Sir, I say this: that I, for one, am not prepared to give up my right to discuss fairly and freely measures that come before the House, and to have it said that in discussing them that is obstruction. Will the Premier tell the House that in passing the vast number of important Bills which were passed last week honourable members were guilty of obstruction? If there has been any wrong done at all it is that measures which should have been more freely discussed have not met with that discussion which their importance demanded; and it was on account of the want of time that we refrained from discussing these Bills fully. Sometimes this practice may cause a great deal of injury. For myself, I say that I have not offered any obstruction, and that I do not intend to obstruct; but, where the importance of a measure demands a discussion, I will have freedom of speech, and will express my opinions in reference to it.

Dr. FITCHETT.—The honourable gentleman mistakes the point. The Premier did not say that he obstructed, but that the business of the House was obstructed. Every one who remembers that on the Premier's motion the House was shut up for fifteen days will agree that we had there as colossal a piece of obstruction as has ever been known in the history of New Zealand politics.

Sir G. GREY.—I understand that I shall

lose my right of speaking on the main question, having seconded this motion?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Yes; the mover and seconder of a motion to adjourn will have forfeited their right to speak on the main question when the motion for adjournment is negatived.

Mr. SEDDON.—Can the honourable member for Auckland Central speak now to the main question?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Yes. As the honourable gentleman did not speak when he seconded the motion for the adjournment of the House he can now speak to that question, which also embraces the original motion and amendment.

Sir G. GREY.—While I had not intended to speak until a later period of the debate, in order that I might advance any arguments that I might have considered of a substantial nature, and which I should have used in the House, I propose to make now a few general remarks on the subject. I simply wish to point this out: that I consider it a most unfair thing to have introduced this measure during the present session. The Premier distinctly told us that nothing was to be considered but financial questions—that the main thing was the reduction of expenditure, and that that was the one thing to be attended to; and yet he has hurried us on in the most extraordinary manner possible in all the business that was before the House. He has prevented any private members from bringing forward their measures or motions by taking all their days from them—not one, but all; and he justified his doing that by the great necessity of settling this one financial question of the reduction of expenditure, which was to occupy all our thoughts: and he has now brought forward a measure of a totally different character. This measure will not save one penny to the country if it is carried in its present form. It might quite as well have been brought forward next session or the succeeding session. The country could then consider the various proposals made for the reduction of the number of members, and this extraordinary advantage would be gained: that he would have an opportunity of bringing forward the measure of local self-government which he intends to propose to us. I ask the honourable gentleman, in all fairness, to consider this question. I fear I have little chance of producing any great impression in the way of votes, because this extraordinary measure has been adopted: The Government have sent round in the House in our very presence to ascertain how every member will vote for them; and it is believed that honourable members will not listen to any argument that may be used. I believe a more insulting thing has never been done to the House than to send round in the open and unblushing way that the Government did. Well, what is the use now of standing up and talking? We all know perfectly well from the Premier's manner that the reports brought to him are good; we

know that, had the answers been in a way that showed it would not do to push the Bill on now, his tone of voice would have been altered. I will give one reason to honourable members why they should not assent to this measure. I think they will all say this: that the number of representatives in the General Assembly should bear some proportion to the number of those under the local self-government scheme which he proposes to set up. If a wise power is given to the bodies under this scheme much legislation will not require to be carried out by this House, and the legislation to be done would be in proportion to the powers that the local bodies would possess. I ask the House, what is the rule that the Premier has always followed whenever he has intended to bring in some measure which was to rob the people of New Zealand of a considerable portion of the privileges they enjoyed? Has not this always been done?—They have been told that so soon as an established thing had been got rid of, then something new and admirable would be set up in the place of it; and those promises have been accompanied by absolute bribes—promises, not real bribes, because they have always vanished into air. The people have listened to them, and we all know we were told that if we would give up the form of local institutions that we possessed new bodies should be set up, to which should be given substantial endowments. Every honourable gentleman can recollect that. And what endowment was ever given, what substantial endowments have been afforded, to make reparation for what we have lost? Absolutely none. But I am satisfied that, if this measure is assented to before we get any form of local self-government, we shall never get any self-government. Now in regard to the Natives. I ask, what can be more admirable than what they have said to-night? They spoke with great justice and with great power, and they say the Government do this, and then pretend to make amends to them by giving them representation, and that the representation they give them is a sham. It has gone forth that the Natives sitting in this House exercise the power they ought to exercise in reference to their numbers; and, whilst that is said, every member here knows that in truth the Natives never had their fair share of representation, and never exercised in this House the power they ought to have done. The only thing is that, on some important occasion or other, they have been deluded by promises made for certain purposes, and they have given their votes in one block, that is, altogether, to save some Government from being thrown out of office. That they have done several times; they have been wrongly used; but they never have fairly exercised within the walls of this House the powers that belong to the representatives of the Native race. And they have asked, and I have often recommended them to ask it, that they should be treated exactly as the Europeans are, and possess the same voting-powers exactly in the same manner, and that both races in the representation question should be blended

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together exactly as if they were one people. That privilege I think they ought to get. Now, the question comes—

Major ATKINSON.—Would the honourable gentleman say whether he means a separate representation?

Sir G. GREY.—Not at all, nor do they ask for a separate representation. What I have contended for is that they ought to be blended absolutely with the European population, as if they were one people, which they are now quite qualified to be. Now let me come to the question of finance, and I ask why that should be delayed for the purpose of considering this totally unnecessary matter on the present occasion. I appeal to the House, and to old members, whether it has not always been the habit of the Premier to start the question of finance, and then never allow it to be fairly considered by the House. I recollect one very memorable occasion here where, to the very end of the session, we tried to get the question of finance brought forward, and could not get it done; and the only chance of doing it was on the last day previous to our being sent for by the Governor, and I was in my place in the House to speak on that subject and to expose the shortcomings of the Government, when the gentleman who occupied the chair of the Speaker, in the Speaker's absence, absolutely refused to allow any member to speak within the walls of the House. I think that was the most disgraceful breach of the rules that Parliament has ever committed, and it was committed with the connivance of the honourable gentleman on that occasion, because he, as leader of the House, sat on the opposite side and allowed a wrong ruling to be given, and Parliament to be shut out from its privilege of speaking; and then the Acting-Speaker, when I insisted on the right, got out of the chair and left it, and went and sat in the chair occupied by the Clerk of Parliaments; and the House for a time was left without a Speaker purposely that the voice of members might be closed, and no debate or commentary whatever should be allowed on the financial condition of the colony. And I say the effort made now to bring this variety of Bills forward before the great financial question is settled, before we have determined what reductions shall be made, is done with the deliberate intention of preventing our going into the estimates and rigidly and carefully considering every item of expenditure. I am as sure as that I am standing here that that object will be secured; that again Parliament will be, I may say, made fools of, because it really comes to that, and the country will be shut out of that knowledge of its finances of which it ought to be in possession. Then, I would ask this: What are we to gain by losing the power of debating the finances? What object is there in passing this measure now? Will honourable gentlemen all resign their seats when it is passed? If it were enacted that this Parliament should terminate the moment the Bill was passed; if we brought about great reduction of expenditure; if we brought about a

new system for the conduct of the public service of the colony; if we made those great and beneficial changes which we might do, if we reduced our expenditure within the narrow limits it should occupy—if we had done all that, then we might deal with this question of the reduction in number of members; we might, with propriety, pass a Bill greatly reducing the number of members, and saving a great expense to the country; then get rid of ourselves, and give the people of the country an opportunity of electing a new House under the new system of representation, to carry out the great and beneficial changes which we had introduced, whilst the saving made would instantly commence, instead of being delayed for three years. We should then show that we were really a band of patriots doing our duty. That would be something worth doing—to give the people a new basis to stand upon, to give them a rigid system of finance, and to give them a new Parliament to carry that out. That would be a proposition worthy of a statesman; but for honourable members to vote that, after they have been a short time in office, they are still to have two or two and a half years to occupy this Chamber in greater numbers than the country requires, and at a greater expense, and this for their personal benefit—for them to do that, and to say, "Having thought of ourselves, and secured ourselves in office for the time we were elected for, when we knew that the number of members was greater than was necessary, we will insist on our successors economizing," that would be very wrong indeed. Is it worthy of honourable members to do that? Is it not better, if they really think the number of members is beyond what New Zealand requires, that they should say that, after the end of this session, when they have done all they could do to benefit New Zealand, they will get out of the way, and let the people elect the proper number of members to sit here, and thus immediately save an expenditure they know to be unnecessary? Is not that their bounden duty? I appeal to all honourable members to say so. But there is no intention of doing that; not at all. The same party will be made use of to carry this measure which has been allowed to do the things which have been done this session; to do the things we saw done the other night by which large runs and vast possessions are to be given to a foreign company in fee-simple for a long period of time—that is, for ever. To say that, and that the people are to be robbed of land to an almost incredible extent, millions of acres—to carry that by the majority which the Government has here at present is a very great wrong. And, then, what is the Premier, careless of all argument, about to do? He will have got you to do that, and, then, with the same majority which has enabled him to do these things, he is to remain in office for yet two years, to enable those plans to enrich great companies to be completed. It is, to me, as if some necromancer sat here such as we have read of in Eastern tales, who had slaves—

a slave of a ring, or a slave of a casket, or a slave of—what shall I say?

An Hon. MEMBER.—A bank.

Sir G. GREY.—Yes, a slave of a bank, as some honourable member says, to help on his followers still further to rob the people of the country, as he has done within the last week or ten days. That is what the course of proceedings is to be; and, after all these things have been achieved, then let the spirits who accomplished it be dismissed. Their work will have been achieved, and then a new state of things is to be introduced; and the number of members is to be reduced, to carry on the same system for a time. I am sure all honourable members will feel with me that this is an unnecessary measure; that it is better for the country that those who have done these things within the last few days should return to their constituents when this session is over, and that a new Parliament under this Bill, if it is to be passed, reduced in number, shall be sent back by the people, who will then have these things fresh in their memory. Let the people of New Zealand do that before they have forgotten what has been done; because it is the very essence of punishment that it should follow quickly on the crime. Let this Parliament, if it chooses, reduce the number of members, and then let the people of New Zealand, in the new elections which will immediately take place, state whether they approve of the action of those who have robbed this country for ever of millions of acres of land—whether they approve that the people who, from being unable to obtain lands on fair terms, have been reduced to poverty throughout the country, should now have no hope of acquiring land hereafter; and whether they approve of great foreign companies obtaining possession of vast areas of land to be given to them, and which we did not know until within the last few days would be given to them. Let the people say whether they approve of that, or return new members who will, as far as possible, remedy the evils which have been done. I wish I had not been hurried on to speak until I had heard further arguments used, for I have not yet heard one in favour of this measure. But I still believe there are left in this House some who will yet rise to answer those arguments, and that when the division takes place there are some who will recollect what they owe to the people of the country, and who will not support a measure providing for the benefit of this Parliament and reducing the number of members who are to follow them. Let them put into the Bill an amendment, which we can yet make, that it shall take effect immediately after the close of this session. Let that justice be done to the people of New Zealand. I say let it be done: but I speak without hope. I live at present without hope to do anything. But I do believe that some others will give utterance to such vigorous sentiments and enter such protests as they ought against this measure that the Premier may yet be compelled, notwithstanding promises just now given to the House

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—promises which I believe he knew to be delusive—I say that he yet may be compelled to give an opportunity to consider the finances before we go on with this measure. I cannot conceive that promises to vote for this measure should have been extorted before the debate is concluded. I think it was a crime to demand such promises under such circumstances, and an abuse which this House ought not to sanction; and I hope honourable gentlemen will vigorously do that which they conceive to be their duty on this occasion, and, if they do, that they will prevent this measure being disposed of before we have thoroughly considered the finances of the country.

Mr. FISHER.—Sir, if I do not succeed in making anything else clear, I should like to make this clear: that if this Bill is not passed this session it will not be passed during the present Parliament. And I urge it upon those honourable gentlemen who claim to sit here as the representatives of "Liberalism" and as the representatives of all that concerns the interests of the working-classes that it is one of the disadvantages of the system of triennial Parliaments that it is impossible to carry any large measure of reform through the Legislature unless it is introduced in the first session of a three-years Parliament. For it is they who make it impossible. And for proof of the correctness of that statement I call up the evidence afforded by the experience of the last Parliament. In the session of 1886 we had presented to us the fact of one member in this House dictating to the late Premier and declaring that no other measure should pass that session if the Representation Bill was proceeded with; and the Premier, the first Minister of the Crown in this country, was forced to yield, although he was warned by the late member for Waitotara (Mr. Bryce) that, if the Bill were not passed that session, the Premier would find himself entirely at the mercy of any two or three honourable members who might choose to make themselves masters of the situation in the expiring session of a Parliament. And that was exactly what happened, for, after the House reduced the number of members to seventy-one, the Premier, under the compulsion of a single member, the member for Kumara, had to raise the number to ninety-one again to get the Bill through. Now, Sir, I wish to point out to the honourable member for New Plymouth that I think it was a little unfair to say that the Government ought not to proceed with this measure until the whole of their financial proposals were before the House. That was not at all a fair statement of the position. It is useless now to take up time referring to the tactics which have been resorted to to delay the Government business. We need not do that. It is sufficient to say that time has been consumed—I will not say wasted, if that word is objectionable—and obstacles have been placed in the way of bringing them on. But are not our financial proposals fully before the House? We have brought in and passed a Bill to reduce the Governor's salary, a Bill to reduce the salaries of Minis-



ters, and a Bill to regulate the honorarium of members. These Bills, it is true, are referred to by some honourable members as Bills of no importance, while, quite inconsistently, others, for example the honourable member for Christchurch North and the honourable member for Kumara, refer to them as Bills of enormous importance. And they are Bills of enormous importance. They are part of a large and comprehensive scheme which will mark out this Parliament as a Parliament the equal of which has not existed in this colony for very many years. Then, Sir, did not the Financial Statement exhaustively outline the whole of the financial policy of the Government? And have we not, I am happy to say, passed the Land Bill?

AN HON. MEMBER.—No.

MR. FISHER.—It has passed its second reading. We have also passed through its second reading a Bill of enormous importance, the Railway Board Bill, which will remove those defects in the railway system which have formed the subject of adverse public comment for many years past. Sir, I fail to see on what ground the objection of the honourable member for New Plymouth is based. But, having combated these objections, I desire to pay a passing tribute to the extreme fairness with which the honourable member for Christchurch North treated the Bill. The honourable gentleman said that, while he recognised that the constituencies had had the question prominently before them during the late elections, he still feared that it would lead to a great deal of dissatisfaction when carried into practical effect. Well, that, of course, is a matter of opinion. My opinion is that, instead of creating dissatisfaction, it will meet with almost universal approval. The honourable gentleman made a valuable suggestion, to the effect that care should be taken, in providing for a dissolution, that proper means were provided for readjusting the electorates. That is a suggestion that may be given effect to in the course of the passage of the Bill through the House. I come now to the objections urged by the Native members. They urge that, as they are under-represented in proportion to population, it is unfair that they should have one of their members taken away. But it must have escaped their notice that, while only one of their number is taken from them, twenty-four members are taken from us. The honourable member for the Eastern Maori District objects to any interference with the special representation, and says that, rather than have it interfered with, he would prefer to see it taken away altogether. That is a fair matter of argument, and one which, I assume, will be fairly discussed when the honourable gentleman's motion upon the subject comes before the House. It is not for me to say why that motion has not come up for discussion. The question is one of very large importance, and when it does come before us it will doubtless receive the fullest and fairest consideration at the hands of the House. I must now revert to some of the statements of the honourable member for Kumara,

which were composed solely of denunciations and abuse similar to those very frequently indulged in by another prominent member of the Opposition. Is it argument to tell us that this Bill is introduced by the present Ministry because they represent a dominant party? Does it in any way affect the question to say that the Ministry is supported by wealthy land rings and land combinations of all descriptions? Sir, I should be very sorry to lose my temper because a member of this House chooses to make such absurd and ridiculous statements; but one may ask whether it can with truth be alleged against any member of this Government that he is the representative of wealth, or that he is the representative of a land ring. Which member of this Ministry represents either wealth or land? There is not a shadow of foundation for these wild denunciations. They are totally untrue.

MR. SEDDON.—There is such a thing as a dummy.

MR. FISHER.—Well, if we are going to discuss principles, let us discuss principles; but I am not going to descend to bandying charges of such a character across the floor of this House with the honourable gentleman. Now, in what way will this Bill deprive the country districts of a fair share of representation, as the honourable gentleman asserts? I have been long enough in this country, long enough have I been a spectator of the proceedings of this House, fully to understand whether the fact of there being a smaller number of members would injuriously affect the country districts. I remember the time when the country districts had fewer members than now, and when, I take leave to think, they were far more ably represented. They were represented by the best intellects of the country—some of those grand intellects of which this colony could boast a quarter of a century ago. I say the comparison is to the advantage of the times gone by, though I should be sorry to have it supposed that I am in any way reflecting upon the honourable member for Kumara. Next, I should like to ask the honourable gentleman how this Bill is likely to foster local jealousies, or to lead to a want of community of interest. Surely the larger the district the less localism; and I should assume that it would be the duty of honourable members, whether they come from cities or from country districts, to study the community of interest, and advance the interests of the constituencies collectively and as a whole. Once again we are treated to a dissertation on democracy. The honourable gentleman tells us that he opposes the Bill in the interests of democracy;—and once again “the rights of the people are to be invaded” by the reduction of the number of members. What puerile nonsense! We are informed also that the comparison as to the proportion of representation in France, England, and other nations of the Old World has no bearing upon the question. Very well, we will come nearer home. We will give the honourable gentleman a fair and legitimate

answer; and the fair and legitimate answer is this: Take his own model colony, the Colony of Victoria—the democratic, the great Protectionist colony, which makes such rapid strides because of its Protection and its democracy. That colony has a population of 1,038,052, and it has only 86 representatives, which is one member for every 12,012 of population. New South Wales has a population of 1,080,762, and 122 members, which is one member for every 8,448 of population. New Zealand, with a population of only 578,482, has 95 representatives, which is one representative for every 6,089 of population. Now, if it be said that Victoria prospers because of her protective policy, and her radicalism, and her democracy, and her parliamentary representation, which prevents “the rights of the people being invaded,” surely we, who have twice Victoria’s representation, should prosper; for, while she has only one member for every 12,000 people, we have one member for every 6,000 people. If that does not show that our representation is altogether disproportionate to our population, then figures and comparisons go for nothing. Sir, I beg of the honourable gentleman to remember that strong language is not argument, and that when he comes to deal with a large question such as this he should have something like solid fact to go upon. Now, this Government and this House, the honourable gentleman says, do not represent the people, the democracy, to the extent to which it ought to be represented. Well, if this House does not represent the people, and does not represent democracy, did the last House represent them?

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes.

Mr. FISHER.—Then the last House did what this House is asked to do now. It adopted the proposal to reduce the number of members to 71. And how was that decision reversed? By the dogged influence of one member, who controlled every act of the late Premier in this House. And, Sir, if it be true that this House does not represent the people and the democracy of the country, it was not for want of abundant representation of the principles which actuate that party, for we had the late Premier, who poses as *par excellence* the great leader of the great “Liberal” party, stumping the country from end to end, together with his colleague the late Minister of Lands, another great apostle of democracy. So that, if this House does not represent the radical and democratic party, it does not say much for the influence, for the democratic power, or for the power of oratory of those two very eminent persons. But there are members on this side of the House and on these benches, I venture to say, who as truly and faithfully represent the feelings of the people of this country, aye, and of its democratic feeling too, as any honourable member who sits on the Opposition benches; and to tell me that those honourable gentlemen have a monopoly of the right to represent the feelings of the people of New Zealand is to tell me something that shall always receive a ready and a sharp answer. Sir, I resent this assumption

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on the part of those honourable gentlemen of the exclusive right to speak in the name of the working-classes of this country. Another strong point made by the honourable member for Kumara was that every pound saved by this proposal would cost the colony a thousand pounds. Now, let us discuss that point for a moment. According to the dictum of the honourable member for the Peninsula, a member of Parliament costs the country £500 a year. Therefore to reduce the number of members by twenty would save the colony £10,000 a year.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That does not follow.

Mr. FISHER.—That may or may not be a fair way of putting it; but I prefer to give it in that form, as it is the estimate of a member of the Opposition, and therefore is more likely to be acceptable to that party. The saving by the reduction of members, as I have said, would represent £10,000. Then, we have to take into account the expensive annual demands made upon Parliament by each of those twenty members for works for their districts, and my impression is that by the absence of these demands the country will save at least another £10,000.

An Hon. MEMBER.—There are twenty-five members.

Mr. FISHER.—Yes; I was a little in error in naming twenty. We are to reduce, of course, by twenty-five. But I will put the saving, roundly, at £20,000; and, if that, in the straitened circumstances of the colony, is not a saving worth aiming at, I should like to know what is. Next, the honourable gentleman made a powerful and pathetic appeal to the Maori members, and made tender reference to the wrongs they would suffer if this proposal were given effect to. Now, does the honourable gentleman for one moment suppose that the Maori representatives in this House are so wanting in intellectual power as not to fully comprehend the nature of this proposal? And does he think they are at all likely to go to him for light and leading? I undertake to say that every one of those Maori representatives understands the effect of every measure affecting themselves quite as well as does the honourable member for Kumara. And I take it to be rather a reflection upon the intelligence of the House that we should be compelled to sit and listen to the honourable gentleman’s lectures to the Native members upon the effect of this proposal. If the honourable member has so much at heart the welfare of the Native race as he would have us believe, he ought to bring in a Bill to do justice to the Native race by enabling them to resume all the goldfields lands, which lands formerly belonged to the Maori race, and all their fishing and riparian rights for all the streams on the West Coast have been polluted and destroyed by the miners. Then we shall see what the real feelings of the honourable member for Kumara are in regard to the Maori race.

Mr. SEDDON.—I have always stuck up for them, and will do so again.

Mr. FISHER.—The honourable member for

Kumara made the further rash statement that our bonds had receded to 92. Sir, our bonds have never yet receded to 92, and are never likely to do so. There may have been some little ambiguity in the telegrams which have passed between the colonies and London relating to the financial policy of the Government which has led to a fall to 97; but so soon as the full effect of the Government proposals is understood in London the bonds will, without doubt, go up very considerably. I hold in my hand a copy of *Westgarth's Circular*, which has come to hand by to-day's English mail—and I think it will be admitted that the conductors of that *Circular* understand as much about these matters as the honourable member for Kumara; and here is what the *Circular* of the 14th October says: "The news of the recent change of Government in New Zealand, and of the programme of economies that has resulted, have been highly satisfactory to this market"—that is, the London market. The honourable gentleman has been telling us a great deal about the state of the market in Kumara. Now, Sir, when the full text of the Financial Statement reaches London, and it becomes understood that we are, for the first time during the past ten years, going to make an honest and a vigorous effort to put the finances of the colony on a sound footing, we shall see the price our stock will reach. Reverting again to the remarks of the honourable member for New Plymouth, I wish to say that the Government have placed their proposals before the House with every expedition. It is not their fault if numerous delays have taken place. For those delays we are not at all responsible. We have worked night and day. Our measures have been before the House for a considerable time now, and they have been acknowledged by the leaders of the Opposition to be measures of immense importance. And when so described they were truthfully described; for I venture to say that when full effect is given to them the colony will reap such advantage as can hardly at present be conceived.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I desire to say that what I said in the connection mentioned by the honourable gentleman was, that no expected saving from reducing the number of members forms any part of the financial proposals referred to in the Financial Statement.

Mr. FISHER.—I do not desire to put the statement any stronger than to say that the criticism of the honourable gentleman was hardly fair. I do not suppose the honourable gentleman intended to do the Government any injustice. I think, speaking generally, he will be prepared to admit that the Government has done all that any set of men could be expected to do. Sir, I thought it only fair to put the position of the Government fairly before the House and the country. I do not object to fair, honest, straightforward criticism; but I do object to those statements which are only remarkable for strength of expression, and are entirely destitute of any form of argument.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Whatever may

be the effect of the speech which the honourable gentleman has just delivered, I do not think it is calculated to much advance the progress of this Bill. The honourable member has not advanced a single argument in favour of the Bill. He has dealt with the somewhat loose and irrelevant remarks of some of those who have spoken; but he has said nothing calculated to promote the passage of the Bill through the House. If there was any argument in what he said, it was this: that in this Parliament of New Zealand a measure, to be passed at all, ought to be passed three years ahead of its time. I understood him to say that no measure having for its object a constitutional change could be passed at all unless it was passed three years ahead. Well, if that is the case, why should we limit the period to three years? Why not pass Bills six or nine years ahead? The one is quite as allowable as the other. He forgot, as a democrat, that, whether in the first or third year of a Parliament, if the people of this country are earnest in their desire for the passage of a Bill it will pass. That may be depended on; and the nearer to the end of the term, in accordance with the dictates of human nature, the more likely is it to pass. We are told that this Bill is part of the financial scheme of the Government. Let me here say that I do not attach any blame to the Government for delaying financial business. I do not agree with the proposed amendment, because it does not solve the difficulty, but merely endeavours to postpone the consideration of this Bill; whereas I am of those who think this Bill ought to be considered and negatived. But the honourable member told us that this is part of the great financial scheme of the Government. Now, how can it possibly be that? Here we are now, desperately in want of money. Does this Bill propose to give us any? Not a single farthing, because it is not to take effect for three years. We want the money now, and cannot get it. We may not want it, as I hope and believe, in three years. We want it now, but it is not forthcoming; and hence this Bill cannot be called a part of their financial scheme, and is not a financial measure at all. Then, again, we were told that when this Bill was passed it would effect a saving equal to the demands of some twenty members. Now, if that is a valid argument at all, it is an argument that, by mere extension, can be used against the presence of any honourable member. If we can save the demands of twenty members, why not of twenty-five or thirty or forty, as the case may be? It is absurd. There is really no arbitrary number: the question is purely one of convenience in the representation of a people. We cannot specify a particular number and say, "This is the perfection of parliamentary representation." If there is weight in such an argument, it is our duty to carry the argument further and cut down the number still more. I have no patience with that class of argument at all. It was precisely the same that was used in favour of Railway Boards—that because Governments are weak therefore we should

withdraw the railways from their control. It is a tacit admission on the part of the Government, who in effect say, "In God's name take this department away from us, or we shall be corrupt under it." Instead of reducing the number so as to get rid of the demands of honourable members, it would be much more natural and proper if we insisted on Governments resisting such demands, as they ought to do, and as they would do if we took that course with them. My principal object in rising was to say that I opposed this Bill before, as I oppose it now; and I do think that we have a right seriously to object to the manner in which the Premier has introduced it. I say that with all respect for the honourable gentleman. The position the honourable gentleman took up was this—I never heard the like of it before: He said, "Here is a Bill of great importance. I have no particular arguments to adduce, myself, in favour of it"—(Oh!)—"but I will leave it for all those who are opposed to the measure to say what they have got to say, and I will reply to them." That is, practically, what the honourable member said.

Major ATKINSON.—No; nothing like it.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—He may not have put it as broadly as that; but that represents in effect what he said. He said this Bill was passed in the last Parliament,—that there were a great many arguments in favour of it, but he was not going to repeat them. The Bill of last session was different. It aimed at the same thing, but was to take effect without delay. I opposed it. The object then was to pass it and to go to the country at once on the reduction, and consequently get whatever saving there was in it. It is proposed that this Bill shall take effect in three years; and we shall not have the saving, if there is any attached to it, at the very moment we most require it. Therefore it is a totally different thing; and when he introduced the Bill he should have given all the reasons which make it desirable that we should pass such a measure now. Instead of that, he left other honourable members to object, saying that he would deal with their objections in reply. All he did was to give a number of bald statistics, which I listened to with amazement, about the number of persons represented by a single member in the different countries of the world. He told us, for instance, that in the United Kingdom the number was 56,000; in France, 67,000; in the United States, 174,000; down to Canada, 20,000. I listened in amazement to that, because it was curious that he did not perceive that these statistics tell against and not in favour of this Bill. What lesson do we learn from these statistics? Simply that the divergence in the various countries is such as to show that there is no absolute rule—that each nation takes the number that best suits its circumstances. We in New Zealand do precisely the same thing. We have found out what number best suits us and our circumstances, and have adhered to it. And not only that, but if any honourable member will take the trouble to look up the debates of 1881, when

the number was increased to ninety-one, he will see that the principle upon which the Government went then was that the country should be divided into convenient districts—that is, that convenient geographical distribution was to be considered, and then the population basis adhered to as nearly as possible. The districts were very convenient. Now, I do not believe that honourable members quite recognise the full extent to which the Bill goes. What it proposes is, that we should double back on our past history for twenty-two years; and no reason has been adduced why we should do so except a vague notion that at some future time we may save some money by the process. Does the House know that the number of members was raised to seventy in 1865?—and that, let it be understood, was not at a time of great inflation, or even of prosperity. It was before the public-works policy was initiated—a time of great distress, when Parliament would be very careful not to unnecessarily add to expense. In 1865, in spite of all these circumstances, it was thought wise to increase the number to seventy; and it has been increased at different periods since then. In 1871 it was increased to seventy-four; in 1875, to eighty-four; in 1881, to ninety-one, at which number it has since remained. And now it is proposed to travel back upon our history to the year 1865; and no substantial reason that I know of is advanced in favour of it, except that we shall save on the now reduced hono- rarium some £3,000 in three years' time. We shall commence to save it when we may not require it; and we are led, indeed, to expect by the measures of the Government that we shall not require it. The reason for such a change is altogether too slender, and we have a right to expect something better; otherwise it will be our duty to negative the Bill. The principle can be stated, I think, in a single sentence. If it is a valuable Bill and a financial measure, it is worthy of being passed, and its operation should be commenced now at the cost of a general election. If it is not a valuable measure, I should like to know for what reason we should pass it three years before it can have effect: why should we not consider it fairly and on its merits when the time approaches? There is just one other argument which has to be considered by honourable members before they pass this Bill. It is a very good and sound principle in politics that nothing should ever be done by a violent wrench and sudden change which can be accomplished by the quiet healing process of time. That is the case now. If we leave things alone, and take care not to increase the present number of members, the population will be increasing all the time; and all the evils of over-representation—if such there be—will disappear without disturbance and without taking from the people a representation they do not perhaps sufficiently appreciate, but the loss or curtailment of which they will certainly feel.

Mr. FERGUS.—The honourable member for Mount Ida has said that my colleague the Minister of Education advanced not a single

*Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie*

argument why this Bill should be passed. He advanced one which, to my mind, was unanswerable, which was, that the last Parliament, of which we both had the honour to be members, passed the measure, and then, by a piece of political jugglery, the country was robbed of its benefits. It is a well-known fact that in the division on the amendment of the honourable member for Caversham last session a mistake was committed by the honourable member for Bruce. He explained to his constituents on a public platform that he had voted under a misapprehension, which rendered the number of votes equal, and the Chairman of Committees gave his casting-vote against reduction. That was the only thing that threw out the amendment the second time. The reduction to seventy had been carried; but, as I have said, by a piece of political jugglery the country was robbed of the benefits of the reduction. Another argument that might probably be advanced was, that the country has most unmistakably spoken in favour of the reduction. That was admitted by the honourable member for Christchurch North, and by the honourable member for Kumara, and by almost every honourable gentleman who has spoken on this subject to-day. They admitted that there is a majority of honourable members here pledged to vote in favour of the reduction of members; and, if the House recognises the opinion of the people and of the people's representatives that the number of members should be reduced, I ask, what harm can there be in passing the measure now? All the talk that its opponents can indulge in, or all the tactics they may resort to to postpone the question, will result in nothing more than preventing the expression of opinion which this House is prepared to give just now—it could only delay that expression of opinion until another session. It seems to me that the honourable member for Mount Ida was not fair in saying that my honourable colleague advanced no reasons why the Bill should not be passed at the present time. The honourable member says that the Bill might just as well be postponed for three years. But what possible advantage could there be in delaying it? The honourable gentleman admits that there is a majority in the House and the country in favour of the measure. Then, if that is so, by all that is fair, let us pass it now and have done with it. We do not know what questions may demand the attention of the House next session. In fact, we do not know what complications may arise next session. We cannot tell what will be the result of the measures which the Government propose to introduce. We shall have great questions to deal with, which will take up the whole of the time that can be spared next year; and why are we, then, not to dispose of a measure which we can easily deal with now? The Minister of Education was perfectly right in saying that no really good measures are passed except in the first session of a Parliament. And, to my mind, any great measure of reform ought not only to

be introduced in the first session of a Parliament, but on the very first day of the session. The people want this reduction, and if we allow the question to be burked this session there will be the very same tactics against it next session, when other questions will absorb our attention thoroughly; and then, in the third session, we shall not be able to pass it at all, because of the multiplicity of work which Parliament will have in hand. The honourable member for Mount Ida also asked, in reference to the argument of my honourable colleague that the operation of the Bill will save the colony £10,000 per annum—it will really be £12,500—

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Abolish Parliament altogether!

Mr. FERGUS.—The honourable gentleman assumes, what he is perfectly unwarranted in so doing, that we have now the charmed number—that ninety-five is the exact number required for the good government of the colony. That I utterly deny; and the people of the colony deny it, as is shown by two-thirds of the members of this House, when before the electors recently, pledging themselves to vote for the reduction of the number of members. The honourable member for Dunedin West has admitted that the country has pronounced for this measure. The honourable member voted against reduction last session; and just afterwards I had the pleasure of being at a public dinner with him in Dunedin, when the whole of those present gave him to understand that he had acted wrongly and against the opinion of the country. The honourable gentleman was convinced of his mistake, and he now admits that the mind of the country is made up for this reduction, and is prepared to support it.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—He has changed his mind.

Mr. FERGUS.—No doubt the honourable gentleman will change his mind many times in the course of his life. The honourable member for Mount Ida said the same class of arguments were used for this Bill as for the Railway Boards. Yes; and the very same class of arguments apply. The honourable gentleman said the action of the Government in proposing the Railway Board was an admission by them that they could not manage the railways satisfactorily. No Government in any of the constitutionally-governed colonies have been able to manage their railways satisfactorily to the people; and that is why, throughout the Australian Colonies and New Zealand at the present time, there is such a widespread feeling in favour of taking the management of the railways entirely out of the hands of the Government and placing it in the hands of Commissioners—men of some knowledge of the working of railways. And the state of things which this Bill is intended to alter is partly the cause why the management of the railways by the Government has not been, and cannot be, successful. There are claims from every petty out-of-the-way corner of a district on account of railways and railway service, and honourable members are compelled to urge on

the Government the demands of portions of their districts for what they know those localities ought not to get in the way of expenditure of public money, or, if they do not do so, they know that they will get block-votes against them at the next election. That is the state of things from the North Cape to Stewart Island.

Mr. WARD.—Not Stewart Island.

Mr. FERGUS.—Yes; I had an address from there to-day for the expenditure of public money. Every member must struggle for the expenditure of public money for some out-of-the-way corner of his district, or he knows he will get no support there; and I say that by increasing the size of the constituencies you will inevitably get a more healthy feeling in that respect, and you will get better men to represent the people, and honourable members who then represent constituencies will be able to treat with scorn unjust attempts to make them get spoil from the public chest for the benefit of every little locality that chooses to be clamorous and persistent. The honourable member for Mount Ida said the Premier, in introducing the Bill, had adduced no argument in its favour. The Premier knew quite well, and it has been admitted by other honourable gentlemen, that nine-tenths of the Press of the colony are in favour of the reduction of the number of members. The merits of the question were threshed out last session; the bulk of the members of this House are pledged to it; and what the Premier wanted to find out was if any honourable gentleman had any fresh argument to bring against the proposal. It was useless to bring forward again the same arguments as were urged many times for the Bill a few months ago, or to refute those which were then refuted over and over again. I was very much amused when the honourable member for Mount Ida said the Bill of last session provided that the geographical features of the country should be taken into account; and that this Bill—

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—The Bill of 1881.

Mr. FERGUS.—Yes, and that of last session too. The honourable member said the Bill of last session provided that geographical features should be taken into account. I entirely disagree with the honourable gentleman. The measure we passed last session for the redistribution of seats did not at all insure consideration of the geographical features of the country. Take, for instance, the part of the country he and I represent. Going by geographical features, the electorate of the honourable gentleman, that of the Dunstan, and my own should be two electorates, and the honourable gentleman's district should not be thrown so far towards the sea-coast, on the one hand, and mine should not be thrown so far into Southland, on the other. The honourable gentleman said we are going back in the action we now propose. I am free to admit it is going back, and a very healthy going-back it is. The honourable gentleman said that in 1865 the number of members was raised to seventy. But what have we been doing during the

*Mr. Fergus*

last two or three days? Have we not been going back? The Governor's salary has been put back to what it was ten or twelve years ago; it is the same with the salary of Ministers and the honorarium of honourable members. If we find we can do it, and the people desire it, and it is in the interest of the colony, we have a perfect right to go back now. We are only following out the legitimate course that was indicated in the Financial Statement. I have searched in vain through the "heap of chaff" in what the honourable gentleman said for one grain of wheat, but have not been able to find one; and now I will leave the honourable gentleman, and refer to remarks made by other speakers. I was very much surprised at the manner in which the honourable member for Auckland Central condemned the Bill. I do not wish to say a word in disparagement of that honourable gentleman, whom I hold in very high esteem; but I must say his action on this question is very inconsistent. Last session there was no stronger supporter of reduction of the number of members than he: he then voted, on both occasions, for reduction. I will say no more in regard to the honourable gentleman than that his conduct seems to me exceedingly inconsistent. I will say just one word in reference to the proposal to reduce the number of Maori members from four to three. It has been pointed out by several honourable members that we are not treating the Natives in any unfair fashion whatever, seeing that, while we propose to reduce the Maori representation by 25 per cent. by taking one out of four, we reduce the European representation by a larger percentage in taking away twenty-four from ninety-one. We are practically strengthening their power and their position at the present time. We do not wish to take a single representative from the North Island, but we do wish to do away with what has been a great farce; and it is a perfect farce that a member should be returned by a constituency in which, as was the case during last election, there were only some 418 votes polled in the whole of the district, extending from Pictou to Riverton, especially when it is considered that the men who cast those votes are just as fit as any of us to take their position as electors in the ordinary elections for this House. I say it is a mere farce that one honourable gentleman should represent such an exceedingly small section of the people as the honourable member for the Southern Maori District does. Then, we are told that if we reduce the number of members of this House we shall increase the power of property; and my honourable friend the member for Dunedin East was insulted by having it said of him that he was put in by the power of "land-rings" and absentees; and that sort of nonsense. I should like it to go forth to the electors of Dunedin East that they are the nominees of "land-rings" and absentees. Never was greater "bosh," if I may use the expression, talked in this House than that. And then, as my honourable friend the Minister of Education has said, the democrats and Liberals, so

called, are always dragging democracy and Liberalism across the floor of this House. I deny that they have any right to do so. The working-men of this country have given these honourable gentlemen no such right as they claim. The working-men of this country are not, and are not likely to be, led away by such specious arguments as those which have been used against this measure to-day. Working-men—who know their own interests and their own power—know very well that they will possess far greater power if this measure is passed. That they will insist upon its being passed I am certain; and I venture to say that when honourable gentlemen, who talk so loudly about the interests of the working-men, go back to their constituents after this session, they will, if it is seen that they have had anything to do with interfering with the passage of the measure, receive a warm reception at the hands of their constituents. We are told that a great injustice will be done; that it will be a crying shame if we cut down the number of the members of this House. Well, I will take the electorate that I represent at the present time, and also the district represented by the honourable member for Hokonui. The population we had in those districts at the election preceding this last one was just equivalent to what we shall have, provided that this Bill be passed; yet there was no outcry owing to the smallness of the representation then. Then, the honourable member for Sydenham also represented a constituency which did not want to be broken up. If that constituency had been left as it was I venture to say that the people would have been just as well satisfied, and that the district would have been just as well represented, as it is now. And so it would be all over the country. This is not a measure against the interests of the working-men at all. If it is against any interest it is as much against the interest of property as it can be. But it is in the interests of the working-man and of every class in the community, it is in the best interests of the whole community, that this measure is demanded. It is in the interests of economy as regards the expenditure, it is in the interests of securing less of what is known as "log-rolling," it is in the interests of securing purer political air than we have now, or have had for some time past, that this measure is promoted, and I am sure that the bulk of the members of this House are in favour of it.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—I cannot hope to rise to the height of the impassioned eloquence of the honourable gentleman who has sat down, but at least I can congratulate the Premier that at last we have seen the spectacle of two of his colleagues standing up and instructing the House on a Government Bill. After the very curt introduction of this measure at the hands of the Premier, I thought it was to be thrown down as one of those Bills which we were to be permitted to do what we liked with, and to get what we could out of it; but it would seem that the Premier held his hand or held his tongue to enable two of his colleagues to dis-

tinguish themselves. Whether he regrets the course he took or not is a matter on which he is better informed than I am, but I am afraid that the honourable gentleman who has just sat down has not given us very many reasons why this Bill should be passed. He has told us that the larger the number of members of the House the larger the demands for local works. I do not agree with him in that opinion, although I will admit that probably he knows more about the matter than I do; because I can well remember that during the time that what was known as the "Continuous Ministry" sat in power the honourable gentleman made a good deal of capital out of the fact that he got more out of them for his own district in the way of local works than any other member in the House. I had the honour of paying a visit to the honourable gentleman's constituency in 1888, I think, and I can remember very well that the Minister of Lands at that date, Mr. Rolleston, was then also on a visit to that district. I think he was "personally conducted" by the honourable member for Wakatipu, and, if I am not mistaken, they came into Queenstown in the midst of a procession headed by a couple of brass bands. They were received in triumph, and the honourable gentleman was at the pinnacle of fame on account of his having so skillfully worked the Minister of Lands. There was a scene of revelry by night. They had a banquet in the evening, and I recollect being awakened about two o'clock in the morning by the tumultuous shouts of the honourable gentleman and his delighted friends. I quite agree, therefore, that the honourable gentleman probably knows what he is talking about when he informs us of the log-rolling which goes on in this House; but I do not agree with him that Ministers will be less liable to pressure if the constituencies were made fewer in number, because it is perfectly well known that the fewer members there are in the House the greater is the power of the "railers." I remember in the past, when there were not so many members in the House as there are now, the enormous power that was exercised by small and unscrupulous sections of the House, and I believe that, if the number of members is reduced to seventy, you will find that two or three members sitting on a rail will be able to hold the balance of power between parties, and that when men find themselves in that position they will be more aggressive in their demands for public works. The Minister of Education made a vigorous speech indeed, and I may say that it contained less personal denunciation than usual, and more endeavour to deal with argument; but I shall try to point out what I think were errors in his argument. He told us that you cannot expect to pass any measure in this House unless you do it in the first session. If there is anything in this argument at all, then we had better at once adjourn this House at the conclusion of this session until next Parliament, and not come here for the next two sessions at all; because really, I think that if we are to come here and not to carry important

measures we might as well stay away. But I think the honourable gentleman's memory was at fault; because, if he will think again, he will remember that last session there was passed in this House some very important legislation—for instance, the Redistribution of Seats Bill; while in the session previously there was a very important Railway Bill, and also a Native Land Bill of great importance. The Minister of Defence told us that this measure was in the interests of democracy. Of course, "democracy" is a term which is made use of on both sides of the House. There is no doubt about it—there is keen competition for it. But I do not admit that we on this side of the House drag the coat-tail of Democracy across the floor of this House. We do not attempt to take it over there. That has been done by the democrats who have taken their seats among the capitalists and Conservatives, who form the bulk of the Ministerial party. The Minister of Education claims to be a democrat, and yet comes down here and champions the most reactionary policy that the oldest members of this House have ever witnessed—a series of reactionary measures calculated to undo all that the Liberals have achieved after the toils and struggles of years. If he is a democrat, it is very singular that his ideas should be so completely on all fours with those of the most Tory members of this House. Measure after measure which he advocates has been cordially supported by such Tories as the honourable member for Napier, the honourable member for Waipawa, and the honourable member for Gladstone. The lion of democracy has lain down with the capitalists' lambs. Certainly that is an impressive spectacle; but I do not think that people of the colony will consider that it is at all a logical position. The Minister of Education, in his new-born zeal for Conservatism, thinks it necessary to draw comparisons, and says that the members who represented the country districts twenty-five years ago were a great deal better representatives than those we see here to-day. That was the time when this House was filled with gentlemen who represented a great many sheep and very few men; and if this House had continued to be dominated by such men honourable members would still represent a great many sheep but very few men. The change which has come over New Zealand has been brought about, not by members of the class whom the honourable gentleman regrets, but by democratic members, who have made the people's will felt in the people's House. I cannot conceive how a gentleman of the ability of the Minister of Education can intentionally and deliberately attempt to induce this House to believe that Victoria is at all a parallel case with ours as regards sufficiency of representation. It is perfectly well known that Victoria is one of the most centralised colonies of the Australasian group, and the one most easily governed from a centre. It is a country to any part of which, starting from Melbourne, you may get in a few hours. Whereas New Zealand is a country cut up by Nature in

a way that legislation cannot undo. This Bill flies in the face of geography. It is of no possible use attempting to fly in the face of Nature. You cannot level the Southern Alps by legislation; you cannot blot out Cook Strait; you cannot dry up impassable rivers. If you could do all that by law, you might give certain districts which are now utterly separated from each other such a community of interest that they might be well represented together by one member. But, while New Zealand is cut up as now it is, it is perfectly impossible that it should be properly represented if its members are reduced to the extent that this Bill proposes. Now, I am in a peculiar position. I am willing that there should be a reasonable reduction in the extent of the present representation. I never could quite understand why the number of eighty-four members—which did perfectly well until 1870—was then raised to ninety-five. It seems to me that if we had kept the number as it then stood we should have none of the present trouble about the number of members in this House; but, having increased the number unnecessarily at the bidding of the honourable member for Egmont and the honourable member for Selwyn—for it was they who proposed and carried that change—I do not see why we should rush now, at their bidding, from one extreme to the other, and go back by twenty-five members. I do not see the necessity for doing that; but, at the same time, as I pledged myself to a reasonable reduction of the number of members, I shall not oppose the second reading of this Bill; but I think, if honourable members on this side of the House and on the other side could see the real damage this Bill will certainly do to the Liberal cause in New Zealand, they would not abandon the fight; and I do hope that, if this reading is carried, these honourable gentlemen will, in Committee, insist that this reactionary measure shall not go beyond what is reasonable.

Dr. HODGKINSON.—As I intend to vote for the second reading of this Bill, I wish to justify the vote I am about to give. I shall give my vote in the full hope and expectation that during the next session of Parliament the Ministry will bring down some scheme for the decentralisation of this Parliament, and a measure for the reform of our local government. I submit that those Bills ought to have been the accompaniment of this Bill, and I consider it a very great omission on the part of the Ministry not to have brought such Bills forward even this session, or, if it were not possible in such a short session as this, at least to have given the House some assurance that it was their intention to bring them forward next session. I do not wish to argue the merits of the Bill; but I wish to point out that much of what the Premier has said in support of it is quite out of the question. He argued that in the United States there was only one representative in Congress to every hundred or hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants; but he forgot to tell us that there are thirty-eight States which deal with all matters except foreign policy and a

*Mr. W. P. Reeves*



few other questions. It is the same with Canada. There are a number of provinces in that Dominion which do a great part of the work: so that what the Premier told us was quite irrelevant. I will not take up the time of the House in arguing this Bill; but I must express my opinion that it is a very grave reflection on the Ministry, and an evidence of great want of statesmanship, that they have altogether ignored this question of decentralisation and reform of local government; and I hope that other honourable members will impress that upon them also. For my part, I do not hesitate to say that, if I should come back to this House, and the Ministry do not bring forward some measure in that direction, I shall not feel it my duty to assist in keeping them on those benches any longer.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I intend to say a few words on this Bill, although the honourable member for St. Albans has pretty well touched on all the points I intended to refer to. I am astonished at the innocence of some honourable members, especially the honourable member for Wallace, in imagining for one moment that local self-government is going to be anything else than this: the right of the ratepayers throughout the colony to tax themselves, while the central and governmental expenditure of the country is increased. That is the view I take of the matter; and that is borne out by facts. We have had for many years past numbers of duties shunted upon local bodies under this cry: "Give the local bodies self-government." But the local bodies have to raise the means of carrying on self-government. I consider that would be justifiable, providing the general governmental expenditure was reduced thereby; but it is not so. The general expenditure is increasing, notwithstanding that we burden the local bodies with this additional taxation. That is a matter I want to see dealt with. I want to see this governmental expenditure reduced. I know the local bodies will always have the power of taxing themselves; but I say, if they have that power, and choose to exercise it, the general expenditure of this colony must be reduced enormously. It is something monstrous to see, year after year, the general expenditure of the country increasing, and the local bodies burdened with all kinds of taxation. I hope the Premier will withdraw the vote which it is proposed to take for naval defence, and not punish us in that direction. I shall certainly vote against it, and I hope every member of this House will vote against it. We are not in a position to maintain armies and large land-forces. It is simply a waste of public money, in my opinion. The real strength of this country, so far as defence is concerned, is in the Volunteers. We heard it argued a great deal during the late "scare," which was the cause of this large expenditure, that it was possible a cruiser might drop in here at any time before a declaration of war and surprise us. What is to prevent a cruiser doing the same thing now? Unless a public notification were given of a declaration of war, there would be nothing to prevent a

cruiser from coming in here and doing what it liked. I voted last session in favour of a reduction of the number of members to seventy-one; but, after the action of the Commissioners in the adjustment of boundaries, I am not inclined to go quite so far. The way they subdivided and cut up the districts has placed the community at a great disadvantage. I am prepared to vote for something like eighty members; but I am not pledged in any way to vote for seventy-one. I stated this to my constituency. I voted last session in favour of seventy-one members on these grounds—and I do not think I have seen much reason to alter my opinion in that respect—namely, that there are not more than seventy-one members who take any interest in the business of the country. That is the ground which I took last session; but, owing to the action of the Commissioners in their readjustment of the electorates, and seeing that the provincial district from which I come suffered enormously by that action, I am not prepared to place such a power as this in their hands. If it had been seventy-five outside the Native members, I should not have had any objection to the proposal. I trust that the Premier is not going to pledge us to this specified number, but will accept the number seventy-five or seventy-six, as the case may be. I do not intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill; but I hope the matter will be dealt with in Committee in a fair and impartial spirit.

Mr. MARCHANT.—I intend to vote against the second reading of this Bill. The matter is one of very great importance to the district in which I live, because, so far as I can judge, it means a loss of one member to the Taranaki Provincial District. Undoubtedly, the electors in my part of the world did not consider this question during the late election, and I am not prepared to take upon myself the responsibility of voting for the second reading of a measure which will so seriously curtail their representation. At two or three places where I addressed the electors I was asked whether I would support a reduction in the number of members, and I said "No." I gave as my reason that I was undoubtedly in favour of reasonable retrenchment, and that a reduction of the honorarium would meet my view in that direction, but that to curtail the number of members from ninety-five to seventy would, I considered, so very largely extend the area of country districts that a great number of them would be very unwieldy, and that there would not be much community of interest between different parts which would then belong to the same constituency. There was no pressure put upon me. I was asked the question at the time, and I gave that answer. I now intend to stand by the attitude I then assumed. If this Bill goes through, and the country electorates are so very much enlarged, I believe the effect will be most injurious to the whole country. When speaking on the honorarium question the other night I said I thought it a mistake that this Bill had not been brought down at the same time as or before the Bill reducing

the honorarium, because it appeared to me that £150 would not be sufficient to enable a poor man to run for such large electorates as are constituted under this Bill, and discharge the duties satisfactorily to a large portion of the electorate if returned. I think there is plenty of time yet to consider this question. In all probability there are two years before it can come into force, and we do not know what change may come over things before that time. At all events, I can see no pressing need for passing the Bill now.

Mr. KERR.—I wish to give the reason why I am going to vote against this Bill. I cannot support it as long as the Representation Act stands in the way that it does now. That Act rests on the population basis. To pass this Bill would simply mean to do away with numbers of outlying districts altogether, and there would be very few persons here but members from the towns, who can know very little of the country districts. If the Government were to alter that, I would vote with them. If they bring down local-government Bills—which I consider ought to accompany this Bill—I think we might reduce the number of members very much below seventy. In the Waste Lands Committee to-day there were honourable members representing every part of the colony, and there was a great difference of opinion as to the price of land. Honourable members from Otago think the land worth a certain price, and I believe the land there is much better than and will consequently fetch a higher price than the land in the North. I defy any one to pass a land-law in this country which will satisfy every part of the colony. For instance, in Auckland, if you put the price of land there at 10s., £1, or £1 10s., perhaps not fifty acres of it may be worth that in many places. In the country I come from it is exactly the same. I feel satisfied that the whole of this difficulty would be removed if we had our own local bodies, as we had at the time of the Provincial Governments. We then could tax ourselves. We could put land up for sale, and if it was worth only 2s. 6d. an acre we got that for it; and then we were able to get taxes from the owners. As it is now, in the district I come from all the available good land is bought up, and there is only the rubbish left. It is no good to the people, and, if the price is not reduced, in a few years it will not be worth a penny to the State. By introducing a proper local-government system—of which, I am sure, the present Ministry are capable—we could do with a great many fewer members than we have here now. I believe that then fifty would be quite sufficient to represent the country. But unless such a scheme is effected I do not see that we can do with any reduction at all. If you have such a reduction the outlying districts will be neglected. I may say that every time the Premier has been in office he has done our district injury. We have only got one and a half members to represent the whole place. I have to drive over three or four hundred miles to visit all my district now; and, if the number

Mr. Marchant

of members is reduced to seventy, that large part of the colony, which is as fine a district as any in New Zealand, will have only one member. As to reducing the Maori representation, I think that is a very wrong thing. We have a lot of Maoris in our district; and, unless it is to get sweet revenge, I cannot see what motive there can be for doing this. It is proposed to add the South Island Natives to the Western Maori District, which is already an immense district; and, if you add the South Island to the district of the honourable member for the Western Maori District, you will need to give him the whole twelve months to enable him to visit the whole of his constituents; and the people will not like that. The Native members from this Island know very well that their districts are so large that they cannot take in any more area. I am satisfied that one member or two for the City of Wellington would be quite sufficient; and then the city representatives would not be able to do so much more than the representatives for country districts. Unless you have a member to represent a country district properly, and see to the roads and bridges and one thing and another absolutely necessary for the benefit of the country, you might as well disfranchise us altogether, and let the towns represent the whole country at large. I am satisfied that until the Ministry brings in a local-government Bill to enable the local bodies to tax themselves and spend their own money we shall never have a system of government that will be suitable to this country. Then, there is the honourable member for the Buller, who has to go all the way into the Nelson District? which any of us could as well represent as he can. He cannot get there at all unless he gets there by steamer, and then it takes him four hours to get there. What does it matter if a man represents ten thousand or five thousand people, so long as they are all in one district? He then sees them all, and he can do justice to them, no matter what number there may be. The electors expect a member to go round once a year; and every third year he has to run the election—the man who can get his foot out of that is a cleverer man than I am—and you are only going to put it into the hands of a man who has capital to do it with. I am sure the district I represent will oppose this Bill. Every time the Premier has had an opportunity of doing an injury to that district he has given it his hobnailed boot. He has given it kicks already. The Minister of Justice said that if the number of members were reduced the members would be much better men; but I believe the men we have in the House now are as good as you can select from the country. And it appears to me the honourable gentleman does not know what the people want. He told us that the Maori members for the North Island would be able to represent the South Island better than the honourable member now does who knows that Island. The honourable gentleman knows nothing about it, because the Maoris in the South Island feel very keenly on this subject, and will be very dis-

pleased if you take one member away—the only member they have got. The Government have robbed these Maoris of their lands, treated them like little children, and have paid the Natives when they liked or what they liked; and they are a good deal worse off at present than ever they were before in all their lives. I want to know why the Natives cannot have the working of their own lands, for I am satisfied that the Natives in our district could work the lands with any white man in the country. If this Bill is adopted they will have no means to let the Government know their wants in any shape or form. I think the Premier is doing a very wrong thing in taking away the member from the South Island; and, if it is not for improper purposes he is doing it, I say they will think it is. I hope the Bill will not be read a second time.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Before the discussion goes any further, if the Premier will allow me to ask him a question it might save much discussion. There are a number of honourable members who believe that the Premier is pledged to carry the reduction mentioned in the Bill. I understand that is not so; and if the Premier will give us an opportunity of fixing the number at eighty the difficulty would be got over. If it is decided to fix the number at seventy I, for one, shall oppose the Bill.

Mr. HOBBS.—It is quite amusing to hear some honourable members to-day discussing this measure as if it were a new measure,—especially the honourable member for Kumara, who must remember that last session this matter was very well discussed and fought out, and if it had not been for his own action it would now have been the law of the land. He said that the Bill was of no particular consequence to him, as, no matter how large his district was, he would be certain to come back here. If the honourable gentleman will pardon me, I say it would be a great calamity to this House. *Hansard* is full of his speeches, and I wish his constituents joy in reading them. I think it would have a good effect to reduce the number of members to seventy. We should have less talking in the House, and I feel sure if the number were reduced we should have more useful legislation. The honourable member for Auckland Central was, I think, hardly consistent in his speech to-night, when he spoke about the Maori members and expressed the opinion that they had not been fairly treated in this House. He knows very well that when I introduced a Bill to increase the Maori representation his Government threw out the Bill. I tell those Native members not to put their trust in princes. The honourable gentleman made remarks to-night also with reference to the reduction in the honorarium; but I say that, among the fourteen who voted against the reduction, you will find all of those who wore the stonewallers and long speakers in this House, though I do not mean to say that the whole of the fourteen were stonewallers.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Are you referring to a division which has taken place this session?

Mr. HOBBS.—Yes, this session.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Then you are wrong in doing so, as reference to what took place during the debates of the present session is not allowed.

Mr. HOBBS.—There is one point in the Bill which I hope will receive the consideration of the Government, and that is the reduction of the Maori members. I am entirely opposed to that; and when the proper time comes, in Committee, I shall move that the word "three" be struck out and "four" inserted, and that instead of seventy members we have seventy-four. I think that would be a better measure than even allowing Maoris to appear on our electoral rolls. The Maoris do not care for the European representation, but they do care for their own. I hope that when the Premier replies he will say that he is prepared to accept such a proposal as this. It would be fair to all parties—to the South Island and the North Island. It would be unfair to the South Island to deprive it of representation. There are about forty thousand Maoris, and they have four members to represent them. I shall vote for their remaining at four members. I have no other remarks to make, except that I shall support the Bill, with the hope that the present number of Maori members will be retained. We have heard the honourable member for Waimea give us a dissertation on the Land Bill, but I do not know what that has to do with the Representation Bill. I hope we shall now proceed to business, and read this Bill a second time.

Mr. STUART-MENTEATH.—Sir, I take it that the Bill now before us is part of one grand scheme of reorganization. Unfortunately, it is only a fragment of that scheme; but, if the scheme in its entirety is carried for the benefit of the colony, then this Bill will be about the most useful of the measures introduced to the House. But I hold that if this Bill passes, and the other measures do not pass, then this Bill will be a curse to the country instead of a blessing. Hitherto, since the abolition of the provinces, this House has discharged two functions—a political function and the function of a Board of Works. If this country is going to pursue the policy which it has pursued during the last ten or eleven years—the policy of taxing the whole population of the colony and distributing the moneys borrowed on the security of that taxation to particular districts—then I hold we should maintain our present number of members. The present Government have given us some indication that it is their intention to put a stop to this so-called policy of colonisation—this policy of road-making and railroad-making out of public expenditure of public money. If that is to be the completed policy of the Government, and if they will carry it out in a thorough manner, then this Bill will be of great use to the country. A great many false issues, I venture to think, have been raised in this debate. Something has been said against this Bill as not being of a democratic character. The honourable member for Kumara said it would tend to increase the importance of the property-vote; but the

honourable member for Kumara cannot possibly have studied the question. He knows that persons possessing property in different districts, and being able now to reach several districts in one day, exert the strength of property. Enlarge the districts, and you make the property-vote of less force. To pass this Bill is to destroy the strength of the property-vote. Then, again, it has been said that representation will be put into the hands of the wealthy if the number of members be reduced. Why, we know that wherever wealth has exerted the greatest influence it has always been in the small constituencies; the smaller the constituencies the greater the personal influence of the individual. Enlarge the districts and you get much purer representation. Therefore it is that I shall vote for decreasing the number of members, looking upon it, as I do, as removing from the floor of this House a great many local interests which, if we are to cease our borrowing policy, would be a curse to it. I look to it also to purify the elections. But there is one great question involved in this Bill which this House will have to consider, and which, as far as I have listened to this debate, has not been mentioned by honourable members. By passing this Bill at this early stage of the present Parliament we are putting it into the power of the Government to say, "Well, gentlemen, if you do not like our policy we shall appeal to the country. You know what that means. You know that twenty-five seats in this House will not be filled again. If we go to the country after next session, you know very well that twenty-five of you will have to perpetrate the 'happy despatch,' and not coming back will cut short their parliamentary career by two years." That is a consideration to be borne in mind. No doubt, if we were writing a sentimental essay, we might despise this result of the immediate coming into force of this Bill; but we are treating this matter practically, and we know perfectly well that if the House passes the Bill it will place an enormous power in the hands of the Government. We know very well that next session this thought will be uppermost in the minds of honourable gentlemen: "The question I have to ask myself is this: Will this vote cost me my seat?" Honourable gentlemen will not acknowledge that they will entertain such a feeling, but we know that all minds are very liable to self-deception, and therefore I say the very strongest feeling of the session of 1888 will be this: "Are the Government able to apply for a dissolution, and are we going to cut short our parliamentary career by two years?" Now, I wish to see the policy of the Government as a whole carried out; but the Government, this year, have been chiefly employed—and it is not their fault that they have been so employed—in the work of destruction. They have a great work of construction to do, and it will depend very much upon the way they carry that out whether their tenure of office will be for the benefit of the colony or not. Therefore I say that, when we consider questions like these, questions in-

*Mr. Stuart-Menteth*

volving the reorganization of the whole condition of the colony, we must not be trammelled in our judgment by the consideration which the passing of this Bill must involve. I shall vote for the second reading of this Bill because, as I have already said, I believe in the principle, coupled with the scheme of retrenchment which the Government have begun; but I should much prefer to see the Government postpone the final carrying of the measure until their completed policy is before the country next year. I think if they adopt that course they will be adopting a manly course. With the large majority they have now got, they can no doubt carry this measure this year; but I think the country will appreciate their motives, and the House will appreciate them, if they say, "We will not avail ourselves of the majority which the House has given us, but we will hold this measure over till our complete policy is brought down next session, and then say, 'Now, gentlemen, you see the whole of our policy, and we ask you to give us the power which this measure confers.'" That is my view of the matter; but, at the same time, I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill, reserving to myself freedom of action as to future stages.

Colonel FRASER.—I think if there was one subject on which the electors clearly determined at last elections it was that there should be a reduction in the number of members of this House. I was so impressed with this that I myself brought in a Bill at the beginning of the session; but, in consequence of the Government determining to deal with the matter themselves, I withdrew that Bill. I think the measure ought to be persisted in to the end by the Ministry this session, and I feel quite sure they will better accomplish the passing of it now than if they postpone it. We all know that a great many of us have been returned pledged to a reduction in the number of members; and if the Government allow another year to pass over our heads some of us may have very convenient memories and forget our pledge. The Government have the position now in their own hands: let them, then, pass this measure; and I have no doubt they will do so by a very large majority. With regard to the Maori representation, I should much have preferred to see the special Maori representation done away with altogether. If that were done, and the number of members were reduced as the Government propose, the Maoris would be much more largely represented than they are now with four of their own members. The Maori population of the two Islands is about forty thousand, and I know that there are many honourable gentlemen who occupy seats in this House now who, if such a measure were carried, would be seen here no more, for the Maoris would have the power to turn the elections in their respective districts. When I think of the resolution brought forward by the honourable member for the Eastern Maori District, affirming that the Maoris and the white people should be treated as one, I feel

convinced that, if that were carried, the Maoris would certainly have four members in the new Parliament. I also feel quite sure that if Maoris were to stand for several of the present white constituencies they would almost certainly be returned. That is, of course, a matter of which they are themselves the best judges; but I think I should go in that direction if I were in the position which the Government occupy at present. With regard to the reduction of the honorarium and the reduction of the number of members, it may be said that that may have the effect of returning representatives of the wealthier class to this Assembly. Possibly that may be the case; but, whether it would be so or not, there is no doubt that the country is in favour of reducing both the honorarium and the number of members at present; but whether it will have changed its views by the end of next session or not I cannot say. I hope that the Government, having a majority at their back, and knowing that this is the wish of the electors, will not shirk their duty, but will carry the Bill through to completion.

Mr. PYKE.—Sir, I was returned to this House pledged to oppose this measure in the shape in which it is now placed before us, and I think nothing worse could be done for New Zealand than to pass such a Bill as that offered to us. I do not object to a reduction in the number of members; I think it could be done with very great advantage indeed to the transaction of public business. But this Bill is a mere skeleton. As the honourable member for Te Aro said, it is but a fragment of a large policy, and it is not right for the Government to bring down that fragment until they bring down the remainder of their policy. What we want to get rid of before we reduce the number of members is what I may call the individualism of representation. So long as we have single electorates, so long as one man has to be personally responsible to a large number of people living on a large area of country, so long will this Parliament be no better than what it has been described as—a “Board of Works.” The reduction in the number of members should be dependent on a local-government measure, such as was promised us when the provinces were abolished, but which has never been given to us. When we talk of retrenchment we should begin systematically; we should begin at the root. The people look to this House for every road and bridge, and the House is hampered in its political action by honourable members making it a lever to try and get what they can for their constituents. Until a measure is brought down freeing us from that and giving us such a system of local government that the words “road” and “bridge” shall never be mentioned in this House, we shall never have effective government, we shall never have real retrenchment. No man has such a scheme more closely at heart than I have, and I would appeal to the head of the Government now, and strongly advise him not to press this measure at the present time, for many reasons: firstly, because he should first bring down a proper

scheme of retrenchment and local government; and, secondly, I say this measure is premature. Why, it is possible, and probable, that in 1890 the population of this country may be sufficient to warrant the present number of members; and the Bill cannot take effect till then. We are not going to have a dissolution. Those honourable gentlemen are going to sit there for this Parliament, and possibly for longer; and I shall be very glad to see them there. But I cannot absolutely traverse my political opinions to support them in bringing down such a measure as this. It is reactionary, it is revolutionary, it is anti-progressive. Take this Bill and take with it the reduction-of-the-honorarium Bill, and I say that the two things combined will render it impossible for any man to contest an election unless he has a well-filled purse at his disposal. You will deprive the people at once of their proper representation in this House if you carry the Bill into effect. If the Government would consent to do something of this kind, even: if they would so far modify their proposal as to say that the country should be divided into twenty-eight districts, or whatever the number might be, and three representatives should be returned for each district,—I could accept it. But with individual representation contained in it I must vote against it; I cannot vote for it. It means that candidates must travel over large areas of country at great expense, and it is putting it beyond the power of an ordinary candidate to incur the expense and loss of time consequent thereupon. There has always been in my mind a feeling that the first step which should be taken by any Government coming down to this House and undertaking the onerous duties the present Government have undertaken should be to initiate a proper system of local government; and, until they do that, all these schemes of retrenchment will fail of their effect. It is not by cutting down the number of members, it is not by cutting down their own salaries, and it is not by reducing the honorarium, that any great saving will be effected. The saving will be effected when people have to pay for their own roads and bridges out of their own pockets, and when this House has nothing whatever to say to the matter. Then we shall have what we never have had yet—laws carefully considered, properly drafted, and put before this House in such a manner that they will be not what they are now, something little less than a disgrace to the Statute Book. I cannot support the Bill as it stands, and I ask the members of the Government not to push it into Committee, because, if it goes into Committee, we shall be compelled to alter it until its authors will be hardly able to recognise it.

Mr. ALLEN.—The honourable member for the Dunstan has made use of some very flowery expressions—such expressions as the “individualism of representation,” and “local government”—a term, I suppose, very dear to all of us; but I am sorry to find that the honourable gentleman has not seen in this measure at any

rate some beginning of local self-government. It seems to me that, if we ever are to have local self-government, it must be by a large reduction of the number of members in this House, and a corresponding reduction in the work done here. I heard an honourable member this afternoon say that, although local self-government meant the expenditure of money by local bodies, it never seemed to bring about in this House a smaller expenditure.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I might explain that I said the taxation of local bodies—which taxation was expended on local works—does not bring about a reduction in the general expenditure of the country. That is quite a different matter.

Mr. ALLEN.—I still maintain that the honourable gentleman said it brought about no corresponding reduction here. It matters little to me whether he said they raised more money for local expenditure or not. The fact remains that, though the local expenditure is increased, the general expenditure is not decreased; and on that I found my argument that, if we are to have a decrease of expenditure here, and any attempt at local self-government, it must be by lessening the general expenditure, and by lessening the number of members who come here. The honourable member for the Dunstan has also attempted to make use of an argument which has been ably answered by the honourable member for Te Aro. He said that the enlargement of the country districts meant that only a well-filled purse could enable a man to contest a seat. Sir, there sits in this House no stronger argument to exactly the contrary than the honourable member for the Dunstan himself. The honourable member for the Dunstan travels throughout the length and breadth of his district, and it never costs him, I believe, a halfpenny. His intense popularity, his great geniality, carries him through his district without his having to put his hand in his pocket. The honourable gentleman on my right suggests, also, his attractive appearance. I was not going to mention that; but, still, that also is a factor in the case; and I venture to assure you that the honourable member for the Dunstan is met open-handed wherever he goes; he has a buggy here, and a buggy there, and this man and that places his house at his disposal. And so, I say, it will be with those who are competent to represent their districts: the farmers will find means and capabilities for carrying them through the district, and enabling them to see and learn what they want to learn. There has been, besides the argument that the Bill was in the interests of the wealthy landowners, and so on, another argument raised against the passing of the Bill. It has been asked, Why do we now pass this measure when it will be three years before there is any likelihood of its coming into effect? There are many reasons why we should do so, and I was sorry to hear the honourable member for Te Aro, who so ably answered other arguments against the Bill, arguing in this respect in favour of those who are opposing the Bill. He said it would give great power to the

*Mr. Allen*

Government, as it would place in their hands the possibility of threatening some five-and-twenty men that they would lose their seats if they did not vote with the Government. If I read argument aright that argument may be used in a contrary direction. It seems to me that, if a man is threatened by the Government that he is going to lose his seat, he is not going to look to the Government to regain it supposing he should lose it. He has to answer to his constituents, and to nobody else; and do you think that a man going back to his constituents and saying he had been "led by the nose" by any Government would ever have a chance of winning a seat again? No, he would lose it, and lose it justly. The argument is entirely in the opposite direction, if in any direction at all. Then, what arguments are there in favour of passing this measure three years before it is actually wanted? There is this argument, and it is a very potent one: We are closer now, and every member must know we are closer now, to our electioneering pledges. There is no question about it that the longer the time we are from our electioneering pledges the less the hold will those electioneering pledges have upon many of us. I think there can be no stronger instance of it, or, at any rate, no stronger proof of the effect that close elections may have, than the fate that this measure met with last session. It passed in the first instance, and was then brought up again and defeated only by a casting-vote. Sir, I maintain that, if the last House had been true to their pledges, and true to the best interests of the colony, they would have passed this measure and made it law then; and I believe they would have done so but for the fear of losing their seats, it being close upon the election-time. Then, it has been asked, Why pass any measure three years before it is required? But can it not be seen that this is a measure affecting ourselves,—that it is not like other measures,—and that measures affecting ourselves, and which we naturally feel a great interest in, if they do become law, in many cases must be passed before they are absolutely needed? Then, again, how do we know that Parliament will last out three years? It is possible that some burning question may arise which may cause the Government, whatever Government may be upon those benches, to appeal to the country: and do we want the same trouble again that we had last session—a Commission sitting and the election pending for several months, with all the consequent expense? Surely we ought to be ready for anything of that kind whenever it may happen, with the Bill passed into law and the divisions made out, so that, if elections had to take place, there would be no need for delay. Then, I think the honourable member for St. Albans said that that side of the House—and I presume he meant that that side of the House was going to vote against the Bill—represented democracy, and that nobody else did.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—Hear, hear.

Mr. ALLEN.—The honourable gentleman

says, "Hear, hear." I may tell him that if he likes to come down to our part of the country I could show him that there are gentlemen on this side of the House who represent the democracy, and who intend to vote for this Bill. The honourable gentleman told us that upon this side of the House those supporting the Bill were capitalists and Conservatives. Who represent the capital and the power of the country? If anybody does, it is the members of the Press, and I maintain that his capital has much more influence upon this country than has mine. Then, he told us on this side of the House that we were Conservatives. Sir, it is upon those benches that the Conservatives have their seats; they will have no change, they want no change, they want no progress, but they want the ninety-five members continued. We want change, we want the Bill that is brought down to become the law of the country, for it is progress: it is liberalism, and we want liberalism; they want conservatism and the ninety-five members. Then, the honourable member also told us, in talking about the difference in the number of members between here and Victoria, that our country was vastly different in its configuration, that between the one Island and the other there lay Cook Strait, that we had a long extent of seaboard, and that it took a very great deal more to travel over this country than to travel in centralised Victoria. I admit all that. The configuration of the country is very different. But what did he base his argument upon? Did he mean that representation was to be representation of area, or was it to be representation of population? Sir, I maintain that representation, if it is to be anything, must be representation of people, and not of land. And then, if that be so, of what force is his argument? He said that in 1863 they had seventy-one members, and that in a few years it was increased to eighty-four, and that was found enough. Has the configuration of the country altered since we had seventy-one members? Has it altered since we had eighty-four; when they were found sufficient? No; it is not the area of the country that has altered, but it is the population; and the only reason why the number was raised was, not that the configuration of the country had altered, but that a few more people had come into it. And in these days we have found out that our population is not large enough to support so large a number of members. We find that in Victoria, with double our population, there are not so many members; it is not the area, but the number of their men. I admit that we have to take area into a certain amount of consideration, but that is not the main point. The main point is the number of men, and, compared with any country in the world, we are vastly overgoverned. The honourable member for Mount Ida this afternoon also tried to prove from this question of statistics that the argument was on his side of the question. He said that, because the representation per number of people varied, that was a reason why we should support our present number, because the numbers were dif-

ferent. The argument goes the other way also. If we stand at the bottom of the list,—if we have more members per number of men than any other country, surely we ought to stop and ask ourselves the reason. We know they differ; but why are we at the bottom of the list? And if any person answers it to his satisfaction he must come to the conclusion that we have more members than we ought to have to represent us. Then, he talked of this being a wrench. He said, "Are we going to make a violent wrench like this?" If I remember rightly, the honourable gentleman, in his electioneering speeches, advocated the most violent wrench ever thought of when he said, "Stop the borrowing policy altogether." Surely that is a wrench that is mighty in comparison with this wrench. He said, "Stop the borrowing policy." I should like to see it stopped. I admit that that policy is a bad policy, and I think it is a wrench that should be made. This is nothing compared with the other. I will now refer to the Natives in a few words. I must say I have every sympathy with the Natives; and if it be possible that the member for the Eastern Maori District can bring his motion forward, and if that motion should be acceptable to the House, then I say there is no better solution of the difficulty than by putting the white man and the dark man on the same footing. That seems to me the only natural conclusion, and if we can only come to that conclusion I believe it will be for the advantage and welfare of both races.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—May I be allowed to make an explanation? The honourable member who has just sat down has stated that I was opposed to any reduction. Now, I took very great pains to explain, more than once, that I was very strongly in favour of a reduction to eighty-four members.

Mr. WARD.—I am not going to make a long oration on this question, but I wish to state my opinions on one or two points of the Bill before voting. We have heard the question of democracy raised in the course of this debate. Now, I am here representing a democratic constituency, and for that reason I am going to vote for the second reading of this Bill. When I was before my constituents I advocated a reduction of the members of this House to as low a number as seventy; and that met with general acceptance at the hands of my constituency. Since I came to this House I have been all the more impressed with the idea that it is desirable to reduce the number. A great deal of time may not have been altogether wasted; but, to my mind, a great deal of time has been frittered away, and I believe that if the number of members had been less so much valuable time would not have been frittered away. Besides, I recognise this: that by the reduction of the number of members—I do not care to what extent—the demands of different members from different constituencies will be proportionately decreased. I do regret that the Government have decided to reduce the number of the Native members, but particularly so as it is the member from the South Island who will have to go. When it is remembered

that the Maori population is forty thousand, it does appear to me to be a wrong step. If the number is reduced, it certainly should be on the population basis. With the four members there would be one for every ten thousand of population. Upon the same basis as the European representation they are entitled to five members. How is the colony or the Government going to look after Native affairs in the South Island if the representation is taken away from the Natives? We have to keep in view old feuds between the North and South Island Natives; and, if it is intended under the Representation Act that the Natives of the South Island shall have their affairs managed by the Natives of the North Island, I venture to predict that it will act very unsatisfactorily. And, although the number of Natives who voted in the South Island at the last election was only 416, as the Minister of Justice stated, we should not take advantage of that small number to deprive them of one member. When the Bill goes into Committee I will support any amendment to increase the number to seventy-one, so that the Native race may have its old proportion of representation under the Act.

Mr. GRIMMOND.—It has been said by the honourable member for Dunedin East that this is the first of a number of Bills for local self-government. I have in vain looked to see any one of these Bills. Had I seen these I might have felt inclined to give this Bill my support. Then, he tells us that it is the solution of a Liberal problem. If it is, it is the solution of a problem backwards, because I see nothing of advancement in it; nor have I seen that any of the colonies of Australia has taken or talked of taking the step we are taking, of reducing the representation of the colony. I feel that I must protest and vote against this Bill. I did intend to give a silent vote; but I felt compelled to make some remarks upon it, and I oppose it on account of its being a retrogressive and very conservative measure. I do think that before this Bill was introduced we ought to have agreed as to the basis on which the seventy members are to be elected. The present may be a very true basis to elect ninety-five members upon; but, if you applied that same statistical arrangement to the election of a House of seventy members, it might be very unfair, and therefore that ought to be arranged. It is said that the geographical configuration of the country is not against large electorates. If the honourable gentleman who said that knew as much about some of the electorates as I do he would say a very different thing. In order to travel through the constituency I represent I have to go four or five hundred miles; and if the electorates are increased very much it will increase the difficulty of getting through them. And where there are very large districts you cannot get that community of ideas that is necessary in getting men to represent them. It has been urged that the Government are going to hand over a large portion of the work which is now done by the House to local governing bodies; but before

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we do that the Government ought to tell us what position those local bodies are to be in—what powers they will have, and what duties will be thrown upon them by this House. The idea mentioned by the honourable member for Te Aro is, that this would place in the hands of the Government a vast power in directing the movements of this House, because a Government which was not very strong might threaten weak-kneed opponents with a dissolution, and so get them to vote for measures which they would not otherwise support; and that ought to be a strong reason why we should not pass this Bill until another session or two passes. Then, we have had advanced the plea of economy. One honourable member said that a Parliament of seventy members would cost over £10,000 less than the present House. It is utterly impossible for a member of the Ministry, or any other member, to tell us what Parliament will cost the country. The mere fact of multiplying the honorarium by a certain number does not give the true result. If the honourable gentleman's calculation is a good one, all he has to do is to abolish Parliament altogether, and then he will arrive at a great saving. But would that be a right thing? A measure was introduced the other day to reduce the cost by something like 10 per cent. That was met by an amendment to reduce it by 25 per cent., and the political economists refused the 25 per cent. and supported the lower amount. When measures of that kind are introduced for purposes of economy, I think there is a ring of sham about them. I feel sure the introduction of this measure will mean the disfranchisement of a vast number of small outlying districts. Of course, if the policy indicated by the Minister of Defence is carried out, that when an outlying district demands a necessary work the member should be in a position to treat the request with contempt and scorn—if that were carried out it would give us that power—but it is one that we have no right to have. I hold that it is the outlying districts that ought to be nursed, and that an endeavour should be made to increase their population. We should have plenty of time to take the question of saving the cost of a few members into consideration in another session, at all events. I really do not know how any one can stand up here and make a calculation as to what a House of ninety-five or a House of seventy members would cost three years hence, and reduce that to within a thousand or two. I regard it as the babbling of an overgrown baby; I can see no reason or sense in it, and shall oppose the Bill.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Although a great deal has been said on this Bill, I should not like the House to go to a division until I have said a few words upon it. The Minister of Education, when he addressed this House upon the subject, told us that any important reform ought to take place in the first session of a Parliament. The legislation of 1881, which dealt with this very subject, was passed in the last session of Parliament. Then he went on to tell us that this will be a Parliament of



great and unequalled reform. I believe this is the Parliament of reform, such reform as the world has never seen. What are the reforms? First of all, the Government asked the House to adjourn for a fortnight to give time for them to frame a policy. The House adjourned for the fortnight, and what were the proposals that were brought forward when we again met? They were the most barren proposals ever heard. What was the next wonderful thing done? The Government proposed a vote of confidence in themselves. Surely that was a great reform. What next? The Government brought down their financial proposals, went so far with them, and then dropped them to carry their Bills. That was never done before—first of all to pass their Bills, and then discuss their financial proposals. The honourable member says, so much time has been consumed in allowing the Government to bring down all their measures. Who is responsible for that? I will not say waste of time. He guarded himself against using that word, because he knew that, if anybody was blamable for a waste of time, it must be his side of the House. What was the fortnight for? Did they bring down any policy? Their proposals were the most barren proposals possible. I am sure if those proposals had been submitted to a jury of matrons they would have said they were the most barren proposals ever brought down to this House. Then, the honourable gentleman said that, although in each of two of the colonies of Australia the number of people is double the number in this country, yet they have fewer representatives than there are here. But why did he not tell us the whole story, and say that both in New South Wales and in Victoria one-third of the population is gathered in and about one city? Out of about a million people in each colony there are some three hundred thousand in the capitals. We are told that the present Ministry represent the democratic feeling of the country.

Mr. FISHER.—Hear, hear.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—The Minister of Education says, "Hear, hear;" but I say if their democracy is the democracy of the country, I do not know what democracy is. If it is democracy to take away the power of the people to be represented how they like, then the honourable gentleman may be right; but so long as the true meaning of democracy is the government of the people by the people, then I say the present Government are most lamentably wrong. As the honourable member for the Dunstan has said, if you increase the size of the country districts it will be impossible for any but rich men to represent them. What the honourable member for Dunedin East said on that point was no answer to it. It is no answer to say that the election did not cost him one penny because his constituents paid the expenses. The honourable gentleman knows it is not right to argue from an individual case to generalities. Let him show that it is the general rule for constituencies to pay the expenses of candidates, and then there

would be something in what he said. If the districts are increased to the size now proposed a very large proportion of the country electors will not know their representatives, because the time it would take to visit and address them all would be so great that none but the richest men could do it; it would be impossible for men who have to earn their living to spare the time. The honourable member for Hokitika says he has to ride four hundred miles to visit the various parts of his district; and how much further would he have to go if his district were increased in area by the operation of this Bill! The Premier told us the other day that it was the duty of a representative to address his constituents once a year; and now he wants to take away from them the power to do so. If that is democracy, I must repeat again that I do not know what democracy is. I think it is one of the greatest duties of a representative to address his constituents, and so to educate them in the politics of the day; because we know there are many people distributed over the country who neither read the papers nor hear what is going on, and the only way they can learn and be educated in the requirements of the country is by being addressed by their representatives. With such enormous districts as this Bill would create, only wealthy men would be able to contest an election, because it could not possibly be expected that the electors would pay the expenses of every candidate who might choose to come forward. The Minister of Education said that twenty-five years ago, when there was a less number of members in this House, the people were as well represented as they are now. Sir, what did those seventy people do? What became of the land? What became of the safeguards of the public-works policy? Who did away with them? It was just for these very things that the people clamoured for greater representation: they have it now, and they ought to guard it and keep it. Then the Minister of Education went on to argue from what he himself knows is a fallacy. He told us that the honourable member for Kumara says every member cost the country £500 a year; and on this he contends that, if the number of members is reduced by twenty, the country will save £10,000 a year. Is a fallacy a proper thing to argue upon? If the honourable gentleman can urge no more convincing argument than that, it would be better for him to have kept silent. Then, it has been asked, What are we taking away from the people? Sir, we are taking away from them the only power they have of making their wants and requirements heard. I do not agree with those who contend that all men should be exactly equally represented: but every man should have equal facilities to make his wants and requirements known. Can it be said that the people in the towns labour under the same difficulties in making their voice heard as the people in the country districts, who, perhaps, have no communication whatever with the Government, and never see such a person as a Minister, as none of the members of the Government ever go near them to see what the

position, wants, and requirements of their districts are? I should have no objection to reducing the number of members so long as you took the representation off the towns. I have frequently expressed myself in that direction, and I told my constituents so during the election; I told them I should oppose any reduction of members unless they were taken away from the towns. It is as easy for a town representative to represent ten thousand people as five thousand. All he has to do is to hold one or two meetings, and in two or three days he can be face to face with every one of his constituents, make himself acquainted with their requirements, learn their views, and make them conversant with his own; and, if his views do not suit, the electors can get some one else. But what chance would country candidates and electors have if the districts were increased as is proposed? Even if we did agree to reduce the number of members, I could not agree to the readjustment of the representation by Commission. We have had some experience of that mode of revision now. It has always been held that community of interest should be taken into consideration; but did the Commissioners take that into consideration? No. And why not? Because it was impossible for them to do it. Certain lines were laid down, and by those lines they had to be guided. The Minister of Justice argued strongly in favour of passing the measure this session, saying it is quite possible there may be a dissolution next session over the great question of Free-trade and Protection. I say there was no question brought more prominently forward than that was during the last election. Every member in the House is pledged on one side or the other on that question. But, when a deputation waited on the Premier the other day, he told them that next session he would bring down a policy that would please both the Free-traders and the Protectionists.

Major ATKINSON.—No; I only expressed that hope.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Well, I hope the honourable gentleman will; but I doubt it very much. But I do not believe the Premier would get a dissolution on the question of Free-trade and Protection, because, as I have said, no question was brought more fully before the people during the late election than this very question. We have been told that in the past we had very excellent Parliaments. But what was the invariable action of those good and excellent Parliaments every time the question of representation was raised? They always increased the number of members; and they did it after mature deliberation. We have been told they were excellent men, well fitted to carry on the functions of government; but, still, they invariably increased the number of members at each redistribution. Then, I ask, what reason has been adduced now for going the contrary way and reducing the number? The only reason that has been urged is the need of economy; but that will be a very poor economy, because, although a few thousand pounds will be saved in the direct cost, we may ask ourselves how much

money was wasted by the smaller Houses. How many political railways were made; and who advocated them? The smaller Houses. If this Bill is passed it may be said that the outlying districts will be entirely unrepresented. We have seen in the past that the towns have sent a large number of members to this House; and, whenever any great question affecting the towns cropped up, they were always able to attain their objects by their preponderance of voting-power. We are told that nine-tenths of the Press of the colony is in favour of this measure. And, forsooth, because the Press is in favour of it, is that a reason why we should pass it?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Well, I will tell the honourable gentleman something else. Nine-tenths of the Press says that we have not a good Government. We have been told that some wonderful measures have been brought forward by this Government. What are those great measures? Bills to reduce the Governor's salary, the salaries of Ministers, the honours, the number of members—this miserable Representation Bill. These are the great measures which took three weeks to hatch.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The Land Bill.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Yes; that is a measure we shall have presently. But is that a Liberal measure, which abolishes the local Land Boards? I say it is anything but a Liberal measure. I maintain that before we can reduce the representation we must have a perfect system of local government; and I maintain, further, that all the legislation of the present Government, so far, has been opposed to the principle of local government—it is all in the direction of centralisation, such as this Land Bill, which takes away all local administration in regard to waste lands, and puts the whole business in the hands of a central department. We have been told we should pass this Bill this session because it was agreed to by the last Parliament. Now, I deny that; and the honourable gentleman who made that statement told us what was not correct. The honourable member knows very well that many members voted for reduction last session hoping it would kill the Representation Bill, and when they found it did not do that they let the old number go. The honourable member for Auckland Central, who is now opposing this Bill, was one of those who voted for reduction when the last Bill was before the House. In 1881 the present Premier was a very strong advocate for increasing the number of members to the present number. He told us that the number of people had increased, and he brought forward all sorts of statistics to prove it was highly necessary for good government to increase the representation; and we have that increased representation. Now the honourable gentleman comes forward and, without any argument, tells us that the number of members must be decreased. We were told by the honourable member for Dunedin East that he belongs to the Liberal side—that he is not a Conservative like those on this side of the

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House, who want to retain the number at ninety-five. Does it follow, because we do not want to reduce the number from ninety-five, that we do not want to alter the number at all; that because we want to stick to the ninety-five we must be Conservatives? Has the honourable gentleman not a right to assume that perhaps we want more representation? I do not see that he has scored a point at all in that. In the past we had excellent Houses—so honourable gentlemen have told us—who always increased the number of members as the population increased. The population has no doubt increased largely since 1881, when the present number of ninety-five was fixed. Speaking about Liberalism, I understood the honourable member for Dunedin East to say that in his district larger sums were spent during the election than in any other part of the colony. If that is democracy and Liberalism, I do not know—

Mr. ALLEN.—By my opponent, not by me.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I did not say in Dunedin East; but evidently the cap fits, and the honourable gentleman is welcome to wear it.

Mr. ALLEN.—You said in my district.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Taking Dunedin, there are four members; and then there are the suburbs—such as Caversham, Roslyn, and others of which I do not know the name. There are at least eight or ten. Then, the honourable gentleman tells us that the Government would lose its power, for members would not depend upon the Government for election, but that they would appeal to those whom they represented. My honourable friend forgets that these constituencies are to be wiped out by this Bill. There are twenty-five that would lose their representatives by this Bill. That this is a measure of retrenchment I also deny, because if the number of members were reduced the honourarium would be increased. There are very few men who would come to this House to lose money. If the honourable gentleman really is in earnest, why does he not do fairly and take away the representation of Wellington altogether? Why did he increase the representation of Wellington last year? Or, at any rate, why did he not oppose its being given? The fact is that he is in a hurry to get this Bill passed because he knows perfectly well that if the country had time to consider it he would have no chance of passing it. He is trying to do the same thing now that he did in 1881. He then brought forward a measure of which nobody knew anything. In fact, the country was completely misled by the speeches of the Government. People were led to expect something very different from what was brought down; but the Government would not let their measure stand over for another session, because they knew that the people would not have accepted it. This measure is a surprise on the country, and it has not been well prepared. It says that seventy members are to be elected, but it does not say how they are to be elected, which districts were to lose representation, or whether the balance is to be taken from town or country. It simply says that the number is

to be reduced by so many. I shall vote against the second reading of this Bill. It can very well stand over till next session, and if it passes its second reading I hope it will not be pushed on further.

Mr. BRUCE.—Sir, although I intend to support this measure, I cannot avoid, in the first place, giving expression to a feeling of regret that the Government have not thought that the time has arrived for giving representation to the seamen of this colony. I hold that all men have a right to a voice in our national councils, and it appears to me somewhat unfair that those of our fellow-countrymen who are precluded by their occupation from being able to exercise the franchise should not have some special provision made for their representation. Now, I do not wish to be misunderstood with reference to this; I do not say that the seamen of New Zealand have any special grievance, but I do believe that if they had representation in this Chamber it is reasonable to assume that those abuses would not grow up in our mercantile service which, in the merchant navies of Great Britain and the United States, have been nothing short of a disgrace to civilisation. I will merely say, in reference to this subject, that I hope the time will soon arrive when the claims of the men of our merchant seamen will receive consideration at the hands of this Legislature. Now, Sir, although I intend to support this measure, I quite admit the force of the arguments which have been used against it. I have always believed, rightly or wrongly, that large constituencies would presumably return members of larger mental calibre, and that those returned would thus be more independent than honourable members at present are of local jealousies and intrigues in their districts; and there is no doubt that the country generally is in favour of a reduction of the number of members. But I might point out that this measure has to be read in context with that which reduces the salary of members of this House, and there can be no question that any material increase in the size of a constituency must, to a corresponding extent, increase the cost of elections in that district, and I am quite sure that in many instances that will have a deterrent effect upon poor men coming forward to represent constituencies. So I believe that the two measures, taken together, will go in the direction of throwing the representation of this colony into the hands of the wealthy classes. Whether that is at present an evil I will not say; but that if this Bill passes we shall have fewer able men of small means coming to this House is as certain, to my mind, as a problem in mathematics. Now, I am not one of those who believe that, if the legislation of this colony were placed entirely in the hands of its wealthy classes, they would necessarily abuse that power. In point of fact, the interests of all classes in this colony are inseparably interwoven. I believe that all this cry about the wicked Toryism of the wealthy, who are supposed to have no sympathy for the poorer classes of this country, though it may serve very well as a method of

galvanising ignorant voters during an election contest, is wasted on the floor of this House, where we know its real value. We hear much about democracy and Toryism, Liberalism and Conservatism, but, as a matter of fact, no man can define the lines of party as they present themselves on the floor of this House. I suppose that many of our leading men, although on opposite sides of the House, have many principles in common, and that those who are called Conservative are just as liberal as those who style themselves Liberal. I must say that this continual cry we hear in the country during election contests appears to me the merest claptrap. I am a Liberal and also a Conservative. I am sufficiently conservative to hold fast that which is good, and sufficiently liberal to vote for any measure which appears to me to be conducive to the welfare of the people of the colony. But what I wish to point out is that by these two measures we are going entirely in the direction of placing the representation in the hands of the wealthier classes; and I fear that the masses will believe that their wants, their wishes, their hopes, and their aspirations will not find sufficient expression on the floor of this House, and I believe that the result will be smouldering discontent. I believe that it is extremely desirable that the democratic masses of the colony should have full and complete representation in this House, if only for this reason: that I believe it will show them that much of what they are clamouring for is in the region of the impossible. I do not wish to be understood as desiring to introduce the question of the poor working-man in this debate. I believe that the poor working-man is better off in this colony than in any other in the world; certainly he is better off than in any other country which I have visited. I believe that the greatest enemies of the working-man are those who promise him what they know can never be fulfilled and hold out hopes which can never be realised. But, after all, this payment of members is one of the corner-stones of democracy. We have heard a great deal during a debate that has recently taken place as to how little a member can live for in Wellington, how he is only here for twelve weeks on an average, and how £150 is a handsome allowance. But, as a matter of fact, we know from experience that a member is largely occupied during the recess, that he has many heavy expenses of which the general public know nothing, and that he has to append his name to all sorts of subscription-lists, not only in his own constituency, but in other parts of the colony. There is one other matter to which I wish to draw attention before I sit down. It has been frequently said during this debate, "Give us a good system of local government and we will submit to this reduction." Now, I contend that we have good local government in this country, excellent local government. The honourable member for the Dunstan said, "Keep out of this House the words 'roads and bridges,'" and the honourable member for Kumara said something of the same sort.

*Mr. Bruce*

Now, as a matter of fact, the late Government passed a measure in that direction, and one which, in my opinion, entitles them to the gratitude of this colony—I allude to the Loans to Local Bodies Act. That Act provides a means whereby roads and bridges may be made without reference to this House. If that measure were carried out in its integrity there would be no need for roads or bridges to be mentioned in this House, and it should have a most purifying effect upon this Legislature. I shall vote for the second reading of this Bill; but in doing so I give expression to the hope that, when the financial position of the colony warrants them in so doing, some succeeding Parliament will increase the honorarium which we have recently reduced, if this Bill is to be carried into effect.

Mr. PARATA.—I have something to say to the House on the proposed reduction of members. What has caused confusion in my mind is this: Only during the last session of Parliament this House passed a measure confirming the number of members at ninety-five. I thought that the matter of the number of members was then fixed for some time at all events; but very few months have passed over and now this question has cropped up again in precisely the same form. I cannot understand what the arguments were in 1881 in favour of increasing the number to ninety-five and now reducing them to seventy. The reason this is being done cannot surely be that our population has decreased. Some members of the present Government were responsible in 1881 for increasing the number of representatives, and I do not understand what reasons they can now offer for reducing the number. Seeing that our population is steadily increasing, as a matter of course their wants also increase, and it is necessary for them to have increased representation. Our population is always increasing: for instance, a large number of people arrived on our shores yesterday, no less than five hundred. That number of new-comers are almost entitled to a special member to represent them. The Minister of Education stated that twenty-five or thirty years ago our government was much better managed than it is at present. I think I can prove to the contrary. I will not admit that there is any force in his argument, for this reason: At the time he spoke of our population it was very small. The members in those days did not take the trouble to go all over the country and make themselves acquainted with the wants of their districts: there was no necessity for them to do so such as there is now. This proposal to reduce the number of representatives, in face of our increasing population, causes confusion in my mind. I can only suppose it is justified on the score of retrenchment. There are two inflictions to be borne by honourable members during the present session—first, the reduction of the honorarium; and secondly, the reduction in their number. These are the two troubles which have come upon the members newly elected to this House. I wish to make this perfectly clear to the House: I did not come here to seek benefits for myself. I did

not come here to ask for money, or to ask the Government or the members of this House to support me in getting money. I came here for the express purpose of obtaining justice for the Native people in the South Island—I mean with regard to their land. Had former Governments or the present Government fulfilled their promises and reduced the grievances of the Natives in the South Island, honourable members would not now see me standing here; it would have been quite unnecessary for me to come to this House. Seeing that the wrongs under which those people suffered have not been redressed, that is the reason why my predecessor was sent to this House, and why I also have come here. Why should the only representative those people have got be taken from them? I again say it is not a question of money with me. It is only to obtain justice, only to get what is right and what is due to us, that my voice is heard. The Government have already taken the whole of our land from us; they have also taken away the administration of the small reserves which were left to us. There is only one thing left to the Natives of the South Island, and that is their representative, and now it is proposed to rob them of that also. I ask both sides of the House to consider for a moment. Is such a proposal as this justice? One member of the Government has stated that it is necessary to take away one Maori member on account of the small population in the South Island. I do not think that is an argument at all. I think that the Government should consider the great size of that electorate, and the great difficulty in getting over it and attending to the interests of the people. Some honourable gentlemen have stated that it would be far better for the Maoris if the special representation were done away with so that they might be represented by Europeans. I am afraid our wants would not be attended to if such were the case, because I do not think a European member would be capable of ascertaining what our requirements are as well as ourselves. We are not all of one mind as yet, and it is well known that different races have different wants, and therefore they require different representation. Some honourable gentlemen have suggested that if we were all placed on the same footing the Maoris would have an opportunity of returning members to Parliament. I say that that would never be the case, because you would never find Europeans supporting the Maori candidates; so what chance would the Maoris have of having any representation in this House? I am simply speaking on behalf of the people of the South Island. They are quite ignorant of this proposal to take away their representative. Had the proposal to reduce the Maori representation been shadowed forth in the Speech from the Throne, the Native people in the South Island would have had time to consider it, and a communication would have been made to the House upon the subject. Although the number of members in this House has been increased on two occasions, the Maori representation has been left untouched.

It has not been increased. Seeing that the Maoris are represented under a separate Act, I cannot see why their representation should be mixed up with the European Representation Act, as at present proposed. I do not think the Maori representation should be touched at all, seeing that the European representation comes under a different Act. I am not here to plead to the Government to retain the representative for the South Island. If the Government think it better that I should go, and will give me any intimation to that effect, I will go willingly, at once. I hope it is not so, but it would appear to me, on the face of this Bill, that there is an ill-feeling towards, or an intention to do an injury to, the Maori representative of the South Island. Our troubles never seem to come alone. Coming in at the same time with this trouble there are other Bills affecting the people of the South Island, not one of which is devised for the benefit of those people. There are measures of far more importance to the Maoris of the South Island; those are kept back altogether, but this measure is brought forward. I will not detain the House much longer. I will not ask any member of this House to retain the representative of the South Island. I will not say whether he ought to be done away with or not. That matter rests with the House. It appears to me that this is the first step towards doing away with Maori representation altogether. One will be taken now and another in a short time, and this is an example of what will be done for our benefit in the future. It can only be a question of time when the Natives in the North Island will see that what I say is true.

Mr. JONES.—Sir, the speech of the honourable member for Rangitikei was a most interesting one; but I would recommend that honourable gentleman not to sacrifice his opinions at the altar of his party. There is no one to-night who has spoken in words more damaging to this Bill than those that honourable gentleman used in reference to the second reading. He very justly said that the effect of this Bill would be to largely increase the cost of contesting an election, and that it will put representation in the hands of the wealthy classes. He also says that the effect will be to introduce minds of a larger character in this House; and, to show the perplexity he is in in reference to this matter, he tells us that there will be fewer able men if we restrict the field from which to select. His natural instincts are entirely against this Bill, because he knows it is a deadly blow aimed at the liberties and privileges of the people; and it is because I think so too that I shall vote against this Bill. And no one can accuse me of inconsistency in this matter, because I think it is very well known that last session I opposed the proposal to greatly reduce the number of members. I expressed my views in this direction: that, if a reduction had to be made, and it went back to the old number of eighty-four members, I was prepared to support that and no less a number; and during the late elections, at the

time when some honourable members stated that their constituencies were in favour of urging a reduction in the number of members of the House, I distinctly stated to my constituency the reasons why I supported the larger number of eighty-four; and, in my opinion, the reasons I gave justify me in adhering to that number, and I shall energetically oppose any number that goes below that. I should like to say, in reference to the number which is mentioned here, that it is a number quite incompatible with any fair division as between the two Islands, supposing it is carried. I took the opportunity of going over the figures as they now stand as between the two Islands, three-sevenths and four-sevenths, the numbers which have been carried by the Commissioners in making up the report of the list. You cannot make any use of these figures in such a way as is proposed in the Bill; some figure must be used that is divisible by seven. The Premier had very few remarks to make in introducing the Bill, but I could not help thinking that he was speaking of his own Bill with very scant courtesy by the very few remarks he did make upon it. He simply introduced the Bill, and beyond that he seemed to care nothing for it. In the few remarks he did make he gave us a comparison between the representation in this colony and in the Old World. Now, if that were carried out in proportion to the population of the United Kingdom, and carried to a logical end, I think it would prove to us that we are not entitled to more than ten members in this House at the present moment; because that is exactly what it means. He says the population in the United Kingdom, is 56,180 for every member. We have about ten times that amount, and therefore we are entitled logically to ten members. And then he tells us that in the United States it is 174,000 who sent one member; but, as was very correctly pointed out by the honourable member for Wallace, he did not give us any information whatever as to the representation of the different States. There are thirty-eight different States, and he said these States had a very large number of representatives. The Premier has not given us any information on that point. He has simply taken the number of members of Congress. And his figures in reference to Canada, are not satisfactory. He gives them as 20,888; but I think he will find that, *pro rata*, the figures are 17,000, and do not apply to our own case. I think what we have to consider is representation for our own people. It has also been very properly pointed out that the comparison with Victoria has nothing at all to do with us, because there they are so centralised that they are well represented with the members they have got, but here we are so scattered all over the country that, with a reduction in the number of members of this House, it would be impossible for us to have proper representation. At the present time many parts of the country districts are very imperfectly represented in this House, and, if we reduce the number of members by 25 per cent., as is here proposed, there will be many parts which will be utterly

Mr. Jones

unrepresented in the House. I take it that this is not a matter of the few thousand pounds which may be saved. We have been making reductions of expenditure very largely: in fact, in my opinion, we have fully answered the expectations of our constituents. It seems to have got into the heads of some persons that reduction of members is the same as reduction of expenditure; but, as reduction of expenditure has been agreed to, I am sure the constituents will go against this reduction of members. If they only study this question for one moment they will see, from one end of the country to the other, that, as they have now obtained from this House of ninety-one members every attention in the way of reduction of expenditure, they ought now to resent any attempt to reduce their full privileges of representation. The Government are making a very great mistake. I look upon this as a retrograde and mischievous step. For what does it mean? This Chamber, as now constituted, is divided into four quarters, and it means that one quarter is to be absolutely swept away altogether. Go a step further and there will be no need for this Chamber at all, as then all the work can be transacted in the Cabinet-room. It appears to be one of the ideas prevalent in the mind of a leader in this House, whether of the Government or of the Opposition, that the smaller the House the more easily it can be managed and controlled. If the present Premier, who has a very strong party here, is so strong in a House with ninety-five members, what will he be in a House with seventy-five? He and the members of the Government will practically have the whole business of the country in their own hands, and nothing will disturb them. That is the tendency of this measure, and it is a very wrong one. It has been pointed out by some speakers, and, I think, very justly, that this question of reduction in the number of members should not be gone into until the question of the enlargement of local government had first been brought down. Then this would have been not the leading step, but the sequence. And that is where the honourable member for Dunedin East made a great mistake in his speech in speaking of this as being the first step to take in the matter of giving proper local government. It is really the sequel to that. I cannot at all understand why the Government should be so anxious to bring this question before the House in the first session of this Parliament, at a time when there are such very important matters still to come before us, and so few days to attend to them. There is the Land Bill, there is the Public Works Bill, there are the money Bills, there is the Railways Bill—any one of which great measures is quite sufficient to occupy the whole time at our disposal; and yet we have this Bill, which is really not wanted, and which is most objectionable—objectionable not only to many on this side of the House, but to many supporters of the Government—we have this brought down, and, apparently, the intention is to thrust it upon us. I cannot understand it, except on this ground: that the Go-

vernment are afraid that if it does not pass this session the opinion of the country will turn quite round in reference to it, and, whereas during the last election, in some quarters, strong opinions were given in favour of a reduction in the number of members, a contrary opinion will be expressed on the subject throughout the country before very long. I cannot understand the Government pressing this measure on any other grounds, and I cannot help thinking that there is a great deal in the remarks of the honourable member for Te Aro. Whether what that honourable gentleman said proves to be the case or not remains still to be seen, but I, for one, say that whenever, next session, the Bills come down dealing with the tariff and other important matters, whatever the result may be, and whatever threats may be held over honourable members, I certainly shall vote on those measures exactly as my judgment directs me, perfectly independent of what effect this measure may have upon me in the future. Of course I shall oppose this Bill in all its stages, and I hope the ultimate result will be its rejection, because, as I said before, I think it is a retrograde and mischievous step, and a direct attack upon the privileges and rights of the people.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I purpose looking at this Bill from a disinterested point of view. I think a majority of honourable members have taken an extreme view of it. We have, for instance, the Defence Minister saying that this question was forced upon the candidates at the last election. Speaking for myself—and I think I speak in common with other honourable members—I had to educate my constituents on the point of whether it was advisable to have a reduction in the number of members or not. I spoke in favour of such a measure, because I felt that it would insure the returning of a better class of men to this Parliament, and would also raise them above the petty influences of particular localities and give them freedom to exercise their votes for the benefit of New Zealand as a whole. We have the honourable member for Dunedin East saying that it is a measure calculated to assist the poor man to get a seat in Parliament in preference to the present Act: but that is absurd, for any one who recognises the work of canvassing a district and arranging the electoral returns must understand that increased size of constituencies must mean increased expense. The honourable gentleman also asks, "Why should we not pass this Bill at the present time?" My answer to that is, that this measure should not only deal with the number of representatives, but it should also deal with the amalgamation of city electorates, with the distribution of seats, and with the franchise itself. In the early part of this Parliament I was of opinion that it was almost impossible to consider a question of this magnitude this session; and had the Government been prepared only to ask us to affirm the principle of the reduction of the number of members I should be able to support them with much greater pleasure than I can do now. I would draw their attention to

one particular point which does not appear to be provided for; and it is this: In the Act passed at the beginning of this year the concession made to country districts is only 18 per cent. as against the towns, and that may be said to provide sufficiently for community of interests in a House which consists of ninety-one members; but how is that community of interests to be preserved when the number is reduced to seventy-one? You run the risk of destroying that community of interests, and I hold that that is one of the main objects that should be borne in mind in adjusting the representation in this House—that is to say, that you should have as many interests as possible represented here. But what will be the effect of this measure if it is passed as it stands? It will mean this: that there will be a vast preponderating influence exercised on the part of town constituencies. In our cities we have half, or nearly half, the population of New Zealand, and this half are chiefly consumers and distributors, and they must live, and they must pass measures to enable them to live. I maintain, therefore, that they are likely to use influence in favour of matters in this House which will not be for the safety of New Zealand or for the interests of the producers in the country. For instance, there is a tendency in the towns to advance Protection as against Free-trade, and my opinion is that, under the system proposed in this Bill, we shall have a number of Protectionists returned from the towns, and the consequence will be that they will pass measures to benefit the towns at the cost of the country districts. I must ask the Government to consider the question of increasing the quota as between the country electorates and the town electorates. My own opinion is that we should have three classes of electorates. The honourable member for Nelson advanced the absurd idea that we should have all the reductions made from the towns. That is ridiculous. What we want is a proportionate reduction from the large cities. I think the members for those electorates should represent from 14,000 to 16,000 persons. Then, in the large towns—and I draw a distinction between large cities and towns, the latter numbering from 5,000 to 10,000 persons—they should have these boundaries extended so as to include 9,000 to 9,500 inhabitants. Then let the country quota be increased to 7,500, and then you would have a fair representation of the various interests of the community in Parliament—one member representing 14,000 to 16,000 in a city, one member representing 9,000 to 9,500 in a town, and one member representing 7,500 in the country districts. Now, the Hon. the Premier, in calling attention to the representation in England, said that they had one member for 56,000 of population; but he might have gone further and said that in England they have not got the hard-and-fast margin laid down in our Act of 18 per cent. difference between the towns and the country. Although 50,000 of population was the basis on which members were returned in Britain, still, we find that, in order to keep up the com-

munity of interests, even under the measure introduced by Mr. Gladstone in 1885, which added two millions to the electors, differences were made in the population of constituencies. For instance, we have in the Old Country such places as Windsor, Durham, and Newry returning a member for 15,000 of population. That is the minimum. On the other hand, we have Huddersfield, with a population of 87,000, returning only one member; Birkenhead, with 84,000, returning one member; and the maximum is reached in the case of Wednesbury which has only one member for 124,000 inhabitants. If this measure is to suit the various conditions of New Zealand—and it is far-reaching in its consequences and must not be lightly considered—it must be so adjusted that we shall maintain as far as possible community of interests in this House. Then, another important matter, which is entirely ignored in this Bill, and which is one of the reasons I have pointed out as making it almost impossible at this late period to deal with the subject thoroughly, is the question of the amalgamation of city electorates. There is not one word in this Bill which states that there is to be an amalgamation of city electorates. This is a cry which has gone up in various parts of New Zealand, and it is a necessity, and for this reason: that under the present system of divided electorates there is room for a majority of members to be returned to Parliament opposed to the interests of a majority of the electors in these constituencies. I will try to illustrate what I mean. Supposing that under the present Act they lose one member in Dunedin, and return three members, and in each of these electoral districts in Dunedin the number of electors is 1,500. We will say that the district is divided into electoral districts A, B, and C. In electorate A, 500 vote for a Protectionist and 1,000 for a Free-trader; in electorate B, 800 vote for a Protectionist and 700 for a Free-trader; and the same thing happens in electorate C. The result would be that 2,100 electors would return two Protectionists, and 2,400 would return but one Free-trader; so that a minority of the electors return a majority of the representatives. Then, the honourable member for Taranaki objects to the reduction of the number of members, because he says his particular part of New Zealand will lose a member. I consider that is one of the strongest arguments in favour of the measure, because had Taranaki in the past been represented by fewer members the probability is that the people in that part of the colony would have been subject to less taxation than they are at the present time, and the public-works expenditure of the colony would have benefited. I think that when any great measure of this kind is brought before us, involving the question of redistribution and representation, the measure should be accompanied by due provision for the fair representation of the various electoral areas in the colony. In other respects I have much pleasure in supporting the measure. I consider it is a step in the right direction, and

*Mr. T. Mackenzie*

part and parcel of the scheme the Government have brought down, and which, if carried out in keeping with their principles and on a fair and equitable basis, will be of vast benefit to New Zealand.

Mr. ANDERSON.—I beg to support this Bill; and not only do I do so on my own accord, but at the late election I promised my constituents, if this Bill came before us, to give it my best support. I have come to the conclusion that those honourable members who have accused the Government of wasting the time of the House and of keeping them from doing the business are treating them unjustly, because I find that honourable members in opposition are getting up in their places and making very long-winded empty speeches. This is to be deplored, because the session will only be a short one, therefore we should push on with all the important Government business, and let the unimportant private business stand over until next session. Honourable members' business may be very important in their own estimation, and I dare say it is of considerable importance in some cases to their constituents, but they must remember that this session we came to legislate for the country and not for localities. In listening to the speeches I came to the conclusion that there is one thing that is unjust in this Bill, which has been alluded to. I refer to the taking-away of one Maori member. My sympathies are with the Maoris, and it must be admitted that if these people were put upon the population basis of representation they would be entitled to six seats in this House instead of four, as they have at present. And if we were to reduce the number of the House to seventy or seventy-one the Maoris would still be entitled to four members. Therefore I think it is doing a great injustice indeed to the Maori race to take one member away; and I shall make it my business, if the Bill gets into Committee, to move in the direction of retaining the four Maori members. It may be said that this Bill is virtually law, because had it not been for the unfortunate mistake made by my predecessor in this House this Bill would have been law. That unfortunate mistake, I dare say, cost the country some thousands of pounds, and I am sorry to say that my friend the late member for Bruce could not explain his action in the matter to his constituents to their satisfaction. Well, seeing that this Bill is virtually law, it is a great waste of time on the part of honourable members to stand up and make so many long speeches in regard to it. The principle of the Bill has been already affirmed, and we should pass it and go on with other business, for any alteration that may be required in the Bill can be made in Committee. I have heard honourable members get up and say that if this Bill passes some constituencies will be so large that they will be unworkable. This House is very fond of taking the Australian Colonies as examples in a great many matters, and I may say that if we follow the example of some of the Australian Colonies with regard to the size of the electorates we shall have very big ones. Some



of the Queensland electorates are as big as one-half of New Zealand: and therefore that argument has very little weight. I agree with the honourable member for Te Aro when he said that the Government, in passing this measure at this early stage of the Parliament, are perhaps pushing the Bill too far forward, because there is no doubt about it the Government could hold the threat of a dissolution over the heads of members of this House; and we know what that means. However, seeing that the Bill is before the House and that we have wasted a considerable time over it, it should be pushed on notwithstanding this objection. The Government have hitherto possessed a similar power. It is the fear of getting wiped out that is troubling honourable members. I have given my reason for voting for the measure. There are plenty of honourable members who will speak and vote against this Bill; but it will be carried, although it seems to me to be brought forward rather early in the Parliament. However, if this Bill had not been brought forward and dealt with this session there would be great difficulty in doing anything with it in a future session. We had an example of that sort last Parliament, which we do not wish to see again.

Mr. BUXTON.—I am one of those who spoke on this question during the last election; and in my electioneering campaign, I said a great deal about this Bill at almost every place at which I spoke; and at that time I was in favour of the reduction of the number of members to just about the number now stated in the Bill. Since I have been in Wellington I have considerably altered my views. I am not at all surprised at that. I quite expected that I should, in some respects, alter my views from my experience here; and I am not at all ashamed to state before this House that I am intending to vote against this Bill. I am not at all ashamed of my constituents hearing of this. I told them on various occasions that it was quite likely, if they sent me to Wellington, that I should speak and vote contrary to what I stated when before them, and that if they did not approve of my action they could deal with me as they have done with their former representatives. I told them that if I altered my views in considering any matters I should hold myself at liberty to do so. I am not a blind follower of any man or men, but will speak what I think right and just to all people concerned. I did think it would be right to reduce the number of members to seventy-one. That was my statement almost everywhere; but since I have been here I find the honorarium has been reduced. I was determined that should not be done if I could help it; but, since this has been done, I think it is one reason why I should not vote in favour of this Bill. Another reason is, that I consider the country districts would be almost disfranchised if this were the case. At present there are for Christchurch and the suburbs, including Lyttelton and St. Albans, about eight members; and then if I take the district from Christchurch to Timaru—a vast area of country

—I find there are only four members. Now, if this Bill comes into force and the same gentlemen have the control and division of the districts as previously, the country districts will be almost disfranchised. I therefore think that if this Bill is passed, which I certainly hope it will not be, this House should take the division of the electoral districts under its own control. I consider that the towns should not have so many members, and that the country should have more. I cannot see at all why the country should be left with so few representatives and the towns be so numerously represented just because they have a few more people living thickly together. I do not for a moment think that the towns ought to have all the power they have. Hereford Street, Christchurch, and Princes Street, Dunedin, hold a tremendous power over the country round about, and if they have a vast number of members representing these towns they will be certainly, to a very great degree, under the power of gold, and the country districts will have to suffer. To my mind this will be a great injustice, and it is a reason why I shall vote against the Bill. Another reason why I think it is wrong to pass the Bill is this: We are at present arranging to sell the land to increase the population, and before three years are over we expect there will be, according to the present arrangements, a vast increase of population. That is hoped for, and if it comes about we shall not need to reduce the number of members. I therefore shall feel it my duty, and I think I shall have very good grounds to stand upon, when before my constituents, to explain to them my reason for voting contrary to what I told them was my idea of things when seeking election. I have listened with very great attention to many honourable members to-night; and, when I was listening to the honourable member for Mount Ida, I thought he gave a very nice, pithy, straightforward little speech. And then the Minister of Justice rose, and what did I find? He seemed to come forth with such power and dignity, as if he were really somebody at any rate, and as if he were going, with very little trouble, to confound the little member for Mount Ida; and he stepped forth on the floor of this House and shook his beard almost as if he were the king of the forest, and with great dignity he waved his hand over the audience, saying, "My little friends, you had better mind what you are about." It was almost enough to frighten us young people, such utterances of astonishment and wonder that any one should speak against this Bill. But, Sir, we are not so easily frightened, after all. We have a boldness about us, after all; and, although we have not the same power or the same authority and dignity about us as the Minister of Justice, who, to my mind, appears to hand out justice without mercy, we are still allowed to say what we think, and act upon it. I have not very much more to say on this matter, but I will stand by those who stand by the poor. There has been a great deal said about the

working-classes and the poor, but ever since I have been in the House wave after wave of legislation has swept over this House which has appeared to be against the working-classes. And I maintain that it is our duty to stand by them; the working-classes are the soul and life of the land, and it is our duty to stand by them. I believe in being loyal to the Queen, loyal to the lawyer, loyal to the clergyman, and loyal to the soldier; but I believe in being loyal to the ploughman and looking after the interest of the man that toils in the field. And I intend to stand by them and stand up for their rights. I do not intend for a moment to disrate wealth and intelligence. I believe in education, and I believe in intelligence and in wealth. I know we need these and must have them. But I do oppose allowing these mighty men of power to crush the working-man. I contend that the working-man has a right to a place in this House, and we have intelligent working-men as well as gentlemen of the higher classes to assist; and if the number of members is reduced and the honorarium is reduced these men cannot be present in this House to speak for themselves. I do not think we should place them in a position which would cause them to rise with brute force and violently take from the owners that which they have; but I believe they should have these rights loyally, honourably, and justly; and therefore I shall oppose this Bill, because I believe it is against the interests of the poor and the working-classes of society, and against the interests of the colony generally.

Mr. BARRON.—The honourable gentleman seems to have a peculiar idea of what is to the interests of the poor and the working-classes. His idea of the interests of the poor and of the working-classes seems to be that a large proportion of the money they can so ill spare ought to be taken and frittered away in a costly form of representation that is altogether beyond our requirements. No one who has thought the subject over can arrive at any other conclusion than that our appliances of government are far beyond the requirements of the colony, and there is no member in this House who does not know that the cost of these appliances in the matter of representation comes out of the pockets of the masses of the people. There have been many contradictory arguments used to-night against this Bill. Honourable gentlemen rose one after another in opposition to this Bill, and each one disposed of many of the arguments of his predecessors, and also of some of the arguments he himself had used against the Bill as he went along. But all have been disposed of in a very sensible remark that fell from the honourable member for Christchurch North, who said that he recognised the measure was justified by the voice of the constituencies. That, Sir, is the whole strength of the position which the Government takes up in introducing this Bill and asking the House to pass it. It is to give effect to the decision of the constituencies. Their demand has been clearly expressed during the election; and the certainty of that will be

shown by the numbers in the lobbies when the House goes to a division. The honourable member who has just sat down is one who was convinced that the demand was a reasonable one when he was before his constituents, and he acknowledged its reasonableness and said he would vote for it. He has now changed his mind in the House. Not that I say that that is a wrong thing. Sometimes a desire on the part of honourable gentlemen to be consistent outweighs their sense of what really is the right thing for them to do. Sometimes they are deterred from doing the right thing from the fear of being considered inconsistent. Therefore I do not say he is to blame for promising to do one thing and now doing another. But, in considering what the constituencies demanded, and what this House is prepared to give effect to, it is something for us to consider how much the promise of the honourable gentleman weighed with his constituents on this particular question when they returned him over his opponent.

Mr. BUXTON.—Perhaps the honourable member will allow me to explain. I said the reason why I should support the reduction of members was that I thought the honorarium should be increased to £300 if the number of members was reduced. If the number is reduced the honorarium should be raised to £300. This has been reduced, and I am not inconsistent in voting against this Bill.

Mr. BARRON.—The honourable gentleman wants to take out of one pocket of the people with one hand and to take out of the other pocket with the other. The honourable member for the Eastern Maori District raised one objection to the Bill—that is, that we should not disturb the special representation which the Natives now enjoy, unless it is with the desire to break down the lines of demarcation between the European and the Maori, and place all on an equal footing. I believe we should break them down, and, if the honourable gentleman moves as he has intimated, this Parliament probably will break down the last line of demarcation between the two races, so that we shall be merged politically into one people, having the same laws applying to all our affairs. One honourable member accused the Premier of inconsistency, because when he was a member of a former Government he increased the number of members. We ought to be very glad to see the Premier is not deterred by the certainty of being accused by members of inconsistency in this and other matters from doing what he now sees to be his duty; but I am sure the country will not desire to charge him with inconsistency, and will consider the benefits he is conferring on it now rather than the disadvantages they laboured under under the former administration. One honourable member says that the comparison with Canada and France is very unfair as applied to a rising young colony like this, whose circumstances are altogether different from those of other countries. The circumstances of Canada or of France may be scarcely on all fours with the circumstances of New Zealand. But again I would venture to

*Mr. Buxton*

point out that in Victoria they have got a Legislative Assembly containing eighty-six members and a population of under a million. The Cape of Good Hope has a population of over one million, and there they have a House of only seventy-four. If we reduced the number to a larger extent than is now proposed we should still be represented to a greater extent than Victoria or the Cape of Good Hope. Then, the same honourable gentleman accuses this side of the House of being the representatives of the property-classes. Well, Sir, to me it is a very amusing claim that some honourable gentlemen who are opposed to the Government so frequently seem to feel called upon to set up—that of being the only true democrats, the only representatives of the people in the House. Party lines have been, unfortunately, for some years not very clearly defined; but I think, if any side of the House is to set up a claim to be considered as acting in the interests of the people of this colony, it is this side of the House that might set up a very much fairer claim than the other side in that respect. The legislation that has been initiated and placed on the Statute Book this session has been more in the interests of democracy, and will go further in the direction of relieving the masses of the people of burdens placed upon them by their representatives in the past, than anything that has been done in Parliament for the last three or four years. But I may go further and say that the legislation of the past three or four years has been to a very great extent pernicious, and certainly against the interests of the people of this colony. The same honourable gentleman said that this Administration was supported by the absentees. In that respect he reminded me of the Irish gentleman who said that absentees were the curse of Ireland, and, that in fact, that unfortunate country was swarming with them. Perhaps, however, this administration may manage to do what its predecessors did not try to do, and make the statement good by taxing these absentees. Then, we have been told by one honourable gentleman that we have no time for reflection; that this measure is hurriedly brought before us, and that we are asked to pass it without due consideration. Why, Sir, the question was raised at least two sessions ago; the question was embodied in a Bill again last session; the House took no inconsiderable time to debate it; the House divided upon it, and the number—seventy—only escaped becoming the law of the land by the casting-vote of the Chairman; and I am reminded that the casting-vote of the Chairman might not have been necessary had one honourable gentleman remained true to the pledges to his constituents and to members of this House. Had that honourable gentleman not been guilty of a mistake in going into the wrong lobby we should have reduced the number last session, and probably that honourable gentleman would have had the honour of having again a seat in this House. The honourable member for New Plymouth said the effect of this Bill, if passed, would be

to increase the evils of log-rolling and coalition Government. Honourable members who sat in the last Parliament must have been exceedingly amused at that argument being raised as an objection to the Bill. If there were any two things which characterized the last Parliament more than others, it was the tendency to log-rolling and the evils of coalition Government. I hope we have minimised the tendency to log-rolling in this Parliament, and that we shall have no more of the pernicious system of coalition Government, which is subversive of all good government on true party lines. The main objection of the honourable member for Mount Ida to the Bill seemed to be that it is effecting what should be a gradual reform by a wrench, and suddenly. Well, there is a proverb that if you have a thorn in your foot it is of no use to change your boots—you must pluck out the thorn. Now, the people of New Zealand have a thorn in their foot, and that thorn is extravagance in the cost of government; and it is of no use to do anything else but pluck it out. To many it is to some extent natural to take a personal rather than a general view of this question. Of course it would be unfair to impute motives to honourable gentlemen; but one cannot help thinking of the reasons which may influence honourable members in either supporting or opposing this Bill when one notices during the debate that just those honourable members who might have been expected to oppose the Bill are those who do oppose it—those honourable gentlemen who unfortunately are in the position of feeling that, if the Bill passes, some local disadvantage is likely to arise to their constituency, or some personal disadvantage to themselves. They forget that, though the constituencies may be enlarged, the electors will still be represented. But I hope that honourable members generally are above personal considerations. We very naturally consider that, in the selection of ourselves, the choice of the best and fittest has been made, but we cannot help noticing that in many cases some of the oldest and most useful public men, men who were able, experienced, and valuable members of the last Parliament, have been replaced by other, younger, and probably quite as useful men. We very naturally take a personal view of the matter, and think our own individual services are absolutely necessary to the good government of the country; yet we may be forced to the conclusion that other persons may surpass us in the estimation of our constituents, and that they may enjoy the honour which we now enjoy, of a seat in this House, and that they may be superior to ourselves and more useful to the country. Sir, I hope this Bill will pass in its present form. I see very little objection to it even in detail. I am sorry to hear many honourable gentlemen say they hope if the second reading is carried it will then be set aside and be heard no more of this session. For my own part, I hope the Government will be in earnest in trying to push it through and put it on the Statute Book this session; and if it is put

there I am sure it will do more to raise the Parliament and the Government in the estimation of the people of the colony than anything which has been done for many years.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—I do not wonder at the honourable member for Caversham having complained of the fact of party lines in this House not being very distinctly drawn. I should think that every time he looks at the back of the Premier's head he must be struck with the fact very strongly; and every time he stands up to address the House he must remind the House very strongly of the days when, on the opposite side of the House, he used to denounce the Premier and all his doings in the very strongest language. I think it only fair to the party I now act with to draw this fact out. Now, a great deal has been said to-night in comparing this colony with other portions of the British Empire, including Canada and England, and with France. I think that is a most unjust comparison. New Zealand has a vast work of colonisation to do which the other countries which have been named have done, or, at all events, have not all to do, and their position is not at all like that of this country. No proper comparison can be made except by comparing New Zealand with such countries as Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania. This fact struck me during the evening, and I compared the representation with the population of those countries and what it would be here if this Bill were passed as it stands. And the figures are these, the proportion to each member being closely approximate:—

Colony.	Number of Members.	Average Population to each Member.
Queensland ..	39	5,600
South Australia ..	52	6,000
Tasmania ..	36	3,700
New Zealand ..	67	8,900

The figures as to New Zealand are assuming that this Bill passes and refers only to the European members and population. I think here we have a right to look forward to the population being enormously increased within a short space of time. When the country is developed, as I hope we shall see it very soon, we shall find a great increase of population—when the enormous mineral resources of the country are more fully developed, when the large tracts of land now waste are settled, and the equally large tracts now held by owners in large blocks, and which we hope to see soon subdivided—when all this is done the country will be capable of carrying an enormously increased population as compared with the present population. Considering the varied interests of the different parts of New Zealand, and the enormous length to which it extends, we have not too many members in this House. Now, I am rather in a puzzle to know what to do in connection with voting on this Bill. I am in favour of a reduction to about eighty to eighty-four members; but I find the Government are inclined to stick to the drastic reduction to

*Mr. Barron*

seventy, or, rather, sixty-seven, Europeans. Now, this, I consider, is too large a reduction, and certainly such as the colony does not require, and such as the constituencies did not demand at the last election. If my electorate were made larger than it is now it would take about four months to contest an election in it, and it would take a very long purse indeed to face the expenditure in connection with a contest. At the last election I had to address twenty-eight different meetings, and I was on the road from week's end to week's end, and I can say I prayed earnestly for the end of the election. If the electorate were made larger it would be almost impossible for a single man to contest it in anything like a satisfactory manner. If the Government will consent to a moderate reduction to from eighty to eighty-four I shall be content to support the second reading of the Bill; but if they insist on the full reduction proposed in the Bill I shall feel compelled to vote against the second reading.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I had not intended to speak on the question now before the House, but the reference made to the honourable member for Caversham by the last speaker has brought me to my feet. He has thought fit to refer to the position hitherto occupied by that honourable member, and has twitted that honourable gentleman with having deserted what he calls "his own particular side." The honourable member for Lincoln seems to forget the position that he himself occupied on becoming a member of this House at the election of 1881. Do we not know that he was a strong supporter of the present Premier in those days, and supported him during nearly the whole of that Parliament? I therefore think that, whatever other members of the House might feel with regard to the honourable member for Caversham, the honourable member for Lincoln is about the last man in this House who should have referred to him. Now as to the reference made to Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania. The honourable gentleman quoted the number of members in the Parliaments of each of those colonies, and cited them as arguments for the rejection of this Bill. Why, he could not have cited an argument more strongly in favour of the Bill. We will take Queensland, for instance. He states that they have only one member for each 6,000 of the population, and he also referred to the distance that he himself had to travel to contest an election; but I am quite sure that, if the honourable gentleman would take the average area of the Queensland constituencies, he would find that for every one mile that he would have to travel to contest an election in Canterbury he would have to travel ten miles in contesting an average Queensland electorate. The same must also be said as to the electorates in South Australia. The only point the honourable member appeared to make was as regards Tasmania, and there the population is so small as compared with the other colonies that the case hardly applies. I think, myself, this question has been sufficiently debated, both last session in this

House and before the constituencies, and I think we need not discuss it further. I, for one, support the measure with pleasure, and strongly hold that now is the proper session in which to decide it. We should recollect the enormous expense and delay that were caused at the last election owing to the Representation Bill not being passed at the proper time.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I am one of those who have been for some time of the opinion that the number of members of this House could with very great advantage be reduced; and I must say that I have not heard one single argument during this debate which would lead me to alter my opinion. But I shall find myself obliged to vote against this Bill; and I will plainly tell honourable members the reason why. Though I hold that the number of members should be reduced even below what is proposed here, and have supported the honourable member for Caversham when he has proposed that the number should be reduced to fifty and then sixty, I really think this is a most inopportune time for introducing a Bill of this kind. The Premier has told us that we are losing, in the shape of retrenchment, £500 every day that the financial proposals of the Government are not considered; and yet here we are spending our time upon a Bill which, probably, before the time comes for putting it into operation, probably three years, may not be required at all! It may be that the population will have increased to such an extent that the ten or twelve thousand of population required for a quota would be made up, even supposing the number of constituencies were left at ninety-one. At any rate, if the Bill goes into Committee—and I have no doubt it will do so, from the determination of the Premier—it will take two or three nights to put it through. Now, have we that time to spare at present? The Minister of Education has told us that if the Bill is not passed this session its chance of passing will be prejudiced, because there will be always difficulties in the way of passing a measure of this kind. I have before now pointed out to members of this House that there is great necessity for amending the Standing Orders, and I thought that amendment in that direction would be one of the first measures which the present Government would bring down, because there is no doubt that as the Standing Orders are at present framed there is a difficulty in the way not only of such a Bill as this, but of all Bills. No doubt the Premier will say that I have been a sinner in this direction myself. I admit it; but, at the same time, I am bound to point out that it is quite time these Standing Orders should be altered, so that no factious opposition should be possible under them. For the reasons I have given, I do not see my way to vote for this Bill on this occasion; but I wish it to be clearly understood that I am in favour of reducing the number of members to the lowest limit possible.

Major STEWARD.—I have only a few words to say in regard to this matter. When the question of reducing the number of members

was before this House in the last Parliament I voted for the motion of the honourable member for Moeraki—who now represents Wai-hemo—to reduce the number of members to seventy-one; and, Sir, my conduct in the matter was entirely approved of by the constituents I then had the honour to represent, and still have the honour to represent. Therefore I feel bound to vote with the Government for the second reading of this Bill. But one is not a little, I was going to say amused, but also surprised to see the attitude taken up by the honourable member for Caversham. It is not so very long ago since I regularly worked heartily with the honourable gentleman in endeavouring to do all we possibly could to defeat the objects of the honourable member who is now at the head of the Government. It is a matter of great surprise to me to see the facility with which he has executed a complete *bouleversement*, and now gives an entire and thorough support to the honourable gentleman in whatsoever he chooses to do.

Mr. BARRON.—No; only in the good he does.

Major STEWARD.—I thought that the reason the honourable gentleman gave for the change in his opinions was that the Premier had recently greatly improved.

Mr. BARRON.—Hear, hear.

Major STEWARD.—I am exceedingly glad to hear it; but we know that the enthusiasm of converts is proverbial, and the honourable member for Caversham is no exception to the rule. He seems to say that the measures of the present Government are more liberal measures, as I understand him, than any measures brought before the House for some years past. If the reduction of the Governor's salary, the reduction of Ministers' salaries, the reduction of the honorarium, and the general retrenchment so frequently spoken of are the measures that he refers to, then I have to tell him that those are measures that the whole country has resolved upon, independent of parties, and that they would have been brought forward by any party which had come into power. Therefore he cannot claim credit to the Government for having brought forward measures in response to the general wish of the country. Although I have said that I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill, I cannot help saying that I think it is to be regretted that the measure should have been brought forward during the present exceptional session. It has been shown to be an exceptional session by the fact that all facilities to private members have been taken away at an early period, without any complaint on their part, in view of the exigencies of the case. We have begun Monday sittings early, and in every way we have assented to the utmost despatch being shown in respect to public business that had to be transacted. Have we not some large questions of public interest which the Government are pledged to carry through during this present session? We have to give effect to the general policy of retrenchment, and the reduction of the estimates by a large amount. We have also the

question of the revision of the land policy, a Bill for dealing with which is under the consideration of a Committee of this House. We have also the question of the reorganization of our railway service, a Bill in connection with which has passed its second reading, and is now down for committal. Seeing that we have only about fourteen days before Christmas for the consideration of all these important measures, I am surprised that the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government should have brought down a Bill such as this, which must of necessity take not less than two or three days for second reading, committal, and third reading. As a justification for this Bill being brought forward at this particular time, the honourable member for Dunedin East has advanced the most extraordinary argument that there is a better chance of carrying the Bill at this session than at next, which will be only four months hence, because honourable members cannot be trusted to remember their pledges for a period of six months. What justification is there for making such a charge? I think honourable members have clearly shown that they are determined to fulfil their pledges in this matter.

Mr. ALLEN.—One honourable gentleman has forgotten them already.

Major STEWARD.—Quite possibly; but one swallow does not make a summer, although sometimes a single sheep infects a flock. I decline to form my judgment on one individual instance. Speaking generally, I say that the House—and the division will show it—will, in the main, fulfil their pledges to their constituents; and that by a large majority a reasonable reduction in the number of members of this House will be carried. If this could just as well be carried next session—that is, next April or May—as it can be carried now—and I contend that it could—I do submit there is no justification for Ministers, who are pleading the want of time for pressing important matters on with great urgency, in bringing down at the same time this Bill, which must of necessity bring almost every honourable member to his feet. The Government must take their share of blame for this matter if they find, by-and-by, that they have to drop proposals of importance. Let them hold this side of the House blameless of having delayed them in that way. If they had brought this Bill down for second reading with an announcement that they did not intend taking it farther than the second reading, but, to fulfil their pledges to the country, that they intended to carry out the reform, and would go on with the Bill next session, and that in the meantime the country could think about it, they would, in my opinion, have done wisely and well. As it is, we have it before us that this Bill is to be pressed through all its stages in this House, and possibly it will come down to us with amendments from the Legislative Council, and, at any rate, it will take us another two or three days. Although I shall vote for the second reading of this Bill, I regret that Ministers have not thought fit to postpone the time to

*Major Steward*

pass it into law until the next session, which must take place in about April next. Those are my distinct views on the subject. I hope yet that the Premier, when he replies, will make an announcement that he will be satisfied, if he carries the second reading by a good substantial majority, to rest at that stage and proceed further with the measure next session.

Mr. FISH.—I shall be glad if the House will permit me to withdraw my amendment.

Leave refused.

Mr. GOLDIE.—I do not intend to take up the time of the House in a lengthy speech to-night; but one cannot help dealing with some of the arguments which have been used by honourable members. I was surprised and amused at the statement made by the honourable member for Rangitika, who told us that he was not a blind follower of any man. It appears to me that he is not a blind follower of himself, for he travelled all round the compass, changed his tactics, and now is going to vote against his own conviction.

Mr. BUXTON.—The honourable member has made the greatest mistake.

Mr. GOLDIE.—The honourable member for the Dunstan told us that he came here pledged to oppose this Bill. As far as I am concerned I am pledged the other way. Most of the members from Auckland are pledged to reduce the number to fifty. I shall be only too happy in Committee to move in that direction, though, if it is carried, I may be sacrificing myself in doing so. I think that fifty members are quite sufficient, and we have had abundant evidence of that since we have come to this House. A certain number of honourable members have been doing all the talking, and the others have been debarred from taking part in the debates owing to the long speeches of those honourable gentlemen. If there were only fifty members, every one might have a chance of speaking. It has been said that it would be unwise to pass this Bill unless we are prepared to amalgamate the city electorates. I am opposed to that. Those of us who had to do with elections in cities with single electorates during the late elections know that it took us all our time to get our rolls pure, for it is a very hard matter to keep persons from personating. If you amalgamate the city electorates it will be a sheer impossibility to keep the rolls pure. As long as I am in this House I shall oppose the amalgamation of the city electorates, which would mean, I think, making it an impossibility to get honesty in elections. We have been told by the honourable member for Hokitika that in none of the other colonies have they attempted to reduce the number of members. I do not know that any of the other colonies have made the mistake that we have made here in having so many members in proportion to our population. In Queensland they have fifty-nine members; population, 333,000. That means 5,644 people to every member; and there are 11,330 miles of territory to each member. Many members complain of the distances which will have to be travelled if the number of mem-

bars is reduced here; but in New Zealand we shall simply have one member to every 1,485 miles, as against 11,390 miles in Queensland. In Victoria there are 11,533 people for every member; and there are 17,378 miles for each member in South Australia. So that in the other colonies they have not made the mistake that we have made here. Their representation is much smaller in proportion, except in the case of New South Wales; so that they have no need to make a retrograde step, as we are compelled to do in consequence of our folly. The honourable member for Te Aro told us that it would be an unwise thing to pass this Bill now, because it would put into the hands of the Government a power—namely, the power of a dissolution—which they might use next session on the revision of the tariff if defeated. It appears to me that, if the Government do not force this Bill through now, they will have a whip equally effective, because those who are pledged to support the measure and do not exercise their power in that direction dare not go back to their constituents. It has been said that the Bill ought to be put off this session because there are more important matters to deal with. The people are watching intently to see how far the pledges of members are being carried out. If you let this question stand over for one or two years, possibly the electors may forget the pledges made to them, and we shall be allowed, very likely, to betray our trust without meeting with that rebuke which otherwise we should meet if we did not fulfil our pledges. I think we should pass this Bill at once, and thus prove to the people that we are carrying out that which we are pledged to carry out. We are told that by reducing the number of members it will lead to a great deal more log-rolling than has taken place in the past. It appears to me that the result would be just the other way, because the fewer the members with whom to do log-rolling the less log-rolling there will be. Decrease the number of members, and the fewer logs there will be to roll.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the country districts?

Mr. GOLDIE.—They are always rolling logs. In the towns there are no logs to roll—all the roads are made by the Corporation. The greater part of the log-rolling is done by the country members. If you reduce the number of members you will reduce the quantity of log-rolling.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The Auckland members.

Mr. GOLDIE.—They do not do any log-rolling at all. It is necessary for us to carry out the pledges we have made. I wish to carry out the pledge I made, and I shall reserve to myself the right of moving that the number be reduced to fifty. I hope the Government will force through this Bill this session: then the rolls can be thoroughly prepared, and the country will thus be saved great expense.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—I hope the Government will press the Bill through as soon as possible. No measure was more fully debated throughout the country districts than the Bill

now before the House, and, as far as I know, the feeling of the people from one end of the colony to the other is that the number of members should be largely reduced. So far as I am personally concerned, I am not pledged in any way; but I shall certainly support the Bill, and I trust nothing will induce the Government to postpone the passing of this measure until next session. We know perfectly well the trouble and confusion which the alteration of the electorates made this year, and we know the very imperfect manner in which the work was done. We also know the trouble there was in compiling the new electoral rolls; and I think it is very important for the interests of the country, if we are to pass a measure of this kind at all, that it should be done this session, so that there may be ample time to alter the electorates and prepare the rolls. I trust that nothing will persuade the Government to withdraw this Bill.

Mr. CADMAN.—I have listened with amazement to the tenor of the speeches which have been made to-night. Fully three-fourths of the speakers have done everything but debate the Bill, and I, for one, am getting sick and tired of hearing so much twaddle talked in this House from time to time about democracy. My experience of the loud-mouthed democrat is that when he has made a long speech he never does anything more. My experience of the electors of this colony is that they think a yard of road of more value than a mile of speech. No one would think it possible that so many men calling themselves sensible businessmen, the chosen of the country, would talk the utter nonsense that we have heard this session. There is no doubt that the country has demanded that we should reduce the number of members of this House; and we are here to carry that out. The question, to my mind, is, Is this Bill of such vital importance that it requires immediate attention? We have had no reasons given us from the Government benches showing that it is of such vital importance. I hope that the Premier in his reply will endeavour to give us some reason. To my mind, if we have any time to spare for legislation outside retrenchment, that time ought to be given to trying to solve the problem of giving assistance to local industries. This is a matter that the country is crying out bitterly for, and I think it would be more to the credit of the Government if they invited us to deal with that question, rather than take up the time of the House this session on this Bill. However, the question is now before us, and the Government tell us that they intend to pass the Bill. I, for one, am pledged to reduction of the number of members, and I shall support the Bill. With respect to the Maori representation, there seems to be a consensus of opinion that the Natives should be put on the same footing as Europeans, and when the Bill is in Committee I intend to move for the repeal of the Maori Representation Act of 1867 and the Continuance Act of 1876. It appears to me that if that were carried the Government next session could consider the question of putting the

Maoris on the same footing with regard to electoral rights as Europeans.

Mr. BLAKE.—I wish to say a few words as to my desire to affirm the principle of a reduction of the number of representatives of the country. I, like other honourable members, have promised to vote for a reduction in the representation. I also promised to do my best for various other things which were supposed to be of much more consequence; and, as I said on a former occasion, I thought the Representation Bill was being forced upon us before it was necessary, when we had so many large questions to deal with this session. However, I have no objection to the reduction; but I do hope that, when the reductions are made, the towns will have a full representation, for the simple reason that I think that is the only chance we shall have of carrying the tariff in favour of local industries, and for that reason, when the Bill is in Committee, I shall vote for the towns to have full representation. I do not think that the reduction of members to seventy or any other number would do the country much more harm than the ninety-five have in times that are passed. We certainly have brought the country to a terrible pass by having a larger number than seventy members. I have not much further to say, except that I shall vote for the second reading of this Bill; but, like so many honourable gentlemen who have spoken to-night, I shall certainly not press for so small a number as sixty-seven, if the Bill goes into Committee, because that is generally below the number in favour of which the opinion of the country was expressed. I shall vote for the second reading to affirm the principle; but in Committee, like others, I reserve the right to alter the Bill.

Mr. BEETHAM.—I did not hear the remarks of the Premier in introducing the Bill; but I gather, from what I heard from the honourable member for Wallace, that he alluded to the position of America. The honourable member for Wallace seemed to consider that New Zealand is a nation entirely by itself. I am only anxious that it should be so, and eventually, I trust, it will be so. But, as I understand the matter, it appears that we are merely a province of a nation at the present time; so that I think the analogy he drew was not at all warranted in this case. As far as I could gather during my travels in America, it takes five hundred thousand inhabitants to make a State, though I may be wrong in this respect. The honourable member for Avon drew attention to the town districts, and I shall make a few remarks about the country districts. If this Bill goes through in its present form without a certain increase in the proportion of the number of members for the country districts, then, possibly, I might vote against it. I do not say I shall, but it will be the duty of those who represent the country districts to carefully consider the Bill when it goes into Committee. I was rather amused at an old politician like the honourable member for Waimate wondering at the Government bringing down a measure

*Mr. Cadman*

of this character at this period of the session. I think that the matter is very plain. Seeing the very remarkable unanimity that has been shown in dealing with the policy Bills of the Government, I think this is the very time to bring it down. We are carrying all their measures almost unanimously, and we are quite ready to do so in the present case, and I hope we shall carry it by a large majority. But I trust the Premier will allow the country districts to have a larger margin than is at present proposed in the Bill. I support the second reading.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—My intention is to support the second reading of the Bill. I have always been a consistent supporter of a reduction of members. In 1881 the honourable gentleman who has brought this Bill forward brought in a Bill to increase the number of members, but of course every one is allowed to alter the representation of the country according to its circumstances. But I would suggest to the honourable member in charge of the Bill that he should accept a second reading in this case, and allow the Bill to be committed on another occasion. I do not think it will be desirable to have the Bill coming into force until after the next census is taken. If the Bill is brought into operation before that time very considerable injustice will be done to many parts of the country. On the west coast of the Middle Island the population is very much increasing, and the electors of the West Coast have a voting-power very much in excess of that of any other part of New Zealand. I think the honourable member for Greymouth has about three thousand electors on his roll, and the number on my roll is about two thousand five hundred. Under any circumstances, it is desirable this Bill should not come into force until the next census shall have been taken in 1890,—or the Government might hurry it on a little to determine the redistribution of seats. A good deal has been said with regard to Victoria and New South Wales and other colonies in respect to their representation. We will take Victoria as the guiding-star, as it were, for the whole of the colonies. I say, without hesitation, that that is the most intelligent and best-governed colony in the whole of the Australasian group, without exception. We find they have only eighty-six members in the Legislative Assembly. We must bear in mind that in Victoria the large centres are not nearly so highly represented as the centres in New Zealand. Melbourne has a population of three hundred thousand, but they have not so many members to represent them in the Assembly as the Town of Wellington; it certainly has not got any more. I think in taking into consideration this very momentous question the Government should look at it from a very broad view. I think the representation of the towns should be very much curtailed, and the representation extended in the outlying districts. Honourable gentlemen may say that the expense of elections will be increased in the event of an enlargement of their districts. No doubt it will be. I myself speak feelingly.



In my district I have got twenty-one polling-places, and, although I was not opposed at my election, I attended some thirty to thirty-five meetings; and some honourable members may have had more. I think it should be taken into serious consideration—the possibility of curtailing the representation of towns and increasing that of the country. I do not know that I have anything more to say on this Bill, further than that I shall vote for the second reading. As I said before, I have always been a consistent advocate of a reduction of members in Parliament. In fact, on the occasion of the passing of the Representation Bill of 1881 I dare say the Premier will remember I warned him that the time would come when he would advocate the reduction of members in this House. I certainly think that seventy is, in the present circumstances of the colony, quite enough, and I shall vote for the Bill.

Motion for the adjournment of the House negatived.

Mr. SEDDON.—As a number of members wish to take the issue on the main question, I ask permission to withdraw my amendment.

Leave refused.

Mr. MOSS.—I was in hope that the amendment would be withdrawn, but I cannot, myself, go to a division on this question without expressing my views upon it. I have been very sorry to see, during this session, that these questions, which appear to me of exceeding gravity, have been discussed simply as if they were financial questions. I feel very certain that the financial aspect is a mere bagatelle as compared with the constitutional aspect in which such questions present themselves to me; for on the passing or rejection of Bills of this kind depend the future progress and liberty of the country. I have heard honourable members during this debate frequently refer to the condition of the old Parliament. I have heard it said that it was a much better Parliament twenty years ago—that the members were superior and the work was better done, and done at much less expense to the country. Sir, I, who know something of the history of Parliament, will venture to give that an emphatic denial. The old Parliament for some time was a kind of club, giving pensions to whom it liked, having gentlemen taken out of the public offices—employed there as secretaries and clerks—and putting them in the Upper House to make them Prime Ministers and Ministers of State; having members taken out of this House and made Resident Magistrates, and Under-Secretaries, and Commissioners of Bankruptcy. That was constantly done under the old *régime*. We have got rid of all that under the present *régime*, and, in doing that, I think we have made a great step in advance. It seems to me a very serious thing that we should now attempt lightly to interfere with the structure we have raised. Reference has been made to the great Parliament, the English Parliament. But will anybody suppose that the great mass of the people would be in the position they occupy in England if they had possessed a Parliament organized and consti-

tuted as this Parliament has been? Would the great mass of the people in England have been allowed to remain uneducated for so many generations, and in so many ways entirely neglected? Could that have occurred under a paid Parliament? I lately read a sermon, and, although the time is getting very late, will venture to quote from it. It is a sermon preached by the Rev. Stopford Brooke at the Bloomsbury Chapel on the 22nd December, 1883, and is one that is well worth reading. Here is what the preacher says:—

“No words, as you have heard of late, can exaggerate that which lies behind the stately edifice of our wealth and pride. Here, close at hand to this chapel, there are dens where decent folk live nine in a cellar scarcely larger than six of the pews in this church, for which they pay 5s. a week. It is the picture of thousands of rooms dwelt in all over this city, the filth and vermin and nameless horrors of which deepen year after miserable year; and every improvement made in this town for the sake of the greater comfort and pleasure of the upper classes, without previous provision for housing those whose dens are pulled down, increases this overcrowding, and raises the rent on those whose life is already crushed out of them by overwork, and whose wages for this overwork are starvation-wages; for work is almost as much overcrowded as the dwellings. There are thousands who cannot get any work at all, and whose lives are spent in daily despair; and while their souls are eaten away by this vulture their bodies are burnt up with famine. Famine is common in this town, and especially the famine of children; and the fact speaks well for the brutality of the first city in the world.”

The gentleman who spoke those words is one whom we ought all to honour for speaking in his place in such outspoken terms; and when I hear people speak lightly of the great mass of the people, and deride those who think that one of the greatest objects of Parliament should be to preserve them in the good position they now occupy, I think of this sermon. It is constantly said that persons talk too much of being the friends of the working-man: but that sneering style only comes from those who wish to rule selfishly. All they aim at is to see the mass of the people kept as humble as possible, and not to have the voice in this Parliament on behalf of themselves, their families and friends, to which they are entitled, and which they have in the past so well used. We have in this colony at the present time the great mass of the people certainly in a condition to which the words I have read are not applicable. Ought we not to be proud of that, and do our utmost to keep them in that position? And what engine is so powerful to affect their position for all time as this Parliament? Their whole future welfare depends on that. The rich can take care of themselves; they do not care how many members are here, or how they are paid, or whether they are paid at all; but, if this Parliament is to be kept in sympathy with the people, you cannot achieve

that without proper payment of members and adequate representation of the people. These are the two great aims to keep before us, and they can only be obtained by a full representation of the whole people. Surely, in presence of that consideration, the small amount of saving which might be effected sinks into insignificance and is not worth consideration. We have been asked by the honourable member for Rangitikei what is the difference between Democracy and Conservatism, and told that he did not think any one could explain it. Well, I will try and explain the difference. Democracy recognises the man first; Conservatism thinks of the property first, and of the man as subsidiary to property. Democracy aims at an entire divorce between society and politics; Conservatism would like to see those who, by their wealth or other cause, rule in society, rule also in politics. There is the difference; and there are honourable members who sincerely defend their own side, and each should credit the other for sincerity. I believe that democracy, and government by democracy, is the natural life of this colony.

Mr. BRUCE.—Will the honourable gentleman allow me to explain? My remarks applied to the terms as they are used in this House.

Mr. MOSS.—Well, I can only say that when I use the term "democrat" that is the sense in which I use it. I believe the honourable member for Rangitikei, from his large sympathies, is a democrat at heart, although in very bad company at present. Then, Sir, speaking of the constitution of this Parliament, surely there is one great and important point that should not be overlooked. Surely we ought not to forget, in our political arrangements, that this country, of all countries in the world, with the exception, perhaps, of Italy and Japan, is the one that has no great centre. Is this place the centre of the colony? Is the Press of this place the metropolitan Press? Is this place the commercial centre of the colony? Is it fitted in any way, commercially, socially, or politically, to be the centre of New Zealand? The answer to be given to these questions indicates a very good reason for our not following blindly the example of other countries, but for marking out for ourselves a course suitable for the country and for the people. All this has been considered in the past, and, although the ideas to which I am now giving expression may be fresh to the new members, they are well known to the old members of the House. Sir, we have built up this structure of the Parliament of New Zealand with great difficulty, and I should like to see it touched with reverent hands, as the foundation on which rests the life of the people of this country. This is a subject on which one might be tempted to speak very strongly. The hour is late, and I will not do so, although my feelings are so strong with regard to it that sometimes I feel a difficulty in repressing myself. Now, on the 13th August, 1881, very irreverent hands were laid on this Parliament, in the same way as now: without due consideration. Then the

Mr. Moss

number of members was increased, and the whole representation of the country altered. I admit it was high time to make some alteration, for the representation was most unequal. On that occasion, when the number of members was increased from eighty-four to ninety-five, I opposed the increase. I have just been looking up *Hansard* to see what I said, and this is it:—

"Instead of increasing the number of members of this House, we ought to have had the measures for local government which we were to have had at the early part of the session, but of which we hear nothing now. If those measures had been brought down properly framed, and carried in accordance with the wishes of the people, I am quite certain this House, being relieved of all local matters, and having nothing but broad principles of legislation to deal with, need not have held more than forty-five members, instead of ninety-five."

I also took the opportunity of saying—and it is very apt to the present occasion,—

"If we go on increasing the number of members in this House, and increasing the enormous departments in connection with it, we shall waste the resources of the country, and we shall not be able to find funds for local government."

Six years have passed since, and I feel now that I was justified in using those expressions. Then, with regard to the financial view of the question, let me state that at that time the colony was in a great crisis, and great steps were to be taken to settle its finances; and so it has been in every Parliament of which I have been a member. In 1879 the same tactics were resorted to as now. A financial panic was created throughout the country. It lowered our stocks then in the same way as a panic is now lowering them in London—a panic got up for special party purposes, just as it is now. In 1879, when the country was in this similar panic, this is what was said by the honourable gentleman now the Premier of the colony: "We are, I hope, about to take a new departure in finance, the proposals of the Government, if given effect to, insuring in the future a state of equilibrium between expenditure and income." That was eight years ago. At the same time the honourable gentleman said,—

"The country will be satisfied with no temporary expedients, and will submit to no makeshifts, but will insist on our finance being placed on a well-defined, solid, and lasting foundation."

The exact words, almost, in which we are addressed to-day. Now, once more, the finances are to be put on a lasting and firm foundation. Once more the honourable gentleman's supporters congratulate him on an honest attempt to grapple with the present difficulty. Who has not heard all that before? It has been repeated so often, and there is such utter absurdity in it, that I have scarcely patience to listen. Those who have gone through the fire know that panics have been created, and that political changes have been sought and effected under cover of that panic. Then,

another and most important failure in the administration in which the honourable gentleman has taken a prominent part for many years is the substitution of a system of local government for that which was so recklessly and wantonly destroyed. Instead of being an advance, it was from that date that our real troubles began. I ventured to say years ago in this House that we were making a very great mistake,—that we should be in greater difficulties than ever,—because we were laying the foundation for a political crisis to complicate the financial crisis sure, from our borrowing policy, to come. On the 4th August, 1876, the system of local government which had existed previously for a quarter of a century, and which certainly needed reform, was recklessly and unwisely destroyed instead of being reformed. On that occasion we were told that we should have, instead, a great triumph. There was to be a form of local government that would give to the country all the works it required without the necessity of parliamentary intervention. Those were the exact words of the promise on which the policy was accomplished. We have gone on for eleven years since that, and millions of money have been borrowed to bolster up and keep successive Governments in their places, without facing this great question and so bringing the colony into a healthy condition. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill. I do not see how I could consistently vote against it, as I have always maintained that the number of members should be reduced, and have opposed the increase which was previously made. But I hold that, with this Bill, there should have come down to us a measure of local government that would have made the reduction of the number of members still larger. We are told that the question of local government is one of insurmountable difficulty. I venture to say that in a week I could bring down a measure which, at all events, would set honourable members thinking; and that is all that any honourable member can aspire to. I would undertake to say that I could do that in half a week, and that, as the result of that thought, we should have something better than the present system. We have had the experience of five-and-twenty years, and we know all the defects of the old system. What difficulty, then, could there be in building up a new one on somewhat the same lines? We might have the great South Island managing its own affairs without constantly coming to this House. What difficulty could there be in framing a similar system for the North Island? It might be necessary to divide it into two or more parts; but what possible difficulty could there be in doing it? And now, when we have run the whole of our resources nearly dry, some such change is, I feel, inevitable. With the whole power of the country centralised in this Assembly, it is scarcely safe to reduce its numbers; it is scarcely safe to do anything that may reduce it to the old condition of a fashionable club, in which it existed for so many years in the early days of the colony. It is

scarcely safe to make the reduction of the number and the reduction of the pay go together without some measure of decentralisation at the same time. We should be careful lest we revert to the old times, of which we hear so much, when it was with the greatest difficulty that a candidate could be got to stand for the House. We know that on one occasion people were glad to pick up one gentleman as he rode past the polling-booth on horseback; and another gentleman, who has stood in the highest position in the country, was absolutely elected by his proposer and seconder, not another person being present. That was the condition of affairs in the old times, and that is a condition that surely honourable members would not like to see us reduced to again. I regard the reduction of the number of members without accompanying measures of local government with much doubt. If we could reorganize in the different parts of the country strong local governing powers, that would keep this House in check; if we could effect this great reform, with those local powers of government so organized that they should elect the members of another place, who would then be the guardians of local interests, the guardians of the liberties of the people, instead of being merely, as now, the nominees of the honourable gentlemen who sit upon those benches, their position would be higher, much higher, than it is, and one of great influence and respect throughout New Zealand. That is a vision which sometimes comes across my mind. I see powerful local Governments depending entirely upon themselves, managing their own railways, receiving their own revenues, and coming no longer as beggars for the crumbs that may fall from the General Government table. I see these local bodies electing to another place the honourable gentlemen who would then be the guardians of their interests and of the interests of the people. I see, in fact, the Government organized on a democratic basis; and I see this House full of life and energy, a democratic Parliament representing the whole people, and not a fashionable club, as it must be if this reactionary policy which is being pursued is carried out to the full extent. Therefore, while I shall vote for the second reading of this Bill, yet, when the motion is made that you, Sir, leave the chair for the purpose of going into Committee on the Bill, I shall be prepared to support an amendment that we proceed no further with this Bill until the Government has taken the sting out of it, the danger out of it, by bringing down some measure for establishing an effective and simple system of local self-government in the country. That is the amendment I should like to see properly moved, and I believe it would receive a very large support in this House. It would prevent the Bill from going any further than the second reading, thus affirming the principle of reduction, but giving with it the local government without which it may prove a serious danger, and seriously affect the power and, in that sense, the rights and liberties of the people.

Mr. TAIWHANGA.—I cannot make out why the honourable gentleman wishes to abolish the Maori members. But, if they want to abolish the Maoris, they do not want to abolish their land; they want to pass an Act to deal with their lands. I am willing that the Maoris shall be turned out of the House provided the Government will agree to pass my Bills. If my Bills become law—my Maori Land Bill and my Bill to repeal all the Native Land Court Acts, and give us the management of our own lands—I am willing that the Maoris should leave this House. I think we are old enough now to look after ourselves independently of the white people. I should like to see fair-play between the two races. If they do not want any of us in the House we are quite willing to have a Council of our own. I say that the Maoris should be allowed to administer their own affairs. I think I have the majority of the Maori people at my back when I say we do not want to “chum” with the English at all, because we have no chance even in any Court of law, and we have no chance in this House here. Here we are four Maori members against ninety-one Englishmen. If ninety-one oxen pull against four oxen, what are the four oxen to do? Of course, whatever we say it is of no good, because there are only four of us; for, of course, ninety-one can beat four.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I think that at this late hour of the night, the Premier having obtained the expression of the opinion of a large number of honourable members, he ought to be satisfied without carrying the Bill any further. The reason that has been given why the Bill should be read a second time at this sitting is, that honourable members are not likely to keep their pledge if the matter is left over to another session. I move the adjournment of the debate, so that it can come up again this session. I hope the motion will be agreed to. I have always opposed the reduction of members, and I think there are plenty of Bills on the Order Paper of much greater importance than this, Bills that can be given practical effect to, and which will be of benefit; while, if we pass this one, it will be of no benefit to any one for the next two or three years. I fail to see why the time of the House, which is very limited indeed, is being taken up in trying to place on the Statute Book a measure which is bound to meet with the strongest opposition, and which it will take several days to pass, if it is passed at all. I say, for these reasons, the Premier ought to be satisfied now, having had the expression of opinion of a large majority of the House clearly in favour of the principle of the measure, to consent to the adjournment of the debate. I move, That the debate be now adjourned; and I hope the Premier will consent.

Major ATKINSON.—Of course the Government is powerless in the hands of honourable gentlemen if they mean to be rebellious; but I shall ask my friends to see the Bill through before we rise, and I need say no more than that I cannot consent, under the circumstances, to any adjournment.

Mr. FISH.—Then the honourable gentleman

really means to tell this House that he intends to check anything in the shape of free debate. I am one of those members of the House who have not spoken on this Bill, and he tells us that he intends to keep us here until he passes the measure. If that is his intention, he will not gain anything by it, because another debate will be raised on the committal of the Bill. The honourable gentleman is clever, and sometimes too clever, and no doubt he will find himself so in this instance. He desires to save time, and has taken on this occasion, as he has done on every occasion, an opportunity of prolonging the debate, and inciting honourable gentlemen to an opposition that would not otherwise occur. He is said to be a tactician; but, in my opinion, he is about the worst tactician to guide a Bill safely through the House that I have ever seen. I understand that we are not at liberty to discuss the main question. Honourable members will be aware that in moving the adjournment of the House to-night I fell into a mistake, not knowing that I could not debate the question. I thought I might be able to speak on the adjournment; but I shall take an opportunity to raise a debate again on the committal of the Bill, and I think the honourable gentleman will find that his very clever tactics will not be successful. The honourable gentleman prevented the amendment moved by the honourable member for Kumara from being withdrawn, with the idea and view of burking debate. I, for one, am not going to be burked by the honourable gentleman, and he will find that he has made a great mistake in adopting the tactics he has adopted on this occasion.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I must object to the tone of the honourable gentleman. Until I am satisfied of the contrary, I have no reason to believe that the Premier of the colony, when he makes a statement, will not stick to it. I cannot understand the language of the honourable member for Dunedin South. I am prepared to deal honestly and fairly with the Premier, or any other honourable member, until I find him breaking his word. I have nothing to do with tactics. I do trust, seeing the second reading of the Bill is to be carried, that that will be allowed to be done, in order that we may get through the business, and I trust that there will be no more unnecessary bandying about or disputing the words of the Premier, until I am satisfied that he is not speaking the truth.

Mr. SEDDON.—The position of affairs is somewhat unique. I stated some time ago that I desired to withdraw the amendment, because of the feeling generally amongst honourable members that the second reading of the Bill should take place; and a number of honourable members who believed that several alterations should be made in the Bill did not feel justified in voting for any amendment that would postpone the second reading of the Bill. It was on those grounds that I asked leave to withdraw the amendment. The Premier, of course, refused to allow that to be withdrawn, and for this reason: He feared, and has just ground to fear, that an amendment dealing with the

question of local government in preference to passing the Representation Bill this session would be brought forward; and, having been warned of that, he suddenly became afraid, and, having the opinion of the House on that point, he refused to allow the amendment to be withdrawn. Now he refuses to allow the debate to be adjourned. I scarcely think it is fair. There is a reason given for the change of front by the honourable member for Sydenham which I disagree with. It is this: The honourable gentleman has been carrying on negotiations between the Premier and himself relative to the number of members. I have been given to understand that there have been some negotiations between the Premier and the honourable member for Sydenham, and that the Premier has stated that the Government—

Major ATKINSON.—I made no statement.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Intimated.

Major ATKINSON.—Nor intimated.

Mr. SEDDON.—I do not know what term to apply, but the honourable member for Sydenham is under the impression that the Government will not object to increasing the number to eighty.

Major ATKINSON.—He has not got anything of that from me.

Mr. SEDDON.—Seeing that a meeting of the Cabinet was suddenly called, I take it for granted that there has been a change of front since the debate has been going on. Perhaps the Cabinet has not come to a conclusion, and the Premier is not ready to give the direct answer that the honourable gentleman wants. If that is the answer—

Major ATKINSON.—There has been no Cabinet meeting.

Mr. SEDDON.—Of course I take the honourable gentleman's assurance.

An Hon. MEMBER.—A caucus.

Mr. SEDDON.—My honourable friend says there has been a caucus. I have no doubt the Premier has consulted with his colleagues on the point raised by the honourable member for Sydenham.

Major ATKINSON.—Not with one of them.

Mr. SEDDON.—The honourable gentleman ought to have done so, because the honourable member for Sydenham is very anxious to get a direct answer. He is dissatisfied, because he was led to believe, rightly or wrongly, that the Government is not going to stand by the Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I rise to order.

Mr. SEDDON.—The honourable member for Sydenham sometimes plays the part of the funny man of the House, and he is somewhat jealous of that rôle being taken from him. He told the House clearly just now that he expected an explanation from the Premier. I took down his words. He did not believe in the debate being adjourned, because the Premier was going to make some explanation. What is that explanation?

Mr. TAYLOR.—If you will give way and not waste time the Premier will tell you.

Mr. SEDDON.—The honourable gentleman is very anxious about this explanation; but other honourable members may not be. What-

ever those negotiations have led up to, he is satisfied with the answer that is to come. If it was against his wish, he would be among those supporting the motion for adjournment. Why I wish the adjournment of the debate is that the following amendment may have fair consideration. If the Premier had allowed me to withdraw my first amendment, I should have proposed the one which I intend to move, and we could have had the issue on the second reading of the Bill; but now there is nothing else for it but to deal with it when the motion to go into Committee comes on. It means a second debate, which will probably take up a greater time than if this amendment were put at once. I will read the amendment: That it is inadvisable that the Representation Bill proceed further than its second reading until the establishment of some simple form of local self-government shall have rendered dependence on Parliament for local works unnecessary. It was to move this that I asked for the adjournment of the debate; and, if the Premier had allowed my first amendment to be withdrawn, this could have been put without debate. These are my reasons.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—I should be very sorry to think that the statement is correct—namely, that the Government is not prepared to stick by this Bill. I feel confident there is a general desire on the part of the constituencies that there should be such a reduction in the number of members as indicated in the Bill. I trust the Government will not agree to the adjournment, but will press the Bill on.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I desire to say the same. I see no reason or force in the motion for adjournment. It is manifest that the country has spoken with no uncertain sound for reduction, and it is also manifest that a majority in the House are determined to have it. I would say, also, that, putting it on the low grounds of party judgment, if on no others, it is inadvisable for those moving the amendment to press the matter. Let us take the second reading.

Motion for adjournment of the debate negatived.

Mr. Seddon's amendment negatived.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at half-past twelve o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Tuesday, 6th December, 1887.*

First Readings—Third Reading—Governor's Salary and Allowances Bill—Municipal Corporations Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### FIRST READINGS.

Native Land Administration Act Repeal Bill, Native Land Court Bill, Maori Real Estate

Management Bill, Ministers' Salaries and Allowances Bill, Parliamentary Honorarium and Privileges Bill.

### THIRD READING.

Oamaru Harbour Board Loan Bill.

### GOVERNOR'S SALARY AND ALLOWANCES BILL.

On the question, That this Bill be read a first time,

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said,—Before you put that question, Sir, I think I should be wanting in my duty to the Council if I were not to call attention to what appears to me to be an omission in reference to this Bill, although, probably, I may be out of order in referring to Bills which have just come from the other branch of the Legislature. It will be within the recollection of this Council that, on a former occasion, Bills of this character which came from another branch of the Legislature were laid aside because certain provisions of the law had not been complied with. We had the authority, on that occasion, of a gentleman who is probably inferior to no other member of the legal profession in the colony, whose views on a former occasion I will take the opportunity of explaining to the Council. It was on the occasion of the third reading of the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill. Then the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker, to whom I refer, pointed out that the provisions of the Constitution Act had not been complied with, and moved that the Bill be laid aside. You, Sir, held that it was a motion which ought not to have been put by you, and you laid the Bill aside. Honourable members will perhaps pardon me for referring to the very strong language used by my honourable and learned friend on the third reading of that Bill. It had gone through the Council, almost; it had gone through its second reading, and had undergone a severe test in Committee. On the third reading of the Bill my honourable friend said, as reported in *Hansard* of 1886,—

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I must refer the honourable member to Standing Order 161, which is very clear on this point:—

“At the first and second reading of such Bill, the title only shall be read by the Clerk. The questions, ‘That this Bill be now read the first time,’ and ‘That this Bill be printed,’ are to be decided without amendment or debate.”

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—You will pardon me, Sir, but it is not for the purposes of debate that I make these remarks. Notwithstanding that Standing Order, I shall still call the attention of the Council to what appears to me to be an irregular proceeding.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—Then the honourable member is speaking to a point of order.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I am speaking to a point of order.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Then, why did you not say so?

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—Any one might have noticed, from the nature of my remarks,

that I was referring to what is simply a point of order. I think it is the duty of every member of this Council to point out what he considers an irregularity, and an infringement of the Constitution Act, such as that to which I wish to call attention. The Bill I refer to came up by message from the other branch of the Legislature; and I was about to point out that the language used on that occasion will fully express what was then done.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—Was it on the first reading or on the third reading?

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—It was on the third reading. But it does not make a bit of difference whether it was on the first or the second or the third reading. The honourable gentleman then said,—

“There is another portion of the subject which appears to me also of very considerable moment, and that is, that this Bill has come down from the House of Representatives, but I cannot find anything on record which shows that these appropriations have been recommended by the Governor. Now, our Constitution Act is very explicit on that subject. It is prohibitory on the Legislative Council or the House of Representatives to pass any Bill where there is an appropriation of money which has not been recommended in the first instance by the Governor.”

Then, he refers to the 54th clause of the Constitution Act, to which I will merely call attention. My honourable friend also referred to a case which occurred in Adelaide, pointing out the section of the Constitution Act of South Australia. The Speaker of the Legislative Council there ruled that it was a motion that could not be put. On that occasion the Hon. the Speaker said,—

“I am of opinion, under the 40th clause of the Constitution Act, that this Council cannot proceed with this Bill, as it does not come with a certificate to the effect that it has been recommended to the House of Assembly by His Excellency the Governor.”

I apprehend that we have no such certificate in this case. I do not know what took place in another branch of the Legislature, but my honourable friend referred to the fact that it was essentially necessary that the Bill should be laid aside; and the Hon. the Speaker said, “Perhaps the best procedure is that I should lay the Bill aside. I may say that really I could not myself put the question. I lay the Bill aside.” I would point out to you, Sir, and the Council that this is exactly a similar case—it is, in fact, a much stronger case than that to which I have referred in connection with the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill; and I ask your ruling, Sir, as to whether the Bill should go further.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The case has been put very clearly. The ordinary rule is, that in the case of the imposition of taxation the Crown has to recommend. But these careful guards are dispensed with where the question of the Bill concerns not the imposition of fresh taxation, but the alleviation of taxation which exists. In such cases—that is, where there is to

be a relief to the country—these precautionary measures are dispensed with. On page 633 of the last edition of May's Parliamentary Practice it is said, "It must always be borne in mind that the House can entertain any motion for diminishing a tax or charge upon the people, and Bills are frequently brought in for that purpose without the formality of a Committee;" and, as I think this Bill is to relieve the burdens of the people, it can be proceeded with.

Bill read a first time.

#### MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS BILL.

##### ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said he moved the adjournment of the second reading of this Bill because he was under the impression that the Bill had not been sufficiently considered by those bodies which it purported to affect. Probably honourable members would pardon him if he went back a little to the history of Municipal Corporations. So far as he was able to remember, the first Municipal Corporations Act was passed in 1867. Prior to that, in 1865, there had been an Act passed in the Provincial Council of Otago affecting one of the very questions referred to in this Bill. He recollected the Act of 1867, because he had the privilege, he believed, of being the first person ever elected under that Act; and one point which made the matter so fresh on his memory was this: that one of the principal questions which were then agitating the Borough of Wellington was that the Mayor should be elected by the people, and not in the manner in which he was then elected. Under the Act of 1867 the Mayor was elected by the Council: in 1875 the Act was altered, and the burgesses had the right to elect their Mayor in the same manner as the Provincial Ordinances of Otago provided. That remained the law until 1876, when the past Acts were repealed, and the provision with reference to the election of Mayors of boroughs was left in the same manner as had been provided in the Provincial Ordinances of Otago in 1865. The whole of the Acts affecting municipalities were consolidated in 1886, and that Act repealed, he thought, fifteen Acts of the General Assembly, and about forty ordinances; and there, again, it was decided that the Mayor should be elected by the burgesses. That being the state of the law since 1876, he was at a loss to understand why the honourable gentleman who introduced this Bill should have given no explanation of the change, except that a Municipal Conference recently held in Wellington recommended that a change of the nature of that proposed in this Bill should take place. He had not heard from persons interested in the matter that such a change was desirable; in fact, he believed that the very opposite was the general opinion, and that the people preferred to have the election of the Mayor in their own hands, rather than that the election should be made by the members of the Councils. These Councils would probably, in time, see that every single member of the Council was elected in turn Mayor of the city. He thought it was a pity

that, at this time in the history of the colony, when everything was done by the voice of the people, Parliament should deprive the people of the privileges which they enjoyed, and relegate to the Councils the duty which was cast upon the citizens as a whole. There were some very serious objections to this Bill which he proposed to refer to. If honourable members would look at subsection (11) of clause 2 they would find a matter which he thought his honourable friend had not explained, and which required some explanation before Parliament gave it the force of law. It was this: "The Council may, in anticipation of the ordinary revenue of the general account, from time to time borrow money from the bank by way of overdraft." As a rule, the overdraft was in the bank; but it was now proposed that, when a Municipal Corporation was unable to pay its overdraft, it might borrow money to pay that overdraft. That was the simplest way of keeping accounts he had ever heard of. It was exactly in the same position as a man who owed another man money and borrowed the money from the lender in order to pay the money that was due. There must be something in that which required explanation. As long as he (Mr. Buckley) remembered, the Council had invariably set its face against retrospective legislation. If honourable gentlemen would look at the 3rd section of the Bill they would find a piece of retrospective legislation, as he thought nobody would deny:—

"Every Borough Council shall have, and shall be deemed to have had, from the date of the commencement of the said Act, authority to apply any part of the borough funds for the under-mentioned purposes, that is to say,—"

"(1.) In payment to the Clerk of each Licensing Committee within the borough of such sum as the Council shall from time to time think fit; and in defraying the necessary law expenses incurred by any such Licensing Committee in connection with the administration of 'The Licensing Act, 1881;' or

"(2.) In payment of the cost of preparing and passing through Parliament any Bill affecting the interests or property of the borough, or Corporation, or Council, or burgesses, or inhabitants thereof."

Subsection (3) was one which his honourable friend had given no explanation of, and it was a provision which he was quite sure the Council would not in any seriousness allow to become law. The subsection was as follows:—

"(3.) In payment of the actual travelling and hotel expenses of the Mayor or any Councillors who may be deputed by the Council to attend at the seat of Government on any Minister of the Crown or on Parliament on any business affecting the interests of the borough."

He thought if that provision were allowed to remain there would be a very large influx of population to Wellington from time to time. Subsection (4) gave power to Councils to give aid to public libraries, *et cetera*. He would now call the attention of the Council to the 4th clause. Here, again, he must say, the Hon. Mr. Stevens had given the Council no explanation

of the clause. The honourable gentleman told the Council that, with the exception of the first provision to which he referred, the Bill was merely a machinery Bill, or that most of the clauses were machinery clauses, and required no explanation. Subsection (1) of clause 4 referred to the retiring-allowances to be paid to any officers of the Corporation, and stated that those allowances were to date from the commencement of "the said Act"—namely, 1886. The ratepayers were to be burdened with retiring-allowances to be given to old officers of the Corporation. He was not one of those to prevent an old officer getting any retiring-allowance which he was entitled to; but the council had objected to giving pensions in future, and it seemed strange that in the Municipal Corporations Bill they should introduce any such legislation as this. He would call the attention of the Council to clause 6: not that he would object to validating the debenture referred to, but he thought it was a wrong place in which to put such a provision. He thought it should be inserted in some Bill having reference to the Borough of Oamaru. Probably that was a Committee amendment, which might be easily arranged for. There was another piece of special legislation with regard to private streets, and he wished particularly to call the attention of the Council to what appeared to him to be a local Bill, and that was clause 8, with reference to streets on Scinde Island, Napier. The rest of the Bill appeared very desirable to be enacted; but he thought the Council would do very wisely, having had the Bill before them, seeing the late period of the session, and seeing that there was hardly a possibility of an election of a Mayor taking place before next session, if they refused to allow this Bill to go any further. He did not wish to oppose anything that was good in the Bill, but he thought his honourable friend would consult the best interests of the boroughs if he took that course. He would only say further that he would vote against the Bill, but he would not make any motion in regard to it.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said he entirely agreed with the views expressed by several honourable members in the Council as to the inexpediency of the change proposed to be made in the manner of electing Mayors of boroughs; and he was confirmed in that view by his recollection of what occurred before the last change was effected. His honourable friend opposite had told the Council that the Act of 1867 provided that the Mayor should be chosen by the Municipal Councils. Between that time and 1875 it was observed that individual Municipal Councils were constantly endeavouring, by Bills introduced in the House of Representatives, to effect a change in that direction. None of the municipalities were more persistent in that object than Christchurch. In 1875 a Bill was introduced by the Hon. Mr. E. Richardson, who was a member of the Ministry of which he (Dr. Pollen) was also a member, providing that the proposed change should be made with respect to the Borough of

Christchurch. In view of the very wide expression of opinion which was known to have been made with respect to the advisability of the change, it was determined by the Government that the operation of the law should be made general; and in 1875 he (Dr. Pollen), being then a member of the Ministry, introduced a general Bill in the Council. He did not know what was the status of the Convention which had recently been sitting in Wellington representing the municipalities of the colony. He did not know whether they were delegates of the municipal bodies themselves, or whether they appeared as representatives of the ratepayers of the cities. He was quite sure, looking at past experience, that the views of the Councils themselves on the particular point under consideration differed from the views of the ratepayers generally. In the absence of any more complete information than the Council had on the subject, it would not be prudent to make such a change now as they were invited to make. There were concessions to what he called democratic principles which were not to be retraced; this was the power of electing executive officers, which, whether it was good or bad in principle, would not be readily yielded up by those who had been enabled to exercise it. He was not sure that it would be desirable, as a matter of administration, that this should be altered at present. He was not sure that it was not desirable that in the different Municipal Councils not a section of the ratepayers but the whole of them should be represented—that not purely local interests but the interests of the municipality as a whole should have a voice in the determination of questions affecting the municipality as a whole. He looked on an elected Mayor as representing the whole of the ratepayers and the general interests of the city; that, in fact, he served the purpose of what one might call a "second Chamber." It was a check upon hasty legislation; it was to be hoped that it was also a check upon the growth of jobbery and corruption, which was not an uncommon excrescence upon local bodies of that kind. He hoped, therefore, if the Bill was allowed to go into Committee, that that portion of it, at least, would not be allowed to become law. As for the rest of the Bill, he thought it desirable that some of the changes should be made; and he thought that some of the objections to the changes proposed were Committee objections that could very well be disposed of.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE agreed with the Hon. Mr. Buckley and the Hon. Dr. Pollen that it was scarcely expedient during the present session to proceed with such an important alteration as was proposed in the first part of the Bill. He thought that if honourable members took the matter up seriously they would find that it would lead to great discussions in both Houses of Parliament, and perhaps the fate of the Bill itself would be jeopardised. There were doubtless some provisions in the measure which it was desirable should be passed, but he doubted the desirability of the change proposed to be made in the mode of election of Mayors. He remembered

*Hon. Mr. Buckley*



the circumstances preceding the establishment of the last change. He noticed that at that time there was a good deal of dissatisfaction in the working of the Corporations, and that there were such things as Corporation rings known. Persons were well aware that unless they were acting with a certain municipal ring it was impossible to get anything they desired advanced; while if they were acting in concert with that ring everything was made smooth for them. The discontent with that state of things was very wide indeed, and it was expressed in the Legislative Council by the Hon. Mr. Holmes; and, unless his memory misled him, it was at that honourable gentleman's suggestion that the Bill was made general in its operation, so as to apply to all the municipalities in the colony. The result of that change was to put down, at any rate, these municipal rings. They had heard no more of these rings since that change was established. He did not know that there had not been some counterbalancing disadvantages. He was rather inclined to think the fact had been that persons, recognising that the highest civil honour was no longer in the gift of the Corporation, did not offer themselves for election as Municipal Councillors, and therefore one effect was to lower the status of Municipal Councils. But, on the whole, the two bodies had, as had been indicated by the Hon. Dr. Pollen, acted more or less as a check on each other—the Corporation watched the Mayor and the Mayor watched the Corporation; and it was almost impossible, he thought, for anything like the system which had prevailed prior to the change to be again established. One thing was clear, that the matter had been brought forward rather suddenly; and no evil could possibly arise from its being held over for public consideration until next session of Parliament. He was inclined to think that there was a public feeling in favour of the alteration, otherwise it could scarcely have been recommended by the last Municipal Conference. The change was supported by Mayors who were themselves elected by the burgesses. If the change had not been approved of by the burgesses generally, he thought that the Mayors who had generally supported the alteration now proposed would scarcely be found advocating the change. With regard to the other matters in the Bill, there were several deserving of a good deal of consideration. However, they were all matters of detail, and he would reserve his views in regard to them until the Bill was in Committee. He thought, however, it was very desirable, as regarded the first portion of the Bill, that the honourable gentleman should not press that on. He thought it was the general desire of the Council that it should not be proceeded with this session. He would keep his own action free in the matter, for he was very doubtful what course it would be best to adopt under the circumstances, and he would like further time to mature his views.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL thought that the honourable gentlemen who had spoken had not adverted sufficiently to the highly-retrospective

proposals contained in clauses 3, 4, 5, 6, and in subsection (2) of clause 7. Subsection (3) proposed to condone a variety of irregularities, perhaps wisely, but members of the Council had no time to ascertain whether wisely or not; and therefore he thought they ought not to entertain the proposal. Clause 4 was another section which proposed that its provisions should be deemed to have been in force since the commencement of "the said Act," which was the previous Act. Subsection (5) authorised the payment of unauthorised expenses in respect to the Jubilee expenditure. Subsection (6) was intended to whitewash the Borough of Oamaru, apparently, to a certain extent; and then, again, this objectionable phrase occurred: "It is now hereby declared that the above-dated debenture shall be deemed to be and to have been valid from the date of the issue thereof." That phrase constantly occurred throughout these clauses. Section 7 provided something with regard to streets which he really had not had time to look into. It provided that the streets referred to therein should be deemed to have been lawfully made. Section 8, as had been already stated, was really a local Bill, with regard to which the Council ought to have more particular information. The attention of the people affected by this clause ought to be called to it by its appearing in the form of a local Bill, with the necessary notices. He thought if the Bill were taken from clause 9—he was speaking on hurriedly glancing through it—it might be of such a nature that it might be well to proceed with it; as for the other clauses, they were all more or less objectionable. As to the proposed alteration in the mode of election of Mayors, he distinctly remembered the state of affairs which the change was intended to put an end to. He had hoped it was put an end to. There might be those who wished to recur to that state of affairs, and it was in their interests Parliament was asked to make the alteration; but in the interests of the public and the ratepayers the Council ought to keep the law as it stood.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said the Hon. Mr. Buckley was mistaken in supposing that he had described the greater portion of this Bill as mere machinery. That portion of the Bill to which he referred as mere machinery related to the audit clauses. He was quite aware that there would be more or less difference of opinion in regard to the method of electing the Mayors of boroughs. The remarks which had been made by his honourable friend Dr. Pollen in regard to the Conference, and his doubting the status of those who attended the Conference, were, he thought, not to be accepted. He believed that the views expressed were growing views in the country. The present system was not adopted in the county system. It was peculiar altogether to the election of Mayors of boroughs. He believed that, if the time was not altogether ripe for the acceptance of the proposed change, it would not be very long before it met with general acceptance. Without spending too much time in arguing the question, he would simply say that he

looked upon many elections as a very great evil. The country was, so to speak, smothered in elections. Here was one which, he thought, was no protection whatever to the public, as was supposed in some quarters, which entailed considerable expense, which disturbed the public mind, and took people away from their employment. He was not aware whether it was generally known that in these elections they failed to comply with the principles which regulated the election of members of the House of Representatives. In elections of members of the House of Representatives there were certain safeguards which were utterly uncomplished with in the election of Mayors. The mayoral elections were governed by the Regulation of Local Elections Act, which was certainly far less stringent than the system of elections that prevailed for the representative Chamber of Parliament. Of course he was quite aware that that might be cured, if it were thought desirable, by applying similar safeguards to the municipal elections. He did not propose to take any action in the way of moving that the clause be struck out when the Bill was in Committee. He would far rather leave the matter for the Council to decide for itself. There were some criticisms on other clauses of the Bill. The Hon. Mr. Buckley had attacked clause 3, and he had pointed out, as other honourable members also had pointed out, that it authorised certain payments which were not allowed by the Auditor. The matter was very trifling, and he would have explained it in moving the second reading of the Bill, but did not wish to take up the time of the Council in doing so. In reference to subsection (1) of clause 3, although it was necessary to appoint a Returning Officer to conduct the proceedings in connection with the election of a Licensing Committee, and the whole of the revenue went to the Corporations, it was not in the power of the Auditor to allow any fee to be paid; and it must be clear to every one that such a state of things was not fair, or satisfactory in any way. These payments had been made, and it was desirable to obtain for the past year the power to authorise the payments, and to authorise them for the future. He could hardly conceive it possible that any objection could be offered to such a reasonable provision as that those who received the whole of the revenue should be asked to pay the necessary expenses in connection with the administration of the Licensing Act. Then, subsection (2) of clause 3 was not objected to; so that he need not refer to it. In regard to subsection (3) of this clause, which provided for the payment of the travelling and hotel expenses of Mayors and Councillors attending in Wellington, while Parliament was sitting, on business affecting the interests of their boroughs, he thought the idea that there would be a crowd of Councillors in Wellington, and that the expenses would be great, was imaginary. He had been in Wellington during many sessions, but had never seen the immense crowds which it was supposed would invade the city on such an occasion. At the same time it was a reasonable

*Hon. Mr. Stevens*

thing that Councillors whose services might be of value in the preparation or conduct of any Bill before Parliament should be free of any expense, and they should be reimbursed. The same remarks would apply to the objections which had been raised to clause 4, which provided for retiring-allowances and the relief of sufferers by accidents. It would be a harsh thing to refuse to grant such retiring-allowances, or a compassionate allowance to the widow or family of any officer who died while in the service of a Corporation. These allowances would be a recognition of their services, and would possibly preserve their families from penury. He hoped the Council would not take any harsh view, but would agree to this provision. With regard to the 6th clause, which validated the Oamaru Corporation debenture for £5,000, it had been said they were whitewashing the Oamaru Corporation; but he would point out that the clause was simply to cure a technical defect. With respect to clause 8, which contained special provisions as to streets on Scinde Island, in Napier, he would explain the circumstances of that in Committee, when he had no doubt the Council would be satisfied that it was a reasonable clause. These were mainly all the objections which had been raised to the Bill. He trusted the Hon. Mr. Buckley would not continue in his opinion that this Bill should be abandoned this session. It contained powers in regard to electric lighting which, he ventured to think, would be a very great boon to the colony, and of great assistance to boroughs. He might say that the provisions in reference to audit and the keeping of accounts were indispensable if the audit was to be satisfactory, and this would only be in accordance with the often-expressed views of honourable gentlemen at other times. He hoped honourable gentlemen would allow him to take this Bill into Committee, and they would see what honourable members had to say about the clauses on their merits.

Bill read a second time.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to four o'clock p.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

*Tuesday, 6th December, 1887.*

Mr. BROWN—Military Training-schools—Borough Council Endowments—Chinese—Hokitika Harbour-works—Market Railway-tickets—Adjourning—Order of Business—Representation Bill.

MR. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

MR. BROWN.

MR. PYKE—in moving, That leave of absence be granted to Mr. Brown for the remainder of the session, on urgent private business—said that Mr. Brown had been prevented from coming out in consequence of the illness of his

mother, and would have been here by the last steamer but for that circumstance.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, I have no wish directly to oppose this motion, but it does seem to me that the House should have had some fuller information given by the honourable gentleman asking for this leave. It is a very extraordinary thing for a member to absent himself for a whole session from his duties in this House. I doubt, myself, whether it is not the duty of the House, under these circumstances, to leave it to the constituency to determine whether they desire to have a member who absents himself for that period, for some private business—although, in this case, of a semi-private nature, but still private business; whether we are justified in taking away the right of constituencies, which is, as given by the Standing Orders, that, if a member neglects his duties for the whole session, the member shall forfeit his seat.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Two sessions.

Major ATKINSON.—No, one session.

An Hon. MEMBER.—He was not here last session either.

Major ATKINSON.—He was not here last session either: but that does not make any difference. I say it is a matter for consideration whether we are justified in depriving the constituency of their right to reconsider their decision. I am not prepared to advise the House under all the circumstances, but I think we should not allow such a matter to pass by in silence without, at any rate, having it on record that the matter had been brought under the notice of the House.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I rise to a point of order. I wish to raise the question as to whether it is competent to put this question at all. Earlier in the session, you may recollect, Sir, I referred the matter to you, and you told me that in your opinion it was not competent to give a member leave of absence until he had been sworn in and had taken his seat. It is a very important question, and one which we should not be hurriedly rushed to a conclusion about. I may point out that instances of difficulty might occur if we passed a resolution of this kind, which would be contrary to previous practice elsewhere. The most recent case in the Imperial Parliament is that of Mr. Bradlaugh, who was not allowed during the whole Parliament to take his seat or be sworn in; yet it was never considered necessary to ask for leave of absence for him. Similarly, the late Baron Rothschild was not allowed, for two Parliaments, to take his seat; and there have been other cases of the same kind. It appears to me that until a member has been sworn in and has taken his seat it is not right to give him leave of absence, for he has not come before us as a member. That was your opinion, Sir, earlier in the session, and had it been otherwise I should have moved for leave of absence, if it had been necessary, for Mr. Brown, but you informed me that it was not necessary to ask for leave. I submit that, on that account, the motion should not be put.

Mr. SPEAKER.—My impression at first was

that Mr. Brown was not a member until he had been sworn in; but Mr. Brown wrote to me a few weeks ago, and I have looked at the matter more closely since, and it appears to me that the Constitution Act does really recognise any one in Mr. Brown's position as a member, because this is the language used in the Constitution Act in reference to swearing in a member: "No member of the said Legislative Council or House of Representatives shall be permitted to sit or vote therein until he shall have taken and subscribed the oath." From this I infer that Mr. Brown is entitled to all the privileges of a member except those of sitting and voting. I say, then, that on looking more closely into the law it appears to me that it does recognise any one declared duly elected as a member, even though he has not taken the oath; and, bearing that in mind, and knowing the honourable gentleman had been declared duly elected, I thought, when I was consulted yesterday by the honourable member for the Dunstan on the subject, that he would be in order in making this motion for granting leave of absence, especially as I feel sure Mr. Brown's non-attendance here during the session will inevitably forfeit his seat unless the House grants him leave of absence. As regards the case of Baron Rothschild, who was for some ten years a member of the House of Commons without taking the oaths, he was so far recognised as a member that he was appointed a member of a Committee for drawing up reasons for disagreeing with the Lords' amendments to the Oaths Bill, and was one of the Managers at a Conference on the subject. I might be allowed to read a few lines from Mr. Brown's letter to me, showing that he was very earnestly desirous of being here. Writing on the 7th October, he says,—

"I had arranged to leave here by the last Frisco mail; my passage was taken out and my luggage on board the steamer at Liverpool, when I received word that my mother was seriously ill. She is eighty-seven years old, and, as I had not seen her for thirty-six years until I arrived here in April last, and may never see her again, I thought it my duty to remain till next Frisco mail. . . . As you are aware, I have been re-elected for Tuapeka, and I am very anxious to be present to take my seat before the session is over. If I cannot arrive in time my position, I hope, will in nowise be affected. My election received my approval; and I would be in Wellington before the arrival of this letter except for the reasons stated."

Sir J. VOGEL.—I must say, with all respect and deference to you, Sir, that the clause you have read does not, in my opinion, so alter the great principle which is at stake that we should hurriedly arrive at a conclusion; and I should like, Sir, if you have no objection, to move the adjournment of the debate, so that you might give the matter further consideration. The word "member" is used somewhat loosely in that clause. It is clear that under it a member has no right to exercise his functions until he has been sworn in and has taken his seat. If we

assume the power of giving or refusing leave of absence before a member has been sworn in, we virtually treat him as a member, and we may stop ourselves in the future, in a possible contingency that might arise, from preventing a member taking his seat, even though he had not been sworn in. It appears to me that the use of the word "member" is perhaps rather loose. It might be "the member designate," or "the member elected by a constituency;" but until he has taken the oath and his seat he is not subject to the rules as to being granted or refused leave of absence. If we have the right to give or refuse leave to a member who has not been sworn in and taken his seat, we should be in a very false position if an occasion arose for taking exception to a member being sworn in, because we should be put in this difficulty: that, while we refused to allow him to be sworn in and to take his seat as a member, he would be obliged to ask for leave as though he were a member: we might therefore refuse to let him take the oath and his seat, and yet refuse him leave of absence if it were asked for. That is a very important question, in view of possible contingencies which may arise in the future. It may be that exception might be taken to allowing a gentleman who was an atheist to be sworn and take his seat, and thus we should be assuming the right both of refusing to let him take his seat and of refusing him leave to be absent from it—that is, if we declare now that we have the right to give or refuse leave to a gentleman elected who has not taken the oath and his seat. My recollection does not carry me back to all the phases of the Bradlaugh case, but I know the argument was—and I think it was sustained by the law-courts—that Mr. Bradlaugh was not a member until he had been sworn in; and I do not consider Mr. Brown is a member until he has taken the oath and his seat. If, Sir, you would not object, I should be glad if you would take time to further consider the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If the House has any doubt on the subject, it might be better, perhaps, to take the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown on the point.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, I move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. PYKE.—Any one elected to the House is a member. The other day, Sir, you, I believe, were elected Speaker before you had been sworn in.

Mr. SPEAKER.—No; I was sworn in before my election. In England the Speaker is elected before the oaths are administered; but here the oath is first administered, and then the Speaker is elected.

Mr. PYKE.—I was not present on that occasion, but I was so informed. The wording of the Constitution Act is very clear and distinct: "No member of the House of Representatives shall be allowed to take his seat until he has taken the oath of allegiance." There can be no two interpretations of that. I do not think any hair-splitting lawyer would hold that it can mean anything but that a man is a member from his election.

*Sir J. Vogel*

The assembling of the House is another thing, and his taking the oath of allegiance is simply a preliminary to his taking part in the proceedings. It does not affect his position as a member. I am not sufficiently cognisant now of the Bradlaugh case; but there was some trouble about the oath there, and consequently he could not sit or vote. But he was, nevertheless, a member, and no other member was elected in his place. If he had not been a member there would have been a vacancy. With regard to the present matter, I certainly did not apprehend that any difficulty would arise, and I did not think it was incumbent on me to make a long speech in moving the motion, and consequently the reproach of the Premier was undeserved. These motions are usually passed *sub silentio*: but, since this one has been challenged, I may say this: The people of Tuapeka knew perfectly well when electing him that Mr. Brown possibly might not return in time to take his seat here this session; and they knew, also, that, although his business in England was of a semi-private nature, yet it was certainly of a character tending to largely enhance the prosperity of the district. A great compliment was paid to Mr. Brown in his being elected when he was actually out of the country. Though he had many enemies opposing him they were not able to prevent his election again as a representative in this House. I would remind the House, also, that, next to yourself, Sir, Mr. Brown is the oldest continuous member of the House; and I do think the House would not be doing Mr. Brown justice or itself honour if it refused to grant the leave required by the honourable gentleman, seeing that it is absolutely and positively an act of filial duty which has prevented him from attending the House this session.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I need not say that I should be strongly averse from taking any action that might be to the prejudice of Mr. Brown. I am of opinion that it would not make the slightest difference to him if leave were not asked for, or I should have taken action before to obtain leave for him.

Mr. PYKE.—It will make a great deal of difference, for, if he is not granted leave, his seat will be vacant. A member of the Council absent two years without leave, or a member of the House absent one year without leave, loses his seat. That would put the honourable gentleman and the country to the expense of a second election. I think no objection should be made to granting leave, and I trust the opposition will now be withdrawn, and that there will be no more discussion on the matter.

Sir J. VOGEL.—If the honourable gentleman is right, that the seat would be vacated if leave were not granted, I ask leave to withdraw my motion for adjournment.

Motion for adjournment, by leave, withdrawn.

Sir G. GREY.—I wish to know, if honourable gentlemen are not members until they have been sworn in, as it is argued, under what autho-

rity do they draw their travelling-expenses for coming here, before they have been sworn in?

Major ATKINSON.—Speaking to the point of order, I have no doubt at all myself that Mr. Brown is a member under the Constitution Act. That is perfectly clear, to my mind. There can be no doubt the matter is one of considerable importance, and perhaps it would be advisable, if you, Sir, have any doubt, to adjourn the subject before coming to a decision. To my mind, it is quite clear that Mr. Brown is a member, though he has not taken the oath; and, so far as I am concerned, after hearing his letter, I shall not oppose the motion any longer.

Motion agreed to.

#### MILITARY TRAINING-SCHOOLS.

On the motion of Mr. WARD, it was ordered, That there be laid on the table a return showing the annual cost of the Military Training-school at Wellington; the number of officers in Wellington who have availed themselves of its use; and also the number of officers outside of Wellington who have undergone a course of training at it.

#### BOROUGH COUNCIL ENDOWMENTS.

On the motion of Mr. GUINNESS, it was ordered, That there be laid on the table a return showing the names of all Borough Councils to which land endowments have been granted; such return to show the area of land granted to each Borough Council, and whether granted by the General Government or Provincial Government, and when, and the present rental value of each reserve.

#### CHINESE.

On the motion of Mr. SEDDON, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House showing—(1) The number of Chinese that have arrived in the colony from the 31st March, 1886, up to the 30th November, 1887, and who have paid the poll-tax; (2) the number of Chinese that have arrived in the colony during the above period and who have claimed exemption from paying the poll-tax on account of their being the holders of exemption and naturalisation certificates; (3) the total number of exemption certificates issued to Chinese in the colony under "The Chinese Immigrants Act, 1881;" (4) the total number of Chinese in the colony to whom naturalisation certificates have been issued; (5) the number of Chinese returned as being in the colony, and particularly in the City of Wellington, when the last census was taken.

#### HOKITIKA HARBOUR-WORKS.

On the motion of Mr. GRIMMOND, it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a return showing—(1) The amount actually required to complete the Hokitika harbour-works to a point at which Sir John Coode estimated the depth of water on the bar would reach 16ft. at high water; (2) the depth of water on the Hokitika bar for the last four years, specifying the number of days in each year on which the

depth of water has been under 7ft., under 10ft., and over 12ft. respectively; (3) the tonnage of goods actually landed on the Hokitika wharf each year for the past four years.

#### MARKET RAILWAY-TICKETS.

On the motion of Mr. O'CALLAGHAN, it was ordered, That there be laid on the table a return of the number of Wednesday market railway-tickets which have been issued on the Hurunui-Bluff section since the inauguration of the system, showing the increase that has taken place by comparison with the number issued at the same stations during a similar period previous to the system being adopted.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

Major ATKINSON.—I propose to ask the House to excuse Ministers from answering questions to-day. There is a long string of them, and to answer them would occupy pretty well the whole of the afternoon. I also wish to propose, That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until eleven o'clock to-morrow morning, for the purpose of enabling the Government to answer questions only, and that Committees to have leave to sit while the House is sitting for that purpose. I should be glad if the House would prefer to have the questions answered in writing instead of their being answered to-morrow; but the House might have thought that it was making an innovation of too startling a character to do that at once. So I will move the motion that I have spoken of, and, if there is a general expression of opinion from the House that the questions should be answered in writing, I will withdraw the motion, and questions shall be answered to-morrow in writing.

Mr. TURNBULL.—It is my intention to move the adjournment of the House, because I consider that this is a question of great importance indeed. We must remember that to-morrow morning a great many members of the House will be engaged in Committee, and that it will be almost impossible for honourable members to be here to hear the questions answered. I do not know what the custom in other countries is in relation to this matter, but that questions should be answered in writing seems to me an extraordinary proposal, and one which I hope this House will seriously think of before it allows it. But I should have moved the adjournment of the House under any circumstances, because I have placed on the Order Paper a question of considerable importance to the whole colony. The question, which appears on the Order Paper, is as follows:—

"Whether, having in view the large amount of real and personal property held by absentees—nearly one-tenth of the whole taxable property of New Zealand—he will make such provision in the Property-tax Bill about to be submitted, or by other means, as that absentees shall be made to contribute a proportionate share of the burdens of the colony?"

This appears to me to be one of the most important questions that could be brought before the House, and I feel that I am war-

ranted in moving the adjournment of the House in order to bring it forward this afternoon. I am aware of the great difficulty which would present itself to the Colonial Treasurer or to any other persons in this House who might attempt at the present time to meet such a difficulty as that which is raised in this question. But it is a matter which must be considered. It involves not only a question of absentecism, but other bodies, and affects loan companies and other institutions which are drawing a large amount of the wealth of this colony away from our shores and returning to us very little indeed. I am not going to draw any deductions from the facts that I am about to mention, but I simply call the attention of the House to the fact that there are 1,140 people holding one-tenth of the whole of the taxable real and personal property in the colony, or one-twentieth of the whole of the real and personal property of the colony, and that these persons are resident in England, and only contribute £37,000 a year to the whole cost of the government of the colony. As honourable members are aware, we raise £4,000,000 annually for the purpose of paying our interest and the cost of government; and the people who hold this large amount of the property in the colony pay only a hundredth part of that taxation which we have to find. That is a fact to which I wish to call the attention of the House and of the country. This is very clearly brought out by a return laid on the table of the House at my instance. And I felt aggrieved, when the return was laid on the table of the House, at a remark made by the Premier. He produced it before the House, and said, "This return cost £18;" and many of my friends said I had done a wrong thing in ordering so expensive a return, and that I should be called upon to pay for it myself. The Premier, when I complained of his making that remark, said that nothing unusual had been done—that it was customary to place the cost of a return on its face. I am aware that it was on my motion that it was ordered to be printed on all papers laid before the House; but I see that there are a good many papers presented to Parliament on which there is nothing said about their cost, and I do not know why this return should have been singled out for notice in that way. However, whatever the cost, it was very important that the information contained in that report should be laid on the table; and I shall take another step in this matter, by endeavouring to get another return showing of what the personal property possessed by these persons consists. I have shown that these absentees possess one-twentieth of the property of the colony, though they only contribute one-hundredth part of the taxation; and to me it seems most unfair to the classes resident in the community that this should be permitted to continue. To put the matter in another way. I call attention to another fact, and simply as a fact: We have raised £34,000,000 by way of loans, which have been expended largely in improving the value of real property, and have helped very materi-

*Mr. Turnbull*

ally to enrich those who possess this personal property. Yet the whole of the taxation paid by these people, who own so large a share of the real and personal property, only equals the interest on three-quarters of a million of money, the residents in the colony being left to pay the interest on all the other money borrowed. I think honourable gentlemen will find that my figures are correct. Every million we borrow costs us £50,000.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No; £40,000.

Mr. TURNBULL.—If you look at the earlier loans you will find that they cost £50,000. However, we will say that they pay interest on one million, and that the people resident in the colony bear the burden of the remainder of the indebtedness. My object is not to make any deductions, but simply to place these facts—these extraordinary facts—before the House and the country. I am quite aware of the great difficulty which will beset the Colonial Treasurer or any other person who attempts to grapple with this question. It is a question very difficult to be solved satisfactorily; but we have here some plain figures which will help us to come to a fair conclusion on the matter. There is also another important fact, which I shall endeavour to get at by another return—that is, a return showing the character of the personal property which these persons hold. I believe it will be found that much of that personal property consists of sheep. I shall endeavour to find out that, if I have to pay for the return myself. If what I believe is correct, then we know that the whole of the wealth arising from that personal property, all the wool, all the mutton, goes straight away from the colony—and there is no return at all in the shape of merchandise or interchangeable commodities; nothing that benefits the merchant, the storekeeper, or the labourer. The wealth that should be accumulating in the colony, and by means of which alone we can hope to lift ourselves out of our difficulties, is being drawn away from us; and, with the exception of what it pays through the property-tax, it contributes nothing to the taxation of the country. It contributes nothing to the cost of defence, which is pre-eminently a charge which should be borne by property. Then, again, this withdrawal of wealth means that to that extent there remain unused the railways and the other works that we have constructed. Not only is it that those who are absent do not use them, but they draw away wealth which if left here would employ our railways. We are just now about to enter upon a severe course of retrenchment. Of course it is our duty to retrench wherever we can; but I hold that it is our duty also, and a most important duty at this time, to see that every portion of the community pays its fair share of the expenses of governing the country, before proceeding to the extreme measures in the way of retrenchment which we are now proceeding to. There is one question mixed up with this which I do not wish to mention by any means in an offensive manner, but which ought to be mentioned. I myself have great doubt whether the Govern-

ment that is now on those benches will care to or be able to deal with this question. It is a Government who, though they may not be aware of it, are placed on those benches by the large monetary institutions of the country and other interests of that kind, whose wishes they must carry out. It may be that the Government are not doing this intentionally, but they will find that the moment that they deviate from those interests some others will be called upon to take their places. One important member of the Ministry is more largely interested in these absentee questions than perhaps any other man in the colony. I allude to the honourable gentleman who comes from Canterbury. Now, Canterbury is at the present time in a most deplorable condition. Canterbury has to find one million to pay the interest on its private debt. I believe that the private debt will be found, when the next returns of the Land Transfer Department are laid on the table, to be £12,000,000 sterling. We cannot expect a Ministry constituted as this one is at present to labour strenuously to place upon the property of absentees the burdens that should be placed upon them. I have said so, because I hold that the chief representative of these absentee proprietors is a member of the present Cabinet.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Name.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I refer to the Hon. Mr. Stevens, of the Legislative Council. I say that he is the representative of the largest absentee proprietors, so that I can scarcely hope that a gentleman occupying such a position as he does will allow such a measure as I have indicated to be brought forward. The condition of the colony is getting most deplorable. If you look at the large amount of property held by absentee proprietors, if you look at the loan companies, holding property to the value of four millions, and if you look at private property mortgaged to the extent of nearly sixty millions, you will see the difficulties of the country. In fact, so far as the people of this country are concerned, the country is leased from absentee proprietors in the shape of land companies, mortgagees, loan companies, and banks;—in fact, the condition of many of the people of this country is worse than that of those who occupy the land in Egypt. The fellahs who occupy the soil in Egypt are in a preferable condition to many of the people of this country. I say that the people here are mortgaged up to their eyes; their life is one continuous struggle, and there is no hope for them so long as their life may be described as being—

*Leased like a tenement or pelted farm.*

As I have said, when the Property-tax Bill comes before us, if the Colonial Treasurer does not propose any motion on the subject, I shall certainly move an amendment on it; but by no amendment which you can put on the property-tax can you reach these individuals so as to get the amount they should in fairness contribute towards the burdens of this country. To do that, the property-tax would have to be 5d. in the pound. I

know the question is a difficult one, and that if the Colonial Treasurer had the ability of a Leone Levi or a Mulhall he could not solve it; but it is one that will be forced upon this country and upon this House, and it must be dealt with; and until it is dealt with there is not the slightest hope of a return of prosperity to this country. We may retrench; and what does retrenchment mean? It means misery. The Colonial Treasurer has told us that he means to retrench to the extent of £57,000 a month. I say the country cannot stand it. It is not money saved from going out of the colony; but it simply means that people who are employed, whether in offices or on the public works, or wherever they may be, will be discharged to such an extent as to effect that saving. I admit the difficulties of this matter, and that if the Colonial Treasurer sets himself honestly and determinedly to accomplish it he will do so; but, unless he takes steps to make these absentees bear a fair share of the taxation of the colony, there will be no return of prosperity. These people should contribute £200,000, instead of what they are contributing—£37,000; and the consequence is that we have to retrench to the extent of £163,000. That, broadly, is how the matter stands at the present time. I shall not move the adjournment of the House, because I can speak on the question the Premier has submitted; but I should have been sorry to have lost the opportunity of bringing this subject before the House and the country as soon as possible; and I see that at the present moment there is no desire to put this paper forward. There have been papers of less importance ordered to be printed and circulated, but this paper has not made an appearance, and the sooner it does make its appearance and public attention is called to it the sooner we may hope to have the existing state of affairs improved.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—I shall move, as an amendment to the Premier's motion, That the questions on the Order Paper be replied to by the Government in writing. My reason for doing so, in the first place, is: If this adjournment is allowed, there is an understanding that honourable members shall attend to Committee-work, and it inevitably follows that, if they attend to the Committee-work, they will be absent from the meeting of the House, when, perhaps, something of importance will occur that they require to deal with; and it is also necessary that the Minister should be here for the merely formal answering of questions. Then comes this difficulty: that, if the House orders that questions may be dealt with in this way, there may not be a quorum of the House to hear the answers. I consider it is better, if the House desires to facilitate the progress of the session, which I believe is very desirable, that we should come to an understanding that the business shall be gone on with in a reasonable way; and for that reason I move the amendment, and I think I have given sufficiently strong reasons to lead the House to its adoption. In many cases it will be necessary for us, if we want to attend to the duties of

this House, to neglect duties elsewhere; and I think it is a wrong thing for the House to put honourable members in such a position as that.

Sir J. VOGEL.—As an amendment is before the House, I should like to ask you, Sir, as a point of order, is it competent to alter the whole practice and constitution of the House, by providing that the House and Committees should sit at the same time?

Mr. SPEAKER.—There is nothing before us about the sitting of Committees at the same time as the House.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I want to ask you, Sir, and I trust I am not out of my privilege in asking, how far it may be the case—I do not wish to put the thing offensively, but, to take an extreme case, how far a Government, with a large majority at its back, can, without notice, alter the whole practice and system of parliamentary government, and stipulate that the House shall meet at eleven o'clock, allow questions to be answered in writing, and go on with the business after half-past twelve o'clock; in fact, alter the rule and the whole practice of Parliament, perhaps, in a more radical manner even than by a system of *clôture* of a severe character. It may be that it is permissible, but I had a strong impression that the privileges of debate, and the freedom of the minority, were much more strongly guarded than would be the case if it is competent to the Government to take the course of so radically and completely altering the whole course of parliamentary procedure. This seems to me to be fifty times more stringent than the *clôture*. That we should have before us a resolution of this kind, without notice, and such a resolution as we have heard given notice of to-day, seems to be a departure from well-known rules. If such a resolution were carried, I need scarcely point out to you that the whole procedure of Parliament is entirely changed.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It seems to me there is no proposal to change any procedure of Parliament in this proposition, beyond this: that it is proposed that the replies to questions should be given in writing instead of orally. To that extent it is an innovation, but I would not rule that it was not within the power of the House to come to that decision. I presume you could not take any objection to the motion that the House, at its rising, adjourn till to-morrow for the purpose of giving replies to the questions on the Order Paper.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The honourable gentleman accompanied it with an intimation that he should be allowed, at the same time, to call on new business after half-past twelve o'clock at night. At any rate, the House should know what is before it. First of all, as to the unwisdom of the thing. I should think the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government would need no further proof of that than that the very fact of his giving this notice has brought the honourable member for Timaru to consider the important question of taxing absentees. As a matter of opinion, it seems to me that questions are

made a sort of vent to enable discussions to be very much contracted; and, in my opinion, if any impediment were put in the way of answering questions—as has frequently been done this session, though I have not remarked upon it,—if such restrictions are put upon the asking of questions, nine times out of ten those questions will become subjects of debate in the House, instead of being dealt with in the much easier manner of replying to questions. The unwisdom of the course proposed to be taken is, however, a matter for the Government; and probably the head of the Government may say that he does not want my counsel, and that he is the best judge of what course he shall take. But what I ask honourable members to consider is this: What position should we be in if we accede to the plan the honourable member now unfolds before us? We should meet at eleven o'clock to consider questions, for I do not for a moment suppose that the House would sanction so large a departure from all prescribed rule in this country, or in any other country, as to shut out from honourable members the right of asking questions. It is true the honourable member for Westport says they may ask the questions in writing; but, if an honourable member does not choose to enter into a correspondence with the Government—because that is what it means, is he to be shut out from the power of putting questions verbally? That would be such an innovation that I do not believe, whatever the power of the honourable gentleman is, he would carry a majority with him on such a proposal.

Mr. O'CONOR.—Will the honourable gentleman allow me to explain? My motion does not deal with any questions excepting those now on the Order Paper; those are what I propose to deal with.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The honourable member for the Buller is very anxious not to throw any obstacle in the way of the Government. I saw a statement in one of the southern papers the other day—I do not know whether it is true or not—that, if the honourable gentleman were about to propose a certain thing, the utterance of a “No” from certain quarters of the House would cause him to sit down immediately; and the honourable gentleman, having given his faithful support to the Government this session, and thinking it was too much to ask that the House should be sitting and the Committees carrying on their work at the same time, has proposed, as the next best plan, that honourable members should enter into correspondence as to the questions they wish to put.

Mr. O'CONOR.—Nothing of the kind.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I do not suppose for a moment that the House would adopt such a system. It would put some honourable members in a very unpleasant position, and it would very much depend on the temper in which the members of the Government rose in the morning as to whether their answers would be satisfactory or not. The members of the Government are only men, and the amount of work which the honourable member at the head of

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the Government proposes that they should take upon themselves would incapacitate them for dealing properly with the questions put to them. Let us see what it is we are asked to agree to. The House is to meet at eleven o'clock in the morning for Ministers to answer questions; but that does not prevent any question being brought forward, and we all know that there are ways and forms by which any question can be brought on; and this is to be done while honourable members are attending on Committees, or are neglecting their duty in that respect. That is to begin at eleven o'clock in the morning; and then it is proposed to take up new business after half-past twelve at night. We know that there are Legislatures where obstruction is of common occurrence, and where it has been necessary to introduce a *clôture* of the most drastic character; but such a proposal as this has never been made in those Assemblies. Even in the House of Commons, I believe, the half-past-twelve rule has always been maintained, no matter what inducement there may have been in the way of hastening on business. In fact, if this proposition is to be carried out, you will require another qualification in honourable members. They will need an athletic qualification, because they have not the physique to enable them to commence business at eleven o'clock in the morning, and then to go on and take up new business at half-past twelve at night. I am not at all wishing to throw any obstacle in the way of the honourable member closing the session early. I have given notice of a clause to be added to the Railways Bill which, if adopted, will, I think, enable the honourable gentleman to get that Bill through with much greater celerity than would be the case if the House thought it was taking an irrevocable step; and I have given notice of that clause with the express purpose of allowing that Bill to pass through, if the House wishes it, though I do not think that is a prudent course. I put it to the House, Is the Government taking the course we should expect of it if it wished an early termination of the session, giving due time for consideration of the measures we have to deal with? We have been told over and over again in the Financial Statement and otherwise that retrenchment was the most important of the measures that it was necessary to deal with this session; but now we see, day after day, other Bills put at the head of the Order Paper. I think we should have been told to-day what course the Government intended to pursue for the remainder of the session, and we could then see how we could help them in their plans; but if the Government, with the majority they have at their back, are going to force the business through, and leave honourable members under the disability of not being able to suggest amendments, or even to discuss the measures, it will be placing those honourable members who are not in the majority in an exceedingly unfavourable position. We have to consider the whole of the estimates, and under ordinary circumstances that alone takes a fort-

night. Then, there are the measures which are already passing through the House; and we understand that the session is to come to a conclusion in seventeen days, or even less; but I tell the honourable gentleman that he will not facilitate business by attempting to prevent honourable members from having the privilege of even asking questions. This side of the House has shown every desire to facilitate the progress of business, but I would point out that we have still very important business before us. There are the measures dealing with retrenchment to be considered; there must be a discussion on the Education Act; the San Francisco service will have to be considered, for it terminates next year; there must be another discussion on the Land Bill, unless the Government put a stop to it; the Native Land Bill must also come under discussion; and, besides that, if the Government intend to press the Representation Bill, there must be considerable delay, because, although honourable members have agreed to the second reading, they have expressed a great many opinions as to the form in which the measure should pass, for there is not only the question of the number of members involved, but there is also the question of whether, if it is thought desirable that such a change should be made in the divisions of the country, that change should be left to the Commission appointed under the last Act, or whether the House itself should not take the matter in hand. Again, there is the question whether it would not be advisable to leave the change to stand over till next session, so that opportunities may be afforded to the districts interested to make objections before we meet next. I might go through the other Bills in the same way. I am sure that suspending the Standing Order as to not taking new business after half-past twelve o'clock, and punishing honourable members for asking questions by compelling them to meet at eleven o'clock in the morning, will not shorten the session. I put it to the Government not to do anything of the kind, but to leave it to honourable members to shorten the session as much as possible, and not to try and force them by such a resolution as this.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I must ask permission of the House to make a personal explanation in reference to a remark which the honourable member who has just sat down made with regard to myself. He said that I was under the influence of a portion of this House with regard to my action; and I wish to deny that, and say that he is the last man in this House who should cast such an imputation on me, because he has himself acted the part of a tempter to me in the library of this building, and he knows how I dealt with him on that occasion, when he was in a position to make a large offer to me. The House will therefore know how to accept such a statement from that honourable gentleman.

Hon. MEMBERS.—What was it? What was the offer?

Mr. O'CONOR.—I will tell the House what

took place between the honourable gentleman and myself in the library of this House. The honourable gentleman knows perfectly well that I could not be influenced by him. I may state that I was in this House when the question of turning out the Fox-Vogel Ministry was being discussed, and Sir Julius Vogel came to me and solicited my vote. I told him I could not give it him; and then he said to me, "What do you want?" I told him, "I want to turn out your Government;" and then he pressed me in every way. I could have got anything I asked for at the time, if I had been more pliant: other honourable members who were so got their rewards.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I think it shows very bad taste on the part of the honourable gentleman to make accusations of that kind about things which occurred fourteen or fifteen years ago. If I made an improper offer to the honourable member, then how is it that he has been on such friendly terms with me all these years? As to my recollecting a conversation which took place fourteen or fifteen years ago, I confess I cannot do it; but I would ask, is it not a strange thing that, if I made such improper offers to the honourable member, he has been on friendly terms with me ever since? To the best of my belief there is not the smallest foundation for the statement.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I can prove it.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The honourable member's memory is entirely at fault.

Sir G. GREY.—I think this is about the most formidable coalition that this House has ever witnessed. Three members are certainly united together with one common object, and that object is to delay the business of the House, to put off the financial question, and to keep us all debating in this ridiculous manner. We have heard it denied from each side of the House that there is any coalition between these gentlemen; but I would ask the House whether it is not clear that they are acting in union. The sooner we put an end to this the better. I think we should stop it at once.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—I would like to ask the Premier whether answering the questions in writing would involve the answers being printed on the Order Paper.

Major ATKINSON.—That is what I understand.

Mr. FISH.—I trust the House will not agree to the answers being given in writing. We have taken up an hour and a half in discussing this question, and in that time all the questions on the Order Paper could have been answered, and if the honourable member at the head of the Government had gone on in the ordinary course we should not have had all this delay. And why does the honourable gentleman want this course to be pursued? Simply that he may force through the House in two weeks measures which ought properly to take two months to discuss. We are also told by the honourable gentleman to-day that he means to ask the House to do away with the rule which prevents new business being taken after half-past twelve at night. What does that mean? It

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means this, if the honourable gentleman's ideas are carried out: We shall meet here at eleven, and sit until four or five next morning. The honourable gentleman knows as well as possible that it is not possible for members of the House to give that time to the business of the country and to do it properly. But it is exactly what he wants. He knows perfectly well that the House will be wearied out. Honourable members will be unable to stand the strain put upon them, and the Premier will have an empty House, and will carry through what he likes and how he likes. Is that proper legislation? Are we to be put to this serious trial in order to pass measures which there is no necessity for passing at all this session? I trust honourable members will guard their own privileges better than that. Some honourable members say, "Go on, and do not debate; do not say a word." If this goes on, all our privileges will be taken away one by one, until there are none left. We shall not be worthy the name of representatives if we allow this to be done,—if, because the Premier says he wants to do such-and-such a thing, forsooth we must accept it. I shall not do it. I do not care if the honourable gentleman has a majority of thirty at his back. If I were in a minority of ten, I shall use the privileges of this House to object to usages of the most pernicious and dangerous character. Reference has been made to the wasting of time; but I say that all the waste of time that has taken place has been caused by the want of tact, the want of ability, on the part of the Premier to see what are the wishes of the House. We shall be told that this is the work of the Opposition. That is what the honourable gentleman has always said in the past, and that is what he will say again.

Mr. ALLEN.—I think the remarks of the last speaker have made some disclosures to us. This discussion has not arisen at all on the Premier's motion, and the honourable gentleman ought to have known it. The discussion has arisen on the motion proposed by the honourable member for the Buller.—(No.)—I say it has, and nobody can deny it—upon that, and nothing else.

Mr. FISH.—The Premier suggested that the answers to questions should be given in writing, and thereupon the honourable member for the Buller moved his amendment.

Mr. ALLEN.—That is not exactly what took place. The honourable member for the Buller moved his amendment, and the Premier said that, if it was the wish of the House, he was prepared to accept it. I maintain that the whole of this discussion has been nothing but a splitting of straws; and I am astonished that men of ability and position, who should set an example to younger members of this House, upon a day like this, when we want all the time at our disposal to discuss measures of great importance, should come here and deliberately waste the time of the House. There is no great constitutional question before us at all. We are simply asked to come here on one single morning in order that questions may be answered, and an amendment to that is pro-

posed that they may be answered, just for that once, in writing. And for that reason honourable members get up and raise great constitutional questions. The whole thing is absurd, and I am disgusted with it.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—The honourable member for Dunedin South has stated that so long as he is a member of this House, although there was a majority of thirty against him, he would use his privileges as a member of the House. If he did not, instead of using his privileges, abuse them, I think the discussions in this House would be got over in very much quicker time. I say the Premier, as far as I can see, has not been answerable for this discussion, and I hope we shall get to the business without any further debate.

Mr. KERR.—My opinion of the affair altogether is that the Premier does not wish to do any business at all. He has brought down Bills, particularly the Representation Bill, which are not wanted and cannot be wanted for two or three years at all events. Why does he not bring down Bills he wants to get passed, so that we may pass them and get back to our homes? The honourable member for Dunedin East says he is disgusted with this discussion; but my belief is that the Premier brings these questions down on purpose to raise these discussions and kill time. There is no necessity at all for this Representation Bill. The honourable member for the Buller has been in a great rage at what was said by the honourable member for Christchurch North. He was very indignant at that honourable gentleman saying that the honourable member for the Buller was a man who would sell his vote, and that the honourable member for Christchurch North had offered to buy it. I have known the honourable member for the Buller many years, and always thought he was ready to sell his vote.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Order, order.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I consider the honourable member ought not to be allowed to use language of that sort.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must ask the honourable member for Motueka to withdraw that expression, which was a very improper one to make use of.

Mr. KERR.—I did not mean it. I meant to say that everybody said he always sold his vote. I never believed it myself, Sir.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I think, coming from the honourable gentleman, the weight of the imputation may not be worth much, but still I object to language of that kind being used by any member of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honourable member at first put it in such a way that it was most insulting, and that he is bound to withdraw it fully and unequivocally.

Mr. KERR.—I will withdraw anything. I have often taken the honourable gentleman's part when I heard honourable members say behind his back what they would not say to his face. I did not mean it in an offensive manner. I mentioned the matter to his face to give him an opportunity of contradicting it.

But I most certainly think, and the House must think, that the Premier is to blame on this occasion. If he really wants to get through the necessary business, let him bring down the measures it is necessary to pass, and we shall be ready to proceed with their consideration. But I cannot and do not believe for one moment that he wishes to get on with the business until his own time comes, and then he will get on with it properly. I object to this morning sitting. The same thing will happen as in former days. We shall begin at half-past two, and keep at it until half-past two the next day.

Mr. PERCEVAL.—The question before the House is one of considerable importance, and I think the time has not been wasted in discussing it. I confess I have been extremely irritated during the session by the multiplicity of questions, and no one would be more pleased than I to see them expunged from the Order Paper altogether. While this discussion has been going on I have been looking through the Standing Orders, and I fail to see how the questions come to be printed daily on the Order Paper. In my opinion that is the reason why these questions are so numerous. Standing Orders provide for the answering of questions in the order of business under Rule 71. Now, I take it that it is a mere matter of courtesy to give answers to the questions. The Standing Orders do not require that written notice shall be given of questions, and I intend that, if Ministers answered the questions as they were put, it would be a great saving of time; and, if a Minister could not give an answer to a question, what he should do is this: He should not put it on the Order Paper, but ask the honourable member to repeat his question from his place in the House next day, and then he would give the answer. It seems to me to be altogether contrary to the spirit of the Standing Orders for the Order Paper to be cumbered with these questions. I hope the Government, during the recess, will take this matter of questions into their consideration, because I am one of those who are prepared to admit that a great amount of time is wasted in the answering of these questions. Not more than one-tenth of these questions relate to matters of public interest; they relate generally to some local matters that only affect the district represented by the honourable member who asks the question. But I think it would be a dangerous innovation to allow the motion which is before the House to pass. It would appear to me to be much better for the Government to refuse to answer questions altogether than to bring us here at eleven o'clock to-morrow. I know that if we come here at eleven o'clock to-morrow it means the thin end of the wedge, and that we shall go on meeting at eleven o'clock day after day. I wish to protest against this. I am quite sure that honourable members cannot give proper attention to public business if they are exhausted by sitting through the whole twenty-four hours; because that is what it would mean.

Captain, RUSSELL.—I do not agree with

my honourable friend. If he had gone a little further in the Standing Orders he would have seen what seems to me to be the key of the situation. On many occasions I cannot say I have been irritated at the number of questions on the Order Paper, but rather at the license which has been allowed to honourable members to debate questions which have been put on the Order Paper. The 73rd section of the Standing Orders distinctly lays it down that there shall be no debatable matter brought forward in putting a question. I do not wish, Sir, that what I say may be in any possible way construed into a reflection on you; but I think there is scarcely a question put, nowadays, into the explanation of which debatable matter is not introduced; and Ministers also very frequently put debatable matter into their answers. I think that is the root of the evil. I think, if the questions were asked without a number of remarks being added to them, the whole of a day's questions could be got through in about a quarter of an hour—that is, if the answers to them were also given concisely. But almost every one who asks a question feels it incumbent on him to make a speech about it; and almost every day also we see the adjournment of the House moved on some question, and frequently several hours spent in debating the motion for adjournment. That, as I say, is, I think, the root of the evil. If in asking and answering questions the Standing Orders were literally adhered to, I am sure that a long list of questions could be got through in a very few minutes every day.

Major STEWARD.—The last speaker has exactly hit the blot. This difficulty is growing year by year. I have been for some sessions a member of the Standing Orders Committee, which has frequently sent down suggestions for effecting a remedy; and I believe another report is now under consideration by the Committee, and will be presented towards the end of the session, that report also pointing to the need of change in this respect, in the interest of public business. I believe in no other Legislature is the question-difficulty felt so much as here, or so much time taken on questions. In the Imperial Parliament questions are put simply in the words which appear on the Order Paper—no explanation whatever is allowed—and concise replies are given by the Ministers. In other Legislatures the practice is similar: the question is put without comment or explanation, and the Minister rises and makes his reply. It is the long explanations on questions, and the motions for adjournment moved during questions, that cause such a great waste of time. I believe, also, that in no other Legislature are there such facilities for wasting time by motions for adjournment as here. In the House of Commons it is necessary for forty members to rise in their places to signify their approval before a motion for adjournment is allowed to be moved. I think the abuse of the privilege—if privilege it is—of allowing any honourable member to move the adjournment might be well curtailed by prescribing that a fair proportion of the House—say, ten mem-

bers—should be required to rise in support of a motion for adjournment before it should be entertained. If the Standing Orders were amended in that direction it would in no way infringe the freedom of debate or lessen honourable members' privileges, while it would prevent what is now a frequent and great waste of public time.

Amendment negatived.

Major ATKINSON.—I merely wish to say, in reply, that I was very much surprised at the speech of the honourable member for Christchurch North, especially after the promise he gave the Government that he would facilitate business, and after the action which he took yesterday afternoon, which certainly did expedite business, and for which I was obliged to the honourable gentleman. No great innovation is proposed by the Government, and no members' privileges are invaded by their proposition. It is simply a question of time. A portion of the House seems determined to spend one or two hours every day in having questions answered, and in discussions on them; and I venture to think that the majority of honourable members regard that as pure waste of time. It seems there is no way out of the difficulty except the one that the Government propose—at great inconvenience to themselves. But, in order to meet the desires of the House, they propose that we should sit an extra two hours. That is the whole front of our offending. We have asked for sufficient time to do the work the House has apparently determined shall be done. I might have moved that the House should meet for ordinary business at eleven o'clock to-morrow; but I thought it desirable that we should try whether we could not do it this way, and to see whether that would really save our time or not. No doubt, if we are to get on with our business, we must take the necessary time for it, or we must refuse honourable members the power of wasting our time. Now one word with regard to what fell from the honourable member for Motueka. He asks, "Does the Premier mean the Government Bills to pass, and why does he not come down with the business the Government intend to pass?" Sir, the Government do mean their measures to pass, and they ask the House to pass them, and to take the necessary time to pass them. We are not trifling with the House, like some honourable members on the other side of the House—though not the honourable member for Christchurch North, who has given us considerable assistance until this afternoon. But certain honourable gentlemen of his party seem determined that the House shall not get on with the business, but shall listen to their interminable talk. That, I say, seems to be the object of certain honourable gentlemen; and the only answer the House can give is to say that it must sit a longer time,—that it must sit as long as may be necessary to do the Government business. I know of no other way in which we can get the business done. The Government have no intention—and we want the House to understand that distinctly—of forcing

*Captain Russell*

measures through, and no intention of wearying honourable members out; but we have this intention: of asking the House to insist, notwithstanding the talk of those honourable gentlemen to whom I have referred, that the work the country has sent us to do shall be done, and that those measures now before the House, and which those honourable members are simply stonewalling by this process, though they admit the country has demanded them, shall be passed. I am certain the House will insist on passing those measures before it rises, whatever time it may take. The only way we can counteract the scenes we witness here sitting after sitting is by taking power to sit an unlimited time. I should not have said this to-day if the matter had not been raised; but I may say now that, if necessary—and I trust it will not be necessary—I shall move that the House meet at eleven o'clock every morning till the end of the session.

Motion agreed to.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, it has always been usual, when the House meets in the morning for a special purpose, to allow Select Committees to sit at the same time. I move, That Select Committees have leave to sit to-morrow forenoon during the sitting of the House. That is no innovation whatever on the customs of the House.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—What will become of the questions of those honourable members who attend Committees?

Major ATKINSON.—They can get other honourable members to ask for them, or they may be able to leave their Committees. They must exercise their discretion.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, I am aware that it has been the custom for some years, in the last day or two of the session, if the House met in the morning, to allow Committees to sit at the same time; but I cannot help thinking that to allow it at this stage of the session—especially as this course is avowedly taken to silence honourable members—is not desirable. I quite agree with the Premier as to the grievance of which he complains, and I think some remedy could be adopted. I have seen in the House of Commons pages and pages of questions put and answered in a few minutes, each question on the Order Paper being asked by the honourable member merely rising in his place, and the answer being read by the Minister. As to questions occupying too much of the time of the House, I quite agree with the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government that it is a grievance; but, Sir, I must say a word in reply to the severe remarks of the honourable gentleman on some honourable members sitting on this side of the House. I believe it is the case that there are some honourable members who speak at some length, and I believe it is the case that these honourable members, though they do speak at some length, speak very well too; and I have heard other honourable members complain of their speaking on this ground: that it leaves no points for other honourable members to deal with, that there is nothing else left for any one

to say. I do not believe that these honourable gentlemen speak for the sake of wasting time, but it is because they consider they have something to say which they have a right to say, and which they wish to say and wish to see recorded in *Hansard*. No doubt *Hansard* is a very fruitful means of prolonging the session and prolonging debates. I think it is only right to say, in the strongest manner I possibly can, that I think the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government does the honourable gentlemen to whom he has referred an injustice in supposing that they speak for the purpose of wasting time. The honourable gentleman can have no reason for saying that, and his experience must enable him to see that there are members and members, and that some honourable members rarely speak, while there are other honourable members who think it incumbent on them to express their opinions more often, as different subjects arise. I do not think it right, because honourable members speak without any desire of wasting time, but simply because they have a right to do so and desire to exercise it, that he should fasten on them the stigma of "obstruction."

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—I think the remarks of the Premier somewhat unfair, though not a little astute. The honourable gentleman spoke of certain members on this side of the House without specifying who they are, and said they are guilty of the practice referred to. Now, if the honourable gentleman had picked out any of us and charged us with the obstruction and waste of time, I consider he might have been justified, for I think there has been a certain amount of obstruction and waste of time; but I know this: that the large majority of members on this side of the House regret and dislike that quite as much as members on the other side of the House. But I do think it unfair that a loose charge of obstruction should be made against this side of the House generally, because the vast majority of members on this side are quite as anxious to get the business through as any member on the other side can be, and we have regretted certain scenes which have taken place in the House during the last few weeks. I think I am quite justified in rising to say so much; and, now that I am speaking, I will say that I do hope we shall not see—I will not say the obstructive but—the dilatory proceedings which have marked one or two debates recently.

Motion agreed to.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Before the orders of the day are called on, may I ask the honourable gentleman whether he intends to make the statement which he promised to make yesterday?

Major ATKINSON.—I intended to make a statement; but I am afraid, after what took place yesterday, and the threats that were made use of, that I am not in a position to do so to-day. I should like to wait until I see what progress is made with the consideration of the Representation Bill to-day. It will depend on that what we shall be able to do.

Mr. SEDDON.—Will the honourable gentleman mention the threats which he refers to?

Major ATKINSON.—No; I have nothing more to say now.

#### REPRESENTATION BILL.

On the question, That this Bill be considered in Committee,

Mr. WHYTE said,—I did not speak on the second reading of this Bill yesterday, because it seemed to me that everything conceivable and a great deal of what, to a well-regulated mind, was inconceivable had already been said. Nor do I intend to deliver what may be called a speech now; but I should like to take this opportunity of drawing attention to an amendment of which I have given notice for consideration when this Bill gets into Committee, as to the percentage of advantage that should be allowed to the country districts as compared with the towns. I supported the second reading of this Bill by my voice yesterday; and I intend to support it, because I recognise that the country has declared in favour of it. So far as my own district is concerned I fancy that the manner in which a reduction of members would affect it was somewhat lost sight of during the election, owing to the number of much larger questions which were being considered; but I believe that, if it had been put to the people in my district fairly and distinctly what the effect would be in that neighbourhood, they would perhaps have thought differently upon it. At any rate, it is quite clear to me that if this Bill be passed in its present shape, it will very prejudicially affect the country districts. Perhaps the reason why this did not come home to me more clearly before this was, that I have been lucky enough, for many past years, to have no opposition, so that I did not know what a contest really meant in a large country district. However, this time I had an opportunity of judging; and when I say that in my district, which is by no means as large as many others, the contest necessitated my holding something like twenty meetings at different places on different evenings, honourable members will appreciate what a contest in a large and scattered district means. I think, moreover, that the Bill will have a prejudicial effect in this way: that diverse interests will be crowded together into one electorate—that interests which are separated by natural boundaries, such as watersheds and other impassable barriers, will have to be thrown into one electorate. There is also a danger, it appears to me, that if the districts are made much larger it must result in men being chosen more upon their physical qualities than upon their mental ones. The fight will not improbably be decided in favour of the man who can travel most, can face the weather best, and address the greatest number of meetings in the various little centres. For these reasons, amongst many others which I need not now detail, I have to-day given notice of my intention to move to alter the percentage in favour of the country districts—which is at present about 18 per cent.—to 25

per cent. I must say, however, that, after the many expressions of opinion that I have heard from many honourable members, I am astonished at my own moderation in proposing to fix the percentage so low as 25 per cent. I would also remind honourable members from the towns that this 25 per cent. is not really 25 per cent., because it has first to be added to the nominal population of the colony, and then the quota has to be arrived at, so that the real advantage does not at the outside exceed 20 per cent. I just say this in explanation of the intimation that I have given, for I think it is as well to say it now as later on.

Mr. FISH.—I dare say that I shall be accused of obstruction and of a desire to delay the business of this House in venturing to say a few words upon this measure. I am sorry, Sir, speaking generally, that honourable members should have the fear placed before them that if they speak upon certain measures they will be called by certain leading members of this House "obstructionists." I trust that will not happen again, and that I shall not be considered in any way an obstructionist for making a few remarks upon the Bill before the House. It appears to me that this Bill is one of the most important we have had before us this session, and, in fact, that it is one of the most important the House can discuss in any session. When we deal with the representation of the country it surely must be a subject which ought to insure deep thought, and all who have thought upon it and have the ability to speak upon it, I believe, should venture to say what they think about the measure. In listening to the various speeches, which I have done very attentively, I could not help being struck with the very great difference in the ideas that different honourable members have expressed during the course of the debate, and the peculiarity of the ideas which have induced some of them to decide to vote in the direction they are going to vote. For example, the honourable member for Auckland West tells us that he supports the Bill because he thinks fifty members are sufficient to represent the country. Well, I think it is about thirty years since this House of Representatives contained only fifty members; and the honourable gentleman's idea of progress is that we should go back to the state of things which existed thirty years ago. Then, he says that in the present House of ninety-five members a few members do all the talking, and yet he thinks that if there were a less number of members the talking would be decreased. Well, I do not know that that would happen; but I do venture to say this: that the talking would be very great indeed if my honourable friend desired to talk and could not find an opportunity for putting in his word. Then, the honourable member for Caversham says that the House is too large because, with a population of at least four hundred thousand more, Victoria has only eighty-six members. I do not admit the analogy between this colony and Victoria. Victoria is a closely-settled and compact colony, its area is not nearly so large as that of New Zealand, and its configuration is

entirely different. Therefore, whilst eighty-six members might be quite sufficient for that colony, we should require ninety-five to make us equally well represented. Then, again, why did not the honourable gentleman refer to South Australia, Queensland, and New South Wales? I believe the representation in New South Wales is 150, and it has about the same population as Victoria; and that shows that the different colonies gauge their requirements in the matter of representation according to local considerations. I take it that that is the reason why New South Wales has a larger representative power than Victoria. Now, the honourable member for Clutha gave as one reason why he should support this Bill that it would be the means of returning a better class of men. The honourable gentleman made that assertion, and it is one that, like many assertions, is easily made, but very difficult of proof. It is an astonishing thing that honourable members seem to forget that in making statements of that kind they are really, as a matter of fact, casting a slur upon their own ability. We find from time to time that the honourable gentlemen who use expressions from which it may be inferred they believe that the possession of wealth indicates superior abilities are generally those who have worked their way up from a very humble origin, and that they entirely forget, when they have become the possessors of means, the place from which they rose. I do not know why it should be that they should so often give utterance to these conservative ideas. I would ask the honourable member for Clutha if he thinks that of necessity brains attach to wealth, or if he thinks that because a man has wealth he has better brain-power than a man who is poorer has. If he cannot prove that, I think his argument falls to the ground. Then, the honourable gentleman was very strong upon the undue preponderance of city influence, and said that this Bill would give the cities undue power. At the narrow-mindedness he displayed I was very much surprised, and I was sorry to see that he endeavoured to excite a feeling of jealousy between town and country. I take it that in the towns there can be no feeling of antagonism regarding the country. The interests are identical, and if one is not successful and prosperous it is impossible for the other to be so. Why any honourable gentleman should seek to raise a feeling of discord as between town and country constituencies is more than I can imagine. The honourable gentleman said he would increase the quota largely with regard to cities; and I have no doubt there will be a determined attempt on the part of some country members to increase the quota; but I think the proposal is most unfair, and I can only say that I shall resist any such attempt to the very utmost of my power, and I have no doubt that in that I shall be aided by the whole of the city representatives, and by a large number of those who represent country districts who are not in favour of this narrow-minded idea that the cities should

be unduly handicapped. Our representation is upon the basis of population, and, if that be a sound basis to go upon, it is unfair to handicap the towns as against the country. At any rate, it is unfair to do so to any great extent, though I do not myself object to a reasonable handicap; but, if it goes beyond that, I think it is most unfair, and we should be losing sight of the basis of our representation altogether. The honourable gentleman was kind enough also to give us a great deal of advice about the amalgamation of the city electorates. I see no reason at all why the city electorates should be amalgamated. I see no reason why the residents in the city should be treated differently from the residents in the country districts; and, whilst the representation is as it is, I think the electorates of the city should remain as they are. There are two or three reasons for that. In the first place, any one who has contested a city electorate must know that there will be an increase in the cost of contesting an election if the electorates are amalgamated. I believe the cost would be three or four times more than that of contesting a single electorate. Then, I think it would be detrimental to the interests of the country in this way: that any man who was very popular could run the whole of the members of his party in for the city: such a man, for instance, as the honourable member for Auckland Central, or Sir Robert Stout, or any other leading man. If the city electorates were amalgamated, such men, no doubt, would carry the whole of the seats; and I do not think, so far as the country is concerned, that that would be a good thing. The honourable member for Rangitikei, to whom it is generally a great pleasure to listen, certainly, to my mind, gave utterance to some of the greatest inconsistencies that I have heard given utterance to during the debate. Really I cannot understand what that honourable gentleman's political principles are. He said that the larger constituencies would return men of larger mental calibre.

Mr. BRUCE.—I might explain that what I said was that larger constituencies would presumably return men of larger mental calibre.

Mr. FISH.—That is what I understood the honourable gentleman to say, and I cannot see how he can make it consistent with what he said shortly afterwards. He said that only wealthy men could contest the larger constituencies. Consequently the wealthy men must be the men of higher mental calibre. Then, he said, taking the Honorary Reduction Bill and this Bill together, it must throw the representation of the country into the hands of the wealthy. I agree that if these proposals are carried the representation will be thrown into the hands of the wealthy. But I am not at all prepared to admit that, if that did happen, the mental calibre of the House as a whole would be improved; because, whilst in Great Britain you are always certain to get a large amount of education allied with wealth, and you have men representing very old families who are wealthy men, our experience tells us that in this colony the wealthy.

men are men who have little or no education, and whose ideas are often very cramped and distorted, and men who certainly would not be better able to represent the people than nine out of ten of the honourable gentlemen who occupy seats in this House at present. That the result of passing the Bill will be to render the cost of contesting, at any rate, the country seats so large that only men of considerable wealth will be able to become candidates is beyond a shadow of a doubt; and for that reason I oppose the reduction of the number of members to the extent proposed. If the honourable gentleman says that these two things will occur if this Bill is carried, why does he support it? He tells us that he does not believe in representation being thrown into the hands of the wealthy, and that to increase the area of the districts and to reduce the honorarium will have that effect; and yet, in spite of his own opinion, he supports the Bill. The honourable member, to my mind, is quite inconsistent. Many of his views I would go a long way in supporting; but I cannot, having regard to the effect he has pointed out, support the Bill as it at present stands. Then he went on to say that it was not right to suppose that a wealthy man had no sympathy with his poorer fellow-colonists. I do not deny that they have a great deal of sympathy with their poorer fellow-colonists, but I believe it is that sort of sympathy which makes a poor man throw a bone to a hungry dog as he passes by. The country was represented in years gone by by men who had large landed properties and considerable wealth; and it goes without saying that, when the country was so represented, the legislation took the form of measures calculated to conserve wealth rather than to relieve the condition of the poorer classes. The arguments of the honourable gentleman would show that he is a Liberal, but the vote he is about to give and the conclusion he has come to show that he is a Conservative. The honourable member for Te Aro made, to my mind, the very strongest speech against the passing of this Bill at the present time. The honourable member said if this measure passes before good local-government Bills are introduced and made law it will be a curse to the country. Now, I am strongly of opinion that the honourable gentleman was right in what he was saying; but does he not know that there is not the slightest chance of any local-government measures being passed this session? And in all probability they will not be passed next session. Does he not know that the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government has been an utter failure with regard to local government? Does he not know that the honourable gentleman took years and years to incubate a local-government scheme which only stood the test of public opinion two years, when it had to be repealed? The honourable member can have no hope of any satisfactory measure of local government emanating from the Premier. Well, the honourable member for Te Aro gave another strong reason why the Bill should not pass at the present time when he said that, if the Go-

*Mr. Fish*

vernment got this Bill passed they would have the means of preventing any adverse vote being passed upon them during this Parliament, because they would always have the power of a dissolution in their hands. They could say to the members of this Parliament, "We defy you to pass an adverse vote;" because I have no doubt there would be a large number of honourable members influenced by the fact that some five-and-twenty of them, at any rate, would not be returned to the House; and honourable members are naturally unwilling to cut short their own parliamentary existence. Therefore I think that the honourable gentleman gave two of the strongest reasons against the passing of this Bill at the present time that could be urged; and yet, while he appeared to hold these opinions strongly and firmly, the honourable gentleman said, "I will vote for the second reading of this Bill." The honourable member for the Bay of Islands said that he was strongly in favour of an increase in the representation of the Maoris. I am not at all surprised at the honourable gentleman's saying that. I believe he is sincere, because he has, unfortunately for the country, from time to time had a considerable influence with the Maori members, and I believe their votes have been influenced adversely to the true interests of the country through the honourable gentleman speaking their language. One of the strongest objections I have to the Maori representation in this House is that European members speaking their language have an advantage over those who cannot speak it in influencing Maori votes, because they are likely to be led by any such honourable member who is designing enough to influence them. The Minister of Education said that if this Bill were not passed this session it would not be passed this Parliament. I cannot see the force of that reasoning. Does the honourable member mean to say that if we do not pass a Bill in the first session we shall not pass it at all? I do not believe that; and I hold that, in so far as this session is concerned, there is not the smallest necessity for passing this Bill; and the Government are only jeopardising the passing of their other measures by forcing this on. The honourable gentleman also said that tactics were being resorted to to delay business. I can only affirm that, so far as I am concerned, I have resorted to no such tactics, nor shall I do so; nor have I seen other honourable members adopt such tactics. But I do object to honourable members being accused of wasting time when they are fairly and properly discussing such an important measure as one dealing with the representation of the people. The fact is, as I stated before this afternoon when speaking on another subject, that the Government are wanting to do in a fortnight work that, if properly done, would take two months. That is the whole secret of this indecent attempt on the part of the Government to shorten debate and curtail the liberty of speech of honourable members. This House is expected to prorogue in a fortnight, and I hope that expectation will be



realised; but what do the Government propose to carry through in that fortnight? A Representation Bill, a Government Railways Bill, a Land Bill—any one of which, I take leave to say, in any other Parliament in Australasia would take at least a fortnight or three weeks to debate. Then, there are the Public Works Statement, the loan proposals, and the District Railways Bill—unless, indeed, the Government are going to drop that Bill, so as to oblige some honourable members who are their supporters. There is also the Otago Central Railway Bill, involving an expenditure of nearly a million of money; and, besides that, there are eighteen other Government Bills on the Order Paper, all of more or less importance; as well as some local Bills which will require to be passed. I say that is too great a mass of work to try to force through in a fortnight, and that the Government are doing an injury to the people of the country by forcing such hasty legislation upon them. It is nonsense to tell me that any member of this House, with even the best intentions, and bringing the greatest amount of intelligence to bear on the subjects to be discussed, can do justice to those measures in the limited time at our disposal. The Government would have been much wiser if they had postponed all measures which were not absolutely necessary until next session, and have matured them in the recess; and then we should have proper legislation, while this session could have been given up entirely to the consideration of the financial and public-works proposals of the Government, as well as the question of Protection. I wish to explain, in conclusion, my own position with regard to this Bill. I am pledged to support a reduction in the number of members, but I cannot, under any circumstances, support so large a reduction as is proposed in this Bill. If the Government will accept eighty-four I shall be found voting for that reduction; but, apart from that, my mind is somewhat changed with regard to the representation of the people since I addressed my constituents; and I would much prefer to have an opportunity of arguing the matter with them, and laying before them the reasons why I have changed my views. I would not ask for that if there was an immediate and imperative necessity to pass this Bill; but I do not think there is, and it would only be fair to allow all honourable members an opportunity of ascertaining the wishes of their constituents on this very important change. The honourable member for Kumara accused the Premier of inconsistency. I am astonished that the honourable gentleman should think it necessary to do that, because every member of this House who has watched the legislation of the Premier for the last nine years must know that it has been one huge mass of inconsistency. His legislation does not last. A Bill is passed to-day and stands perhaps for two years, and then has to be repealed. He has utterly failed to grasp the question of a proper system of local government, and we have never even had an attempt at local legislation, except that

which was made by the late Government. We have been promised, in the Financial Statement, a repeal of the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act; but I have seen no Bill of that kind brought down. Does the honourable gentleman mean to drop that portion of his policy?

Mr. FISHER.—The Bill is before the House now.

Mr. FISH.—Well, I have not seen it; and I am glad the Government are not going to drop that portion of their policy, at all events. The proposed legislation of this Government this session has been of a most reactionary character. Every Bill they introduce has something of the character of what the free-thinkers in this colony and elsewhere do: it tears down something that is good, and puts nothing in its place that is worth the name. Everything is altered that has been done for years past, and the alterations made will be, in many respects, most disastrous to the prosperity of the country. Some years ago we heard of the problem of poverty which the honourable member was going to bring forward: that grand national insurance scheme which was to make everybody prosperous. Surely there could be no better time for bringing forward this scheme—which has been lying in the inner chambers of the honourable gentleman's brain for the last few years—than the present; and yet we hear nothing of it. With regard to the figures quoted by the Premier as to the number of persons represented by each member in foreign countries, those figures, if they prove anything, prove that each country grants representation to the people according to their local wants. There is such a large discrepancy between the numbers of persons represented in those countries as to show that each country makes its representation according to the wants of the population. I have said that I am pledged to my constituents to support a reduction in the number of members; but, as this Bill is not necessary to be passed this session, and as the reduction is far more than I can agree to, I shall oppose the Bill.

Mr. TAIPUA.—Sir, I have something further to say before the House goes into Committee on this Bill. I want to explain why I object to the proposal to tack on the South Island to a portion of the North Island. The great objection to that proposal is that the district will be so enormous that it will be impossible for any one member to go all over it. No Native who has to represent a portion of the North Island will have time at his disposal or ability to cross Cook Strait and inquire into the requirements and wishes of the people of the South Island. The district which I represent is sufficiently large already. It extends from Tauranga to Auckland, and down the West Coast to Wellington. Any member who represents that district properly ought to be a man of great wealth, a man like our present Governor, a man who has abundant money to spare. The Native members, being poor men, like myself, would be utterly unable to do justice to that large district. I look upon this

as one of the main objections to the Bill. Another matter which has occurred to me is this: When the special Maori Representation Act was passed and the number fixed at four, the number of European members of this House was very much smaller. But the European representation has constantly been increased, while the Maori members have remained the same in number. Now, the Government advance as a reason for reducing the number of representatives the financial condition of the colony and the want of money. Speaking to the policy of retrenchment, I cordially supported the proposal of the Government to reduce the honorarium; I willingly consented to a reduction of the money; but the proposal to reduce the number of Native representatives has given me very great pain and sorrow. If the object of the Government in taking away one Maori representative be also on the score of economy, then I ask the Government to make a further reduction in the honorarium paid to Native members instead. But I am inclined to think that it is not on the score of economy that the Government propose to take away one of the Maori members. I will explain to the House what I consider to be the real reason. I think it is because all our lands have passed away, and are now held under Crown grant. If all the lands in the South Island still remained in the hands of the Natives, there would be no proposal then by the Government to do away with the South Island Native member. Seeing it is because all the lands in the South Island are placed under the management of the Public Trustee that the Government now propose to do away with one of the Native members, I hope the Government will not consider the small number of Natives who live in the South Island. They should rather bear in mind the magnitude of the claims, the grievances, and the troubles of the Natives of that Island. Do not let the Government consider the small number of Natives living there, but rather let them consider the objections to making one of the North Island representatives have to go down south to represent the Natives there. The district will be much too large for one member to represent. If this proposal is carried, the Natives in the South Island will be without representation. They will not be sufficiently numerous to elect any man they think fit, but the Natives in my district will elect the representative. Rather than that one of our members should be taken away, I say it would be better to do away with the power some of the Natives now enjoy to vote for Europeans. It would be better for those of us who are able to do so to cease to vote for Europeans and to content ourselves with power to vote for Native members only. If the Premier does not see his way to accept that compromise, he had better tell the Native members at once that they are not wanted in this House; and they will leave. That would be better than to take one member away now, another in a year's time, and so on. I beg to assure members of this House that this proposal gives me a

great deal of trouble and regret. The honourable member for the Thames, speaking last night, said he thought it would be far better if Maoris and Europeans were all placed on one footing. In my opinion that cannot be at present. One objection to that state of things is, that no European would be found supporting the candidature of a Maori. On the other hand, if only Europeans are returned to this House, they will not understand the Maori modes of thought or Maori grievances, and the Maoris would therefore, practically speaking, be unrepresented. Any Maoris having a grievance which they wish to bring before the European representatives of their district will not be able to tell those Europeans what their wishes are. They will have to go and hunt up an interpreter and pay him something for communicating their wishes. That is one objection I have to urge against the Maoris being represented by Europeans. Another objection is that the Maoris will always be outnumbered. Their numbers will be so small in proportion to the votes given by the Europeans that they will be outvoted in every way, as at present in County Councils and Highway Boards. Hitherto we have not been able to elect any of our own race to be members of these bodies, because they are always outvoted by Europeans in the district. Another reason why we shall not be represented if this is allowed is this: The number of Europeans in our district is steadily increasing, and we shall continue to be in an ever-decreasing minority. I have to express my thanks to those honourable members from the South Island who are supporting us in our endeavour to retain our representation in this House.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I did not speak on the second reading of this Bill, but I should like to say one or two words now before the Bill goes into Committee. I listened to the arguments on both sides, and it struck me that both those for and those against the Bill are somewhat conjectural and inconclusive. One argument advanced in favour of the reduction is based on a comparison of the numbers here with the numbers elsewhere. Those honourable gentlemen who say that, because the United States has only one member to every hundred thousand inhabitants, therefore we are excessively represented in having one to every six thousand, forget the particularly effective system of State and local government that exists in that part of the world, a system that renders representation in Washington, to a very great extent, unnecessary, or, rather, enables the United States Legislature to make its work national, and not local. So, also, in Victoria a very effective form of county government exists, which relieves the House of a great deal of local business. Therefore I do not think that much argument in favour of the Bill can be drawn from that. On the other hand it is urged against the Bill that the rights of democracy will be invaded, and that the expenses of elections will be very largely increased. This declaration about the rights of democracy and about infringing the privileges of the

*Mr. Taipua*

people strikes me as being somewhat flatulent. Colonial democracy is of too sturdy a growth to be endangered by the reduction contemplated in this Bill, nor will the expense be so very materially increased. There is nothing to show that the present number of members is the fittest that can be conceived: there is no sacred number. One honourable member complained that under the present system a man has to travel twenty-four hours in a steamer. I fail to see that democracy is endangered or the expense ruinously increased if a man under the new system has to travel thirty hours. Then, there is this, which is really at the root of the whole matter: We are threshing out straw the whole time. This measure was exhaustively discussed in the last Parliament, and it is nothing but threshing out straw to discuss it again now. I do not think a single vote has been affected by all that has been said on this measure, or would be affected if the discussion were prolonged for hours. In this case we are rather following than attempting to lead public opinion. It is public opinion which has led to the introduction of this Bill, and it is public opinion that insists on its being passed. I think, moreover, that the cause of complaint which has been so much referred to this afternoon is an argument in favour of this Bill. It is written that in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom. That might have been so in the time of King Solomon, but in these latter days I am disposed to think that in the multitude of members there is talk. During the short time I have been in the House my experience is that the talk is in inverse ratio to the work. I do not accuse those honourable gentlemen who talk most of talking for the mere sake of talking; but I do say this: that, from the very necessity of the case, the more members there are the more talk there must be. We hear one honourable member make a remark, and that incites another to say something else, and so it goes on. One little word dropped early in the sitting causes a long discussion—one thing leading on to another indefinitely. A whole afternoon may be wasted through a mere casual remark dropped by the Premier or some other honourable gentleman, and it is wasted in such a way that no one can be blamed for it. I do not think any individual members are to blame for the great waste or, rather, I will say, consumption of time this session. It is just a case of there being so much inflammable material in little heaps: a spark lights the first, and then one lights the other till the whole House is in a blaze, and it takes a day to put it out. Here is a House of men with divergent opinions and a trick of expressing them, and one honourable member by speaking provokes another to speak, until the discussion has gone right round. By lessening the talking-power we shall increase the working-power. Sir, this Bill should be passed, because the people are determined it shall be passed; but I think the Premier would do well to take the most effective means to ascertain whether the opinion of the people in favour of this measure

is an opinion formed on mature judgment or on a mere passing caprice. If it be a mere passing caprice we should not proceed further; but, if they are deliberately determined to have it, the Bill should become law. There is a great difference between reduction in prospect and reduction in practice. I would suggest to the Premier this course: that the Bill be passed through Committee, and that then the Commissioners should set to work to organize the districts under the Bill. In this way we should all have an opportunity, during the recess, of going to our constituents with a map of the rearranged districts in our hands, and we could then ascertain if the actual operation of the Bill met with the approval of the people or not. If it does, we can pass the third reading of the Bill, and it will come into operation; but, if not, we can, next session, negative the third reading, let the thing drop, and no harm will be done. I trust the Premier will consider seriously the wisdom of the step I suggest. No one can be injured by it, but a great injury may possibly be prevented by it. Whether the Bill will be beneficial in its operation or not is largely a matter of conjecture. For my own part I favour it; but we are not able to speak from experience, and therefore we may possibly be acting unwisely in passing it at once. A little time for further reflection, and some experience, may show us the unwisdom. Passing from the Bill as a whole, I wish to say that in Committee I shall endeavour to get inserted a clause—which I hope the Government will assist in getting carried—to amalgamate the city constituencies. I do not think there is much in the arguments of the honourable member for Dunedin South against that proposal. It seems absurd that the mere width of a street should create a division in an electorate where there is perfect community of interests. In such cases I do not see why the country should be put to the increased trouble and expense that a multiplicity of electorates causes, and I therefore trust the House will agree to amalgamate the city electorates. I know that in Dunedin the feeling in favour of it is very strong, and I believe it is so in the other cities. I trust the Government will not oppose it. One word, before I sit down, as to the proposals of this Bill specially affecting the Maoris. I sympathize very much with what the Native members have said in protesting against the abolition of the South Island Native electorate. It has been suggested that the Natives could vote for European representatives: but that would simply mean their elimination as far as having any voice or influence in this House is concerned. The Maoris are a separate race from us, with distinct institutions of their own, with distinct modes of thought, with distinct interests; and if they are not represented here by themselves they will not be represented at all. I trust the House will not countenance the insidious proposal to put the Maoris and the Europeans on the same footing, because that would be an ingenious method of eliminating the Maori race—the taking-away of their political power,

and the taking-away of their lands, and their having to be maintained by the State as paupers. I strongly protest against the taking-away of the South Island Native seat. There is no sympathy and no community of interest between the South Island Natives and those in the North Island. I believe there is more diversity between the North Island Maoris and those in the South than there is between the Maoris and the Europeans. If the Maoris in the South are not represented here by a member of their own they will not be represented at all, and therefore they will be disfranchised. I trust the House will agree with the contention of the Maori members that the Natives should be allowed to retain their present number of representatives. They want them; there is no one to help them here unless they are here to help themselves. They have powerful enemies in this House and out of it. The Maoris should certainly have their present full quantum of members to take care of their rights; their little influence and power in Parliament should not be lessened, for in their own interest they want it all.

Mr. PARATA.—Before the Bill goes into Committee, I have something further to say. I am altogether opposed to the present measure. It reminds me of this: of a man being sentenced to be hanged, and before the day fixed for execution some one comes and takes him to where the rope is suspended and tells him to put his head through the noose and strangle himself. The noose being prepared to strangle twenty-five members of this House, it is proposed to include one of the Maori members in that number. This proposal is to put a premature end to a number of members in this House. The Bill is not to come into force for three years, and therefore it puts an end to those honourable members three years before their time. It will have the effect of disheartening those honourable members who know that their political career is to be cut short in three years' time, and will deter them from doing their best for their constituents. I will now speak as to the manner in which the measure affects the Native people. It is proposed, at the end of three years, to take away the Maori representative of the South Island, and afterwards there can only be three Maori members in this House. The honourable member for the Western Maori District has already clearly explained to the House that it would be absolutely impossible for him or any person representing that district to go to the South Island and do justice to the Natives there. If the proposal to take away the member for the South Island Natives were carried, I should earnestly pray that the House would strike out the South Island altogether, and leave the Natives there without any representation. The Maoris in that district will then ask the Government to return to them the management of their lands, and that no Commissioners or Europeans of any kind should be appointed to administer their affairs; they will insist that the management of their lands shall be returned to them, and no longer be left in the hands of

*Dr. Fitchett*

the Public Trustee. There is a Bill before the House now which proposes to give a great deal of power to that officer, and I shall consider it my duty to oppose that measure, because it is not just to the Natives. Sir, I had intended when the Bill went into Committee to move certain amendments, but I have just been informed of a fair proposal, by way of compromise, which has been suggested, and it will not be necessary for me to detain the House much longer with my remarks. I may say this, however: that, so far as the good of the Maoris is concerned, the Maoris derive no very great benefit from having representatives sitting in this House. The main thing, however, is this: that they should have some one to represent them in the House. It is true that, if the Maori members of this House support one side, complaint will be made that that is so. It is true that the Native members have been in the habit of voting on one side; but the reason for their doing so has been this: They have been led to believe that the measures for which they voted in block were for the benefit of their people, and that induced them to vote in that manner. But the fact of their having done so has often been used as an argument against their being in this House. But, as I have already stated, the four Maori members cannot do much for the benefit of the Natives in this House, because they are outnumbered by the ninety-one European representatives. If it be proposed to take away one Native member for the sake of saving £150, I think that is a very small saving to be considered. Very large sums of public money are wasted and spent in other directions which are not likely to prove so beneficial to the colony. This is the reason why I think the Maori Representation Act should not be interfered with for the sake of so small a saving. Seeing that the Maoris are represented by a separate Act, I do not think that Act should be repealed. As, however, the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill has made an alteration, I have nothing further to say on this matter.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, the concluding remarks of the last speaker point clearly to some arrangement having been come to as between the Government and the Natives; and I will leave it to the Premier, under the circumstances, whether it would not be right that, whatever compromise has been promised to them, the House should be taken into his confidence; and I trust that when the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government is replying he will give the House the explanation which, I think, in justice should be given.

Major ATKINSON.—I will do so.

Mr. SEDDON.—I must say this, Sir: It is to be regretted somewhat that arrangements of that nature should be made as between members of the House and the Government when a Bill has been debated, when others have debated it the same as I have, and have taken objection to that particular part of the Bill. I think any compromise or arrangement that is made should be made on the floor of the House, after the matter has been considered by the Government, when the head of the Govern-

ment should tell the whole House, and not any private member who is specially interested in the arrangement. I believe other concessions have been asked for; and, if the Premier had only consulted honourable members and met them in a fair and impartial manner in regard to the objections made by myself and others to the Bill as it now stands, a great deal of time could have been saved, and would have been saved. The honourable gentleman at the head of the Government must be aware that there are specific objections, and it is not the Bill as a whole that many object to. There are specific grounds on which honourable members object, which were pointed out by them during the debate yesterday. The position in which I saw this Bill to-day was at the head of the Order Paper, and that proved to me conclusively that the Premier had laid—if I may use the term—a trap; that he was desirous of entrapping members on this side of the House. He wanted it to be said, if we walked into this trap, that we were guilty of obstruction and wanted to delay business; and he wanted to make capital of what he was doing in the eyes of the country. But I say this: I will fight if fighting is necessary, and I will speak when I think that to speak may be of good service; but I will not wilfully and blindly walk into a trap, which I believe this to be. What other reasons could there be for the Premier to have placed this Bill at the head of the Order Paper to-day? We have several measures of equal importance—I believe, of greater importance—that we passed some weeks ago, to be considered in Committee. Two or three of them were passed at the end of last week, and we have seen nothing more of them; I find they are below the others on the Order Paper. We last week passed the Government Railways Bill, and I find it is the second order of the day for to-day. Why was not that put at the head of the Order Paper? Why should the House not go into Committee on that Bill if it was not, as I have said, that the Premier desired to provoke us, as it were, to hostility by bringing up the Representation Bill to the top of the Order Paper? The matter is, to my mind, of too much importance to be treated in this manner. What I may say upon the Bill, so far as its further progress is concerned, will be in the direction of criticizing it in a fair and impartial way, and not with a view of provoking hostility from the Government or those who are acting with the Government, but with a view to letting the people in the Colony of New Zealand know that by the passing of this measure they are being deprived of their just rights, and that, if it be passed, and the reduction of members as mentioned in the Bill become law, a large portion of New Zealand will be without its representation. I say without representation;—and a serious wrong is being done. Another thing which struck me as rather peculiar was the form of the motion moved by the Premier. I believe the motion now before the Chair—and you will correct me, Sir, if I am wrong—is that the House go into Committee “presently” on

this Bill. Now, there is a taunt in that phrase “to go into Committee presently.” That means that, if we carried the motion without debate, the next three orders would be attended by the same motion, that they should be committed “presently.” I ask, is it reasonable, or treating the subject with that importance which it demands, that the Premier should move that motion, and ask the House to consider any other Bill in Committee this evening? Surely, in the case of a Bill of so much importance, considering the amendments which have been given notice of, it would have been quite sufficient for the Premier had he simply moved the question that the House do go into Committee on the Bill. But it was made “presently” to taunt. It was done with that view by the Premier, and he wished still further to provoke hostility. I have said I will not be provoked into obstruction as far as this Bill is concerned, but I shall debate it on its merits, and say what I have to say fearlessly; and with a view of profiting the country I may, at this stage of my remarks, notify that I intend to move as an amendment to the motion of the Premier the following: “That it is inadvisable that the Representation Bill proceed further than its second reading until the establishment of some suitable form of local self-government shall have rendered dependence on Parliament for local works unnecessary.” Had I moved a direct motion that the further consideration of this Bill should be postponed, the Premier might have taken objection to an amendment of that kind, and have made the consideration of this question a party question. The rule of party would be that they must vote with the Government; but, Sir, in moving this amendment, I would point out that we simply say that at this stage of public business, at this stage of the session, and considering that there are other measures of greater importance to be brought forward, it would be well if this Bill should go no further than its second reading. But we do more than that. By proposing this amendment we put before the country and before the Government the fact that, in the opinion of this House, a question of essential importance to be now considered is that of local self-government. I take it to be of far greater importance to deal with that question than to pass legislation which is not required to have effect for three years to come. What is required at the present time is that we should apply ourselves to the serious consideration of the financial affairs of New Zealand. We know that a wrong exists, and it is our right and duty to apply a remedy; but I believe that to pass this measure would be more iniquitous and a greater wrong to the colony than was the abolition of the provinces in 1875. Underlying this Bill there is a far greater principle than there was underlying our legislation at the time of abolition; but we are just met on similar grounds in reference to the passing of this measure to those we were met with when the provinces were abolished. We were told that in place of the Provincial Councils the Government

would provide local self-government of a more satisfactory and less costly character. The Premier was then a member of a Ministry that told the House that the time had arrived when there should never be heard in this House the name of a road or a bridge. But since the abolition of the provinces it has been nothing but roads and bridges in this House. It has been a question of constantly raising money and diverting it from legitimate purposes to political purposes; and that has been the curse of New Zealand. So it will be if we pass this measure in its present form. If passed it will have just as bad an effect as the abolition of the provinces. A return laid on the table the other day showed the administrative cost of local government throughout New Zealand; and what does it prove? If any honourable gentleman would take the trouble to read it he would see there is an amount with respect to local-government expenditure which would be quite sufficient, if saved, to make the deficiency that exists in the colonial finances at the present time. Local government we have none. The local government that we have has a tendency to increase in cost. Instead of decreasing the number of local bodies we are increasing them. Every little centre is crying out for decentralisation in order that it may have its own little local body, thus creating extra cost of administration. The number of local bodies is constantly increasing, and the number of members is constantly increasing. We have Land, Education, Road, River, Harbour, and Charitable-aid Boards, County Councils, School Committees, and so on—why, their name is legion. That is all running away with the public money. There is no tendency at all to stop this sort of thing. We had the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, and I would say to the Premier that that measure was a most useful measure, and if it had been carried out it would have met the requirements of the colonists in the sparsely-settled districts; but it was abused.

Major ATKINSON.—You supported a Government whose cardinal point it was to repeal that Act.

Mr. SEDDON.—The Premier does me an injustice, because I was one of those who voted against the repeal of that measure, and I may tell the Premier that I went so far as to say that if the then Government pushed on that repealing measure, and another measure which was introduced by them in the same direction, I would sever my connection with the party. I am not saying anything I cannot prove. I regarded that measure as the most perfect that has been introduced, so far as local-government works are concerned, since the abolition of the provinces. But the last shred of what was given to the country at the time of passing that measure has now gone. Then we had the introduction of the Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill, and we had the Local Bodies' Loans Bill and the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill; and then we were to have the local finance placed on a satisfactory footing by subsidies. We find now

that these subsidies are withdrawn, a reduction to the extent of one-half is made, and I suppose that the whole of the measures dealing with local self-government will be swept away; and we are to have nothing in their place. But we have this Bill, and if it is carried we shall take from the people the last opportunity they have of getting their local wants attended to. I cannot be a party to legislation in this direction, particularly when I remember that the people themselves are not aware of what is going on. I say that advisedly. What knowledge have they in the remoter parts of the colony that the number of the members of this House is to be reduced to seventy? What knowledge have they of the proposal, which has been given notice of to-day, that the number shall be reduced to fifty? Are we to be parties to legislation of that kind, when the people do not know of what is proposed? Why, there is hardly a member of this House who knows what the effect will be. There is no provision in the Bill for the readjustment of the electoral boundaries. Surely that point requires consideration. There is nothing here to provide that there shall be a census taken before the Act is put into operation. If the Bill comes into operation as proposed, it will come into force just a year before there will be a census. A great injustice was done to some parts of the colony in having the representation as it is now fixed on the last census. There are many parts of the colony that were entitled to more representation than they have under the Act of last session. That is a point that should have engaged the attention of the Government before they brought this Bill in. It is not too late yet for the Government to consider the points that I have just raised. Then, there is the question, raised by the member for Waikato, What quota are the country districts to have so as to equalise them with the towns? That is a most important point. I put it to the country members and to the town members: is that question to be reopened? We know what the quota in the case of town and country districts now is, but we do not know what may occur if this Bill gets into Committee. If the country members are strong, it may be altered as is proposed by the honourable member; if the town members are the stronger, the quota in force at the present time may be reduced. The Bill, so far as it goes, is silent upon that point; and I ask, is it fair that, having settled this matter last session, it should now be reopened? I think that the Government should give us a decided intimation as to the course that they intend to pursue. Will they support the proposal of the honourable member for Waikato? Being a Government supporter, I dare say that there are a good many men on that side who will assist him; but then, again, the Government have a large town representation behind them who may object to this proposal, and it may be that we who live in the country districts shall find that we have lost the quota that we have at the present time. It is on account of this uncertainty that I say a

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serious wrong may be done to the people, and I say that it is wrong to throw a Bill down on the floor of this House and raise again feelings of jealousy and ill-feeling that can only demoralise the House, and especially, I say, it is wrong to do it at a time when there is no necessity for it. Three years hence would be plenty of time to deal with it. There is no necessity to deal with it now, just at the commencement of a new Parliament. Seeing that there are measures of far greater importance awaiting our consideration, it would be well for all parties if this matter had been let alone for the present. Then, as this matter has been brought before us, I would say that there is another question which should be dealt with. In the mining districts—and the Minister of Justice will bear me out in this—we have a far greater percentage of adult population than is seen in any other part of the colony. The electoral rolls for the mining constituencies prove conclusively that it is so. If you want further proof take the elections; take the number of votes that were polled at the contested elections in the mining districts, and you will find that they showed much heavier polling than in any of the other districts of the colony. That shows that we have a large adult male population. Then, we have a greater population of producers; and that is a matter that ought to weigh with the House. They are producers and they are large consumers, and they have not, and will not have under the provisions of this Bill, that amount of representation which they are fairly entitled to. I mean to move, when this Bill goes into Committee, in the direction of giving them fairer representation. I am, however, prepared to accept the position as it now is; but, if we are forced to go on with this Bill, I will do what I consider is right to the people who sent me here, by endeavouring to secure, so far as I am able, that in the mining districts the population necessary to secure a member shall be less than in other parts of the colony; and, Sir, I simply claim that on account of their having a greater male population and a greater number of producers and consumers. Now, then, as to the division that was made by the Commissioners. Did that give satisfaction? Was it carried out as it was intended when the Representation Act was passed last session? I will undertake to say that there is not a single member of the House who was here previously who will admit that the alteration of the boundaries of his electorate has not disturbed that confidence and good feeling that should exist between the representative and those whom he represents. I do not think there is one member who can say that he was satisfied with the divisions that were made. Then, again, I would ask, has the law been given effect to as it was intended to be by the Legislature? Has there, in the electoral districts, been community of interest, and have the natural boundaries, taking into consideration the geographical features of the country, been dealt with in a manner satisfactory to the House or the colony? I say, unhesitatingly,

no. Why, there is one member here who told us that there were three centres within his electorate; that each differed so much from the others that neither one nor the other put up a candidate, and that, owing to disunion, owing to the want of community of interest as between the three sections, they allowed an outsider to walk into the House without a contest. Is that representation on a fair basis? What did the Minister of Justice tell us yesterday? Is he satisfied with the electoral boundaries of the districts in Otago? Clearly not. He told us that the division had been made without community of interest having been studied, and I think he said that, as the law stood, it was impossible to have the boundaries made so as to include community of interest. If this applies when we have one representative to every 6,000 of population, how much more will it apply when we have one representative to every 9,000 of population? This contention is unanswerable, and there should be clearly proved to the House and the colony the absolute necessity for the wrench that you intend to give, before it is given. There have been no arguments given why we should do what is intended to be done by the passing of this measure. I say, again, that the electors and the candidates should come face to face. There is nothing like the public platform, the friendly meeting that takes place, and the mutual interchange of confidence or of opinion during an election; and I say that if you carry the measure before us and reduce the number of members to seventy it is impossible that the candidates and electors can come face to face. In that case, what is the inevitable result? The result is this: that the Press of the colony will wield a tremendous power during elections, because those who do not meet the candidate must and do read, and will be biased and swayed by what they read. The Premier, I believe, knows full well that the passing of this measure will have that effect, and, at the present moment, he and those who are with him have the Press of the colony supporting them. The Premier knows the power that the Press wields, and that that power will be used to the benefit of himself and his party; hence he does not even wish that honourable members should meet their constituents. He told us the other day that it was the duty of honourable members to see their constituents at least once every year; but I say he is blowing hot and cold, because he is making it next to impossible for a member or even a candidate to see the whole of his electors. I said that the Press had great power for good or evil. I do not wish to cavil with the Press of New Zealand. I have said on the floor of this House and elsewhere that New Zealand might well be proud of its Press; but I do say this: that, owing to the depression which has existed, the Press has taken a too gloomy view of the situation, and, biased by that view, I think they have in this case recommended a reduction of members, and have impressed upon their readers that which, in the long-run, will prove injurious to the colony. I do not say, and I will not have it said, that the

Press is corrupt; but I do say that the Press at the present time in the colony is swayed, and, in some instances, influenced, by those whom I may term the importers—those interested in land transactions, and those interested in financial institutions. I do believe that they have had greater weight with the Press than have the people generally; and, feeling that, and that more power will be given to the Press by the passing of this measure, I would ask that the Press should have an opportunity of reflecting what the full effect of this measure will be if it becomes law. I know several cases where some of the leading journals, that during and shortly after the elections advocated the reduction of the number of members, have since that time altered their opinions. If time is given and fair attention is paid to the retrenchment that is necessary, and to placing the finances of the colony in a sound position, I will undertake to say that the Press will see that it is inadvisable, under the existing circumstances, to have the reduction in the number of members that is mentioned in this measure. As I said, the Press had great power during the elections, and I believe that that power was used in some instances to the detriment of the people of the colony; but for this I do not blame the Press to the same extent as I blame those partisans who very skilfully and adroitly threw dust into the eyes of the people, and especially into the eyes of the working-men and of the middle-classes of this colony. In some instances we found the working-men voting with those who represented the wealthy financial institutions and the landed interests and the absentees, to secure the return of particular candidates. What was the bond of union? Was it in the interest of the working-men, was it in the interest of trade or of local industries, that they were working together? No; the artisans were simply being used. Why, Sir, in one election in Wellington a gentleman in a very good position here said to me, "I went, in the interests of one of the candidates, to the committee to see how it was formed. I took two or three with me. We had a look into the room; it was quite enough for us—too much working-man, We left them and formed an outside committee and worked with them. They did not know it, but we jointly returned our man." And Wellington is not the only place where the same thing was done. Then, I ask the question, what was the reason for it? The reason was this: that they desired to secure the return to this House of members pledged to support that which, to my mind, is contrary to the welfare of the colony. And, Sir, they have succeeded. First of all, they had the power of the Press with them. Then, dust was thrown into the eyes of the bulk of the people, and of the working-classes in particular, and we have now the result of this wrong-doing. We have Bill after Bill brought on the floor of this House, the tendencies of which, and the effect of which, will do a wrong for all time. I hold that we have had ten years of fair, good, honest, solid work

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done in the interests of the people; and now, at one session, before even the Press or the House has had time to reflect, and before the people are awakened to the fact, Bill after Bill, measure after measure, is to be put through this House without fair consideration being given to them; and if we attempt to give them fair consideration or to debate them we are told that we are guilty of obstruction. No argument has been used on the other side at all. There is nothing but the "hob-nailed boot:" "It must go through: I have a majority. How dare you obstruct! How dare you speak your mind! Be silent, Sir!" And there is a subservient majority who, without rhyme or reason, without themselves being able to give a reason for the action they take, are voting by fifty at a time for the passing of these measures. I undertake to say that if time were given for reflection, and if members of this House were to go back to their constituents, and were asked at meetings of their constituents to give the reasons for some of their votes, they would not be in a position to do so; and they would come back to the House next session and be only too glad to undo that which they are doing now; and, instead of saying that those who wish fairly to debate these measures are obstructionists, I believe they would tender to us their sincere thanks for having pointed out the wrong that was being done. Shall I give a further proof of how things were worked at the last elections? There was what was known as the Financial Reform Association. I saw one of the schedules of questions submitted to each candidate by that association; and I saw the name of the candidate signed to it with answers "Yes" or "No," as the case might be, or an expression of doubt where there was a doubt involved, although I am bound to say that, in the instance I saw, the answers were very straightforward. And what was the meaning of that? It meant that that association was composed of importers; of those who represent the absentee interests in this colony; of those who have filched from the people the land of the colony.

Mr. MONK.—In what part of the colony?

Mr. SEDDON.—In Auckland.

Mr. MONK.—Then it is not true.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, I have had an expression used to me on the floor of this House which ought not to have been used, and I ask that it may be withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member who used that expression is not at liberty to apply such a remark to another honourable member, and it must be withdrawn.

Mr. MONK.—I did not apply it to the honourable member, but I used it because he was not acquainted with this association, and I am.

Mr. SEDDON.—An honourable gentleman on my right says that it is true. I do not apply these words to the honourable gentleman offensively, but I believe it to be true, absolutely true, because in other parts of the colony we know individual members of this association, and I know that the institutions I have referred



to were chiefly represented on it. The fact is that the Premier of the colony has now in his Cabinet-room a list of every candidate's answers to that schedule, and he has nothing to do but to turn to their speeches and to those answers, and they are bound and gagged by the pledges they have given. It is an absolute minority, representing an enormous power, and that power has been used to return certain members; and, as they have given those pledges hastily, they have been trapped, and that power is used in passing this and other measures to the detriment of the bulk of the people; and we are asked to be silent, and to sit down tamely and let this be done without protesting against it. My nature will not allow me to do that. I say that any honourable member who sits in this House after obtaining his seat in that way is failing in his duty to himself as an honest man in being bound by pledges so extracted. I say the questions submitted in that paper are degrading, and I, as a public man, believe that there are a great majority in this House who refused, under circumstances of such a nature, to answer the queries put by that association. Why did not that association send its representatives on to the public platform to put these questions? Because they did not dare to do so; because they knew that the working-men, the bulk of the people, would have known the moving spirit behind, and that any candidate who had received such support or given such answers as were given in that schedule would be at the bottom of the poll on the election-day. Therefore there are circumstances connected with the position in which the House is placed to-night to have the right to be publicly stated; and I state them not with a view of obstruction, but with a view to ask honourable members to reason the thing to themselves before they commit the colony to the certain detriment to be caused by this measure. Yesterday, again, we had a spectacle in this House—one such as I have never seen before, and hope I shall never see again—of a gentleman who, from his years and from the respect he has had in this colony, I should have thought would not have been guilty of doing such a thing—going round the House before the debate had commenced ten minutes with a card in his hand, and asking, "Will you vote for this Bill or not?" And members who had given these answers to the questions put by the Financial Reform Association said, "Yes; I am pledged to it. I do not care about its passing this session; but I am pledged to it." Had it not been for the honourable member for Dunedin East drawing attention to that fact I believe that every member in the House would have been canvassed, and then he would have been doubly bound—by what he had replied to the Reform Association, and also by the consent extracted from him by the Government. Then, what is the position the Government take up? "We care not what arguments you use, or whether you approve or do not of the passing of this measure. We have a majority to pass it. We have got the second reading, and we will see it through in spite of all reason."

If that is the way in which we are to legislate, I ask, of what material is this House made? If members are to vote under circumstances of that kind, the sooner we have an appeal to the people again the better it will be for the colony. But I think honourable members will yet listen to reason, and will not, at the wish of the Government, and of those interests to which I have referred, allow this Bill to go further than the second reading. But it appears to me that no time is to be given to us. Why is this Bill to be committed to-day, when we only passed its second reading this morning? Can the Government show us another case of a Bill of such importance being attempted to be hurried through in such a way as this Bill has been hurried? I say, unhesitatingly, that there is not another instance of the kind in the history of the colony. Sir, the Minister of Education yesterday took exception to some remarks which I had made on this question. The honourable gentleman said there was no force in the arguments I used, and that they were fallacious, and, I think, he kept the House for half an hour in endeavouring to refute one or two arguments I had used. One of the arguments adduced by him was this: that the Representation Act of last session, under which the last election was held, was not fairly the opinion of the last Parliament. He went even further than that, and told the House that last Parliament had decided that the number of members should be reduced to seventy-one. Well, I was somewhat astonished at such an assertion being made when there is the statute, there is the number of members fixed by the Act of last session at ninety-five, and there is the absolute fact that ninety-five members are sitting here. How then can the honourable member say that the will of last Parliament was that the number of members should be reduced to seventy-one, when ninety-five members have been returned to the House? I say the will of the last Parliament was that there should be ninety-five members; and it was said of the last Parliament that it was one of the best that the country had had for years. When it has been decided by a majority that the number should not be reduced, why should we now, without the people knowing anything about it, endeavour to reduce the number? Then, again, the Minister of Education was inconsistent, for, if he considers that seventy-one is the right number, why does he not give full effect to his views by asking that this measure shall have effect on its passing? Why should the number of members remain for the next three years at twenty-five more than is required for the good of the country, at a cost which will not be recouped to the country by the services they render here? The argument was so glaringly inconsistent that I was astonished at the honourable member using it. Being in a minority, and having entered my protest against the passing of the measure, I am always willing to admit that a majority should rule; and if a majority say that number shall be altered I shall be prepared to take my chance in the country if an appeal is

made to it; and then, whatever result is arrived at, I shall be satisfied. But I am not satisfied to legislate three years ahead. We are told by the Minister of Education, "If you do not pass the Bill this session, it will never go through this Parliament." Is not that trifling with the question? Is not that a species of argument which we should at once repel? I at once say that, to my mind, nothing was ever said to honourable members in this House, who think and act for themselves, that was so much to their detriment as the assertion of the Minister of Education under that head. It must be one of two things: either he was afraid that, on reflection, the House would decide to retain its present number; or else he was afraid that, unless this Bill were passed, it would be detrimental to himself and his colleagues. First as to reflection. When the country knows what is being done—and the passing of the second reading will be an indication on that score—honourable members will come back next session with a knowledge of the will of the people; and then let those honourable gentlemen bring down this Bill as one of their first measures and insist upon its being passed, and I, for one, shall be prepared to give it fair consideration. But if that is not what is required—if it is, as pointed out by the honourable member for Te Aro, that it is simply to be a whip held over the heads of members of the House, to be used with no sparing hand by the Premier, in place of the "hobnailed boot"—why should we allow this to be done? Why should the Government be allowed to say to the House, if they want to pass some special measure of their own, that the House will have to agree to it? Depend upon it, this is what will be done: The Government will tell the House that it is entitled to a dissolution, because this Parliament was brought into existence by Sir Robert Stout and the late Government, and the present Government can constitutionally ask for a dissolution. And, Sir, if that dissolution is granted, well, these twenty-five members cannot come back. The usual rule is that thirty out of the ninety members retire from the effect of public opinion, and then it means there are only the six members of the Government and fourteen returned of the old members, and they can work a new party just at their own sweet will. Why is this wanted? I say that the secret of it is this: that the head of the present Government, and one who is with him of the late continuous party that misgoverned New Zealand for seventeen long years, come day, go day, in the Ministry or out, the same continuous party ruled New Zealand for seventeen years, and that was when there was a small number of members in this House. Since there has been a larger number we have had, and, I believe, in the interests of the colony, more frequent changes of Government, and we have had Governments amenable to reason, Governments amenable to honourable members in this House; and I believe the legislation has been better and more beneficial to the country since the number has been increased. I believe, myself, that the passing of this measure and the re-

duction of members would give such a power to the Government of the day that they would hold office as long as they liked, and that the country would suffer. I cannot efface from my memory what occurred in 1879, when we know that for a period of fourteen or fifteen days a no-confidence motion was kept down on the Order Paper, never allowed to come up, until an arrangement was made by four members of this House, signed, sealed, and delivered. The wording of it was as nice a little compact, I think, as ever was drawn. Certain conditions were stated, and these honourable members at that time said, "In consideration of the above being given effect to and being carried out by the Government, we bind ourselves to vote for and support them for the rest of the Parliament." Well, Sir, you get seventy-one members or seventy members: that means sixty-six members exclusive of the Native representation. You have six Ministers; and those who support them, in order to be in a majority, would be about thirty at least. What power would four or five men not have again if anything was required? Why, those members would dominate, and the Government would have to give way or leave the benches. I believe they would give way and remain on the benches. Now, what did that compact cost the country? It cost the country a quarter of a million of money. How far would that go in paying the twenty members we have had since? How far would the money go that has been lost to the country by full effect not being given to the Public Works Act? What number of members was there when the House passed the District Railways Bill originally, where lines were constructed through different parts of the colony simply to enhance private lands?—and then we find the colony has had to purchase them, but never had any profit given to us or given to the people in the shape of a return from the increased value given to the land through which these railways passed. I could go back for the last twenty years and point out Bill after Bill, by taking the Statute Book of the colony, that whilst there was a lesser number of members, and they were paid a smaller amount, the legislation was in the interest and for the benefit of particular sections in the colony, and to the detriment of the people generally. Now, I take the periods since 1881, since we have had an increased number of members, and I say that our legislation has been such that the colony has progressed. The condition of the working-class in New Zealand has considerably improved; but if we go back twenty years, to the old days of 1865, the time we are asked, the time we had seventy members, to the days when there were few members, there is no honourable member but will admit that the most serious wrong ever the colony laboured under was done during those years. What is this question as regards some of the Bills before us now? What is the meaning of that Railway Boards Bill? It means this: that the Government wish to bring down wages in this country. You talk to Cabinet Ministers and their supporters; they

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will tell you this very plainly and decisively: that labour is too high in New Zealand. That is the objection aimed at by the Financial Reform Association and the wire-pullers behind the scenes. If the colony hands over the railways to this Board without it having been distinctly provided that Parliament should have some control over the wages-men, every man's wages will be brought down; and, if you bring down Government wages, that reacts on those who are employing labour privately. The whole of this legislation is intended for no other purpose. Sir, as one desiring to do justice to the bulk of the people, as one wishing that wealth should have its fair due, and that capital and labour should work together in harmony for the profit of both, I say, let us remain as we are. I believe there is no real reason for complaint; that this depression will go away like the mist from a mountain-top. It only requires to retrench in a fair and equitable way. Readjust taxation so as to put a fair proportion on those who are able to bear it, and not, as I believe we shall have, too great a burden placed on the shoulders of the working-class, and too little on the shoulders of the wealthy people who are best able to bear most. We have all to face that yet. It would have been better for the Government, instead of taking time up with this measure, if it had endeavoured to balance the finance, if it had increased the property-tax a little more and rearranged the tariff. I believe that would have been better for all concerned. The fact of having grappled this financial question with a bold and determined hand would have raised our bonds in London instead of their coming down as they have been doing for the last two months. The Minister of Education quoted *Westgarth* on this point; but it is six weeks old. I take the telegrams and private telegrams, and I say that our bonds are gradually coming down. I believe we shall see them down to 90. If they had increased the property-tax and the Customs and had equalised taxation properly, I believe our securities would have risen. We have a tariff which was created by the Government, the same as in 1879. The Premier then told us we were on the verge of ruin; that had it not been for the Bank of England being called into requisition we should have had to repudiate. He said publicly, and I believe privately, that we must bring things down to a lower level before we begin to reconstruct. I do not believe in bringing down at all. It is bearing down enough when we have men working at 4s. 6d. a day, out of which they find it impossible, on account of wet days, to send any money to their wives and families, and these have to apply for relief to the Charitable Aid Boards. What more bringing-down than that do we require? I say let us rise, and let us equalise the finances. Let us do a little in the way of public works. If New Zealand were being run by a private company, that company would never, under existing circumstances, endeavour to do what the Government of to-day are doing, and what this Legislature is insisting on being done. Works must be

found. A revision of the tariff should take place so as to encourage local industries. We should not attempt to cripple one of the chief items of export, which we do by the present railway-tariff. Though there is a deficiency in the working of the railway-lines, now is not the time, when the product of the soil is so low, to have this Railway Board, and to increase our tariffs. And now, when there is a glut of labour, is not the time to reduce labour. I say things have gone low enough, in all truth, to have our securities at 90, and I believe they are still falling, and no attempt is made to equalise our finances. This House is asked to spend two days in discussing a measure which is not to have effect for three years. That proves clearly the insincerity of the Government and those who support them. With regard to the question of Maori representation, I understand that the Premier has given a promise that it shall not be decreased, and that the South Island shall have the same representation they have had for years. If that is the compromise that has been effected, it is a compromise in the interests of right and justice. The Natives in the South Island have at all times been our best friends. There are but a few now remaining of that noble race. Of all things they prize most, it is the fact that they have representation in this Chamber, and to take that away from them must cause heartburnings, and must make them feel their position far more keenly than they have felt it hitherto. The west coast of the Middle Island, I think the most wealthy part of New Zealand, was given over to the colony for a paltry £600.—(No.)—The State records prove it. Lands were reserved for them. We have had cases in the House, which I regret should have occurred, where we find the Ministry of the day, and that under a protest from the South Island representative, where one Wanganui block of 100,000 acres in extent was sold to a Government supporter—I question if some of the Government themselves were not interested in the transaction—it was sold, I say, for 2s. 6d. an acre.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Two shillings.

Mr. SEDDON.—I thought it was 2s. 6d. That block of land was in the London market this last year, and I saw an absolute refusal of £20,000. There are other reserves still in the South Island belonging to the Native race, and if they lose their representation they may lose the balance of these reserves. We have heard of the Native troubles in the past, where the Natives, sooner than suffer the wrong the white people of this colony were doing to them, with the sword fought for their rights. Serious bloodshed and disaster occurred, and from that time to this it has entailed upon the people of New Zealand a very heavy penalty. We have to pay at the present time for eleven millions of money expended upon Native wars. We have that recurring penalty year after year. Now, Sir, when the Native race desire to work in harmony with us, when they come here to help us not only to legislate for the Natives but to assist in legislating for the white people, now we are to commence a further disturbance

and further uneasiness. We know the question of dealing with Native lands has to be reviewed this session, and before we commence to review that legislation the first thing the Natives are met with is that one of their members must go. That is dictation—intimidation of such a character that I, for one, resent. I will ask the Government, seeing that the Maori member for the South Island is an opponent and has been a consistent opponent to the Government, I ask the Government, is it a manly or fair way of fighting to say, whilst they are going to deal with those lands, "There shall be a rod hanging over your head all the time—your seat may be cut away by a Bill passed and forced upon you"? I am positive the Government have never given that consideration to this vast question which it is entitled to, or it would never have attempted to take away this Maori representation. The only one benefit that I can see at the present time which has occurred through debating this question is the fact that the Government, I understand, now have gone back on their proposal to reduce the Maori representation; and shall it be said hereafter that debating a question, and giving reasons why a thing should not be done, has no effect, when an effect has been so apparent in this case, the force of argument and the reasons given by honourable members having caused the Government to give way on that material point of the Bill? Having given way in that respect, I hope they will give way in others, and that this measure will not go further than its second reading. If the Government insist, by the majority they have, on carrying it further, I shall simply protest; and from time to time, when I think amendments are necessary in the interests of the colony, I shall move those amendments. But, in conclusion, I wish the Government and honourable members who have listened to me to be made aware of this fact: that I am not obstructing the passing of this measure. I say that the contention that it should be passed in the first session of the new Parliament is fallacious; and I say that every Representation Act that has been passed has been passed in the last session of an expiring Parliament. The Acts of 1881 and 1887 are the most recent instances. Yet now the Minister of Education, in the face of these facts, says that a Representation Bill should pass in the first session of a new Parliament, and when members have not had time for reflection. That is asking and advising the House to do a serious wrong, and I shall not be a party to it; and with a view of protesting, and with the view of urging that the question of local self-government should be dealt with and made a more prominent feature in the Government programme, I move this amendment: That it is inadvisable that the Representation Bill proceed further than its second reading until the establishment of some suitable form of local self-government shall have rendered dependence on Parliament for local works unnecessary.

Mr. PERCEVAL.—I second the amendment. I rise because I do not like to give a silent vote

*Mr. Seddon*

on this measure, and I will endeavour to give my reasons in as few words as possible, for I think the debate has been continued long enough. I am reluctant to oppose this Bill, because the Government regard it as one of their retrenchment proposals. I see, in the Financial Statement, considerable stress was laid upon the passing of this measure. The Government say that this session they propose to reduce the number of members to seventy, and that next session they will submit a Bill to the House altering the mode of election and making other necessary reforms of the electoral laws. And that is my first reason for opposing this Bill—because I regard it as fragmentary legislation. It seems to me to be beginning at the wrong end to bring down a fragment of such an important set of proposals as this is; and, if we are to judge from this Bill as to how the mode of election is to be altered, we must come to the conclusion that the mode of election is to be made as retrogressive as this Bill is, and the Government may propose to bring down some measure to take away the residential qualification. It seems to me that it would only be consistent with what the Government are now doing to take away what is generally known as manhood suffrage. I therefore think that to vote on a Bill such as we have before us is to vote in the dark, and I certainly shall not do so. I fail to see how the Government should lay such stress upon this measure as being likely to bring about retrenchment, as the retrenchment cannot take effect for three years. I have been astounded at some of the statements made during this debate. We have heard Ministers say from their places that the principal saving to be effected by this Bill will not be in the honorarium which it will save, but in the reduction of the demands made on the public chest. Well, that seems to me to be admitting a most lamentable state of corruption, and, if that reason exists, we ought to go still further and reduce the number to fifty, and even go further still and say we will not have a Parliament at all, but that the Premier shall be a dictator. To admit such a state of corruption as that is most lamentable, and I begin to ask myself if I am carrying out my duty to my constituents, because I have yet made no request; and I hope I shall not have to do so. I am astounded to hear Ministers give an argument in favour of this Bill that it will tend to stop what is termed "log-rolling." Now, I confess that if I had to vote on such a measure as this on the eve of a general election I should be quite content to vote for a reasonable reduction in the number of members, but probably not so large a reduction as is proposed here. I would certainly support a reasonable reduction; and I will. But I have a twofold reason for opposing this Bill now, or, rather, I ask myself two questions in regard to it. The first is, Are the numbers to be reduced? and the second is, Are we to deal with the question now? I oppose it because I think it is entirely unnecessary to deal with the question now. In three years' time the circumstances of the

colony may, and I hope they will, have altered very considerably. I hope that by that time we shall have passed through this period of depression, that things will be more prosperous, and that the population of the colony will have considerably increased. I hope that then we shall have our mining industries developed, that we shall have a protective tariff in operation, and that we shall be experiencing the benefits of those changes. To do this now is, as I have said, entirely unnecessary. We might very well put the question off; and I think the argument is quite untenable that this measure stands a less chance of passing in three years' time than it has now. I have heard some honourable members say that we should pass this measure now while our election-pledges are green; but that seems to me to be one of the most lamentable confessions we could make, and I, for one, should certainly be very sorry to make it. Now, I wish to call attention to a matter which has just been touched on once or twice in discussing this measure, but upon which very little stress has been laid, so far. I can see that an attempt is going to be made to give more power to the country districts; I can see that an attack is going to be made on the town representation. Now, I have asked myself why that is; and I wish to call the attention of those honourable members who have been returned pledged to support local industries to this point: I cannot help thinking that this is an astute attempt to prevent the carrying-out of a protective policy. Speaking generally, it is correct to say that the country districts are opposed to any increase in the protective duties. There are notable exceptions to this, and I think, if the matter were put before them in its proper light, the country districts would see it would be to their advantage to have a protective tariff. We shall probably hear more of that next session when the matter is debated; but I feel assured that the country districts themselves are awakening to the fact that a protective tariff will benefit them equally with the artisans in our towns. Now, the Premier, next session, is going to tackle this question of the tariff, and he has told us that he hopes to be able to bring down proposals which will satisfy both the Free-traders and the Protectionists in this House. Sir, that is a very delusive hope; he will never be able to do it. I believe that the Premier is earnest in his desire to encourage local industries; but I defy him to bring down a tariff which will satisfy those of us who have been returned pledged to a protective tariff and the supporters he has behind him at the present time. Why, do we not see that the bulk of his supporters are the Free-trade party in this House? and how is he going to frame a tariff acceptable to the Protectionist section of the House, unless he throws over his Free-trade supporters and allies himself with the Protectionist section of the House? I cannot help thinking that the country members see that now is their opportunity, and that, if they can get a preponderance of power they will be able, in the event of an appeal to the country, to check-

mate this policy of Protection. I invite all those members who are pledged to a policy of Protection to think over that. We have already had notice given of an amendment in the direction I have indicated—that is to say, for reducing the town representation—and that seems to me a very important thing, and quite sufficient, to my mind, to justify any honourable member, whatever his election-pledges may have been, in opposing this measure, because there is something underneath it. I made no election-pledge on this point. We have been told in the course of this debate that the country, from one end to the other, has demanded this. Now, the people in my district take as lively an interest in political questions as those in any part of New Zealand, and I think it is a somewhat remarkable fact, if there is such a general demand, that, in a large centre like Christchurch, I should never have been asked the question whether I was in favour of reducing the number of members. Probably, if I had been asked, I should have said Yes; and I think, if the present is the proper time to deal with the question, that we ought to reduce the number of members; but I say that the time to deal with this question has not arrived, and there is no necessity to deal with it now, and that this Bill, if passed, will remain a dead-letter on the Statute Book, and before the expiration of this Parliament we shall pass another Bill increasing the number of members. That is my firm conviction. It seems to me that there is very great force in the remarks which have been made on the question of local government. The two questions are most closely allied. If we are going to revert to a system of local self-government, then seventy members are too many; we can do with fifty. The two questions are so closely allied that we cannot deal with one without the other. Then, we have various other questions which all hinge upon this. We have the amalgamation of city electorates. We have the various changes which may or will be proposed in the electoral laws generally; and this is a mere fragment of a very important class of legislation; and it is unfair to deal with the question until we have the whole of the Government proposals before us. These are my reasons for opposing the Bill.

Mr. BRUCE.—I have no wish to prolong this discussion; but I desire to say a few words in reference to some strictures which have been passed on the remarks I made last night. I have been accused of inconsistency in supporting a measure against which I myself urged some objections. Perhaps it would be as well that no member should support a measure that had any flaw, at least from his point of view, and he might not then be accused of inconsistency. But what I wish to point out is this: that the two measures of which I spoke went together in a wrong direction, and that one of them was only excusable as a temporary measure in the existing embarrassed financial position of the colony; and it was with the hope—and I gave expression to that hope—that that measure would be at

some future time repealed that I gave the other my support. I still hold, notwithstanding the remarks which have been made during this debate, that the larger constituencies will presumably return larger men to the House—that is, if all were given an opportunity of contesting the seats. That, taken in connection with my contention last night, perfectly justifies the attitude I have taken up. If it were not that I recognise that this is an undesirable occasion for doing so, I should like to follow the honourable member for Kumara in what he said to-night. I have listened with great interest to his remarks. They have been a repetition of arguments which have been so repeatedly used on the floor of this House, particularly that in reference to the Government attempting to lower the wages of the working-men of this country. The honourable member asserted that the Government introduced their railway measure mainly for the purpose of reducing the wages of the working-men of this colony. How could the honourable member lend himself to such a statement? What are wages? How ought we to pay our working-men on these railways? We should give them the market value of their labour, I presume. If, for argument's sake, we engaged these men ten years ago, when wages were, say, 10s. a day, and if labour is only worth 5s. a day now, should we not reduce them? Or, conversely, if ten years ago we engaged these men at 5s. a day, and wages are now 10s. a day, should we not raise them to that level? I do not wish to go into the argument any further, because I recognise that the time is inopportune; but I will certainly do so if opportunity offers before the close of the session.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Since I last spoke on this question quite a new phase has been put upon this measure, so far as I am able to judge, by strong supporters of the Government. One honourable gentleman, who is a very strong supporter of the Government, indicated last night that, unless a large increase to the percentage were allowed to country districts, he should feel it his duty to vote against the third reading of the Bill. When this measure was first before the House I voted against the principle of the Bill, because I believe that population should be the basis, and the only basis, of representation. Seeing that these honourable members are desirous of having a larger percentage,—I presume to represent sheep or land,—I certainly shall vote against it; and I trust that those honourable gentlemen who represent the city constituencies—and I know there are a great number of them—will not countenance any increase of the percentage. I presume the Premier is aware of the fact. Whether this is going to be a party question or not we have not had the slightest indication. If the Premier had stated what he promised to state—namely, the course he intended to take with reference to this measure—he would have saved much of this talk. If the measure is to go into Committee, and is to be dealt with fairly by both sides of the House, I am prepared to

Mr. Bruce

take my chance with it whichever way it goes; but I certainly am not going to vote for its going into Committee if the amendments proposed by prominent supporters of the Government are to be carried. I am tired of listening to such talk as we have heard in reference to this matter; but, seeing that honourable members who are supporting the Government go quite contrary to the principles I advocate, I felt it necessary to say a few words.

Sir J. VOGEL.—It appears that the longer honourable gentlemen discuss this Bill the more difficult it is to come to a decision. Every fresh speaker raises new points. We have now the question of town and country; before we had Free-trade and Protection; then we had the question of local government; and if we go on much longer we may have every question that ever comes before the House brought up in connection with this Bill, and not improperly so, because, as this Bill deals with the question of the representation of the people, every question that comes before Parliament is very properly amenable to the discussion. But it occurs to me that it would be better for us not to discuss this measure much longer, but to come to some practical conclusion as to how we can arrive at a decision about it. It is very evident, from what has been said on both sides of the House, that there are many honourable members who disapprove of the Bill. There are other honourable members who feel themselves bound to support it because of promises given to constituents; and there are others who really approve of a large reduction of members. It appears to me that it is desirable to get to as quick a conclusion as possible about going into Committee, in order that we may decide the questions which have to be considered when we get into Committee, if we are to go into Committee. The first question that has to be decided is this: Shall the Bill be proceeded with this session? There are many honourable members who think there is no urgency for the Bill. As was stated by the honourable member for Kumara, it is not an urgent measure. There are other measures of very great urgency to be considered during the session, and it would be better to turn our attention to them. There are other honourable members who think that, the principle having been asserted by the second reading, it would be well to leave the country to consider the question during the recess. I take it that the amendment moved by the honourable member for Kumara tests the question of whether we are to go on with the Bill or not; and, as I think that there are more important questions to be dealt with, I shall vote for the amendment of the honourable gentleman. Of course, the honourable gentleman raises, in his amendment, the question of local government, as to the nature of which many honourable members will have some doubt. That a more extended system of local government, or one, rather, I should say, more independent of Parliament, is desirable I think no one doubts. But it is not only a question of local government. There are other questions which, when decided, no doubt will make it

not necessary that there should be so large a House as there is at present. I quite admit the logical reasoning of the honourable gentleman's amendment. It is very evident that if we had a more complete system of local government it would not be necessary to have local interests so represented in detail as is done in a large House. Therefore I am not quarrelling with the logic of the amendment; but still I cannot help thinking that a simple vote, Yes or No, as to whether you should leave the chair would obtain a larger number of votes in the direction the honourable gentleman desires. However, I suppose the question is settled as to whether the Bill is to be proceeded with. If the honourable member's amendment is carried, there is an end of the matter this session. If it is not carried, then I think the question should be come to, and, I must say, I think with as little delay as possible. I do not think there is much necessity for discussion. The question should be come to. As to the amendment which the honourable member for St. Albans, I understand, intends to move, that the number should be eighty-four instead of seventy, I think that question should be decided. There is another question which I consider more important than all the others, and it is that which I wish to direct the attention of the House to, and to ask the view of the Government upon. As the Bill is now drawn out, there is a very peculiar feature in it. Instead of allowing the Commissioners to immediately make the change in the electoral districts, they are not to do so until they are directed by the Governor or the Government to do so. Why that has been put in I am at a loss to understand. What I ask, and what I ask most emphatically, is that we should change that provision, and, instead of saying "when directed by the Governor, and within such time as he shall determine," we should substitute the word "forthwith." And, Sir, I feel certain that if we do that the result will be this: that the House and the country will know what will be the absolute effect of the measure; whereas now we are only groping in the dark and are not certain what its effect will be. If honourable members had known what would be the result of the labours of the Commissioners it is very doubtful if the Act which we passed early this year would have been passed at all: in other words, the result of the division of the electorates has not been satisfactory to the country. Why is that? It may be partly owing to the inherent defects of the Act, or it might be that the working of the Act suffered because, on account of saving time, the provision was suspended for allowing objections to be received to the divisions proposed to be made before they were finally decided. If we put in the word "forthwith," the Commissioners will have to make the divisions immediately, and would have to consider objections before finally deciding them; and next session we shall have an opportunity of reviewing the possible defects of the measure, and what would be the proposed division of the country under the new method;

and then, if the House does not approve and the country does not approve of it, it will be open to revision. It will be a more practical course to follow, if this Act passes; although it is of very little matter whether it does pass, from that point of view. But it means that the divisions are to take place at once, so that we may be able to tell whether the result of the Bill is likely to be one of a satisfactory character. If it is decided to go into Committee, the Bill should go into Committee as soon as possible, and we should take a vote on the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara; and if that is lost we should take a vote on the question of the number of members, as to whether it shall be eighty-four or seventy-one, and whether we shall insert the word "forthwith," so as not to allow the Government to choose when the Commissioners shall or shall not make the change. Perhaps the honourable gentleman will tell me whether he objects to the proposal I suggest, to the change being made at once, so that the House may judge of its practical effects next session.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; I probably shall. I was going to say a few words when the honourable gentleman had finished speaking. I shall probably object to that.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Then, of course, it makes the matter more serious. This is not supposed to be a question on which the Government will urge their followers to support them, as in the case of a party matter. It will be a question for the Committee, not for the whole House. The House will see that the hesitation to allow the districts to be divided at once after the Bill passes is an indication of a doubt on the part of the Government whether the House will be satisfied with the measure if it is put into effect, and I can see no other interpretation that can be given to the hesitation to have the division made at once. It must be recollected that these divisions take place after every census. There will be no new census before Parliament expires by the effluxion of time, supposing it lives out its full term; and there can be no objection to the division being made at once, except the doubts as to the expediency of this division. I think we should soon take a division in this Chamber on the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara, and then on the question of numbers; and, in the event of the division of electorates being made immediately, the country will understand what this Bill really effects. I do not think there are half a dozen members of the House who have the same opinion of the full effect of the Bill supposing it becomes an Act.

Dr. HODGKINSON.—Supposing the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara is carried, I wish to know in what position we shall stand. I suppose it will not be taken as a no-confidence motion. I hope the Premier will say whether I am correct in that interpretation of the position. It is not my intention to vote against the Government on any question of that kind. This is not a matter affecting the administration of the Government, I should think.

Major ATKINSON.—I will presently explain the position. The whole nature of it has been changed by the sudden change of the leader of the Opposition. That has entirely changed what he told us he was going to do yesterday, and has altered my standing altogether.

Dr. HODGKINSON.—If I support the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara, I wish it to be understood that it will not be with the object of defeating the Bill. I can see quite plainly that his motives and intentions are very different from mine. And the honourable member has spoken at very great length on this subject, and where he has said one word in favour of local government he has said a hundred words in favour of killing the Bill. I am not, however, going to be trapped in that way. At the same time, this is not a Ministerial question; and I vote for this amendment in order to get an expression of the opinion of this House as to the necessity of some measure for the reform of local self-government and decentralisation being brought forward; and if I support the amendment I wish it to be understood that it would be from an entirely friendly motive, and not from any motive to kill the Bill or to embarrass the Ministers. I wish the Bill to go through; but, still, I do contend that concurrently with this Representation Bill there ought to have been some measure of local self-government with decentralisation. And if the Premier could even give us any assurance that during the recess the Government will consider some scheme for the reform of local self-government, that would induce me to vote against the amendment. But, unless he does that, I shall feel that it is better to give the Ministry an impetus, something in the direction of urging them forward. I need not take up the time of the House now in urging the question of local government. I would only repeat that I consider the measure introduced by the Government would be incomplete unless they have, as a complement, a measure for the reform of local government, and decentralisation. This reform can be effected in various ways. This question of local government affects their measure in various ways. For instance, in the Land Bill we have inserted a clause of a most radical tendency, abolishing Land Boards, which, I think, is a very objectionable step to take. If we had a reform of local government all the functions of the members of the Land Boards could be imposed on the local bodies. The same in the case of Education Boards and Charitable Aid Boards. I think I have said enough now to justify the course which I shall take, and my desire is not to play into the hands of the Opposition or to affect the position of the Ministry, but to obtain an expression of opinion from the House as to whether it is in favour of a reform of local government. I think I must vote for the amendment, unless the Premier gives us an assurance that this question will be considered during the recess. I think, however, that the amendment goes too far. It says that this Bill shall be delayed until the establish-

ment of some form of local government. I think that is asking too much. I should be quite satisfied that it should be till some measures for the reform of local self-government are submitted to the House, or with even a promise that it would be done next session; and I would not vote for this amendment if the Government could give that assurance. It therefore rests with the Premier to say whether he will give any such promise.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I intend to support the Bill. I may say I advocated this measure during the last Parliament, and I believe it could be proved that it was owing to an unfortunate misunderstanding that it was not carried. I think this reduction of members would be a wise thing; and I think, too, that the present proposal to reduce the number of members of this House seems, on the part of the Government, to be part of a plan, which commences at the head, for the purpose of working down the system of retrenchment, and bringing the expenditure of the colony within its means throughout. We have already dealt with the Governor, we have dealt with Ministers, and with the honorarium of honourable members, and now we are proceeding to deal with the reduction of members in this House. I was a member of a House of seventy members, and I know perfectly well, as far as the democratic element goes, that that House passed the democratic measures which the colony enjoys at the present time. I refer to manhood suffrage and the ballot. It is absurd to say, no matter to what size you reduce the House, no matter what number you may reduce it to, that the feeling of the country will not rule the House. It appears to me that, if you reduce the House, you are not taking away the powers of the people. But it does occur to me that, unless in this measure some provision is contained to keep up the balance between the outlying districts and the towns, an injustice will be done to the outlying districts. I think that, if the quota is to be increased from 6,000 to 9,000, then it will be necessary to increase the percentage that is given to the outlying districts; and that is a proposal which I think the Government will accept. There is another matter that has been referred to in regard to the census. It did appear to me last year, and I expressed myself in that direction to the House, to be an unjust thing to decide the representation on the basis of population upon an incorrect census; and, when we took that as the basis of representation on the last occasion, it should be remembered the census had not been taken for some time previously. If this Bill is passed it will be four or five years after the census was taken when the Act will come into operation, at the expiration of this Parliament. And it appears to me that the prosperous parts of this country will be very badly treated if we take that census as the basis of representation. Some of these will have doubled their population, and will receive no consideration whatever on that account. The Commissioners appear to me to be bound, under the Acts as they are



at present, to deal with the colony as upon the last census. That will be a very great injustice to the people of the country; and I think that some allowance ought to be made in that respect. It ought to be provided that the census shall be taken previous to a dissolution on the basis now proposed. Well, Sir, I think that before I sit down I must explain why I have endeavoured, during the whole of this session, to keep my seat as much as possible, and not to occupy the time of the House by joining in debates. I have seen around me a great number of distinguished young members desirous of giving to the country at the earliest opportunity the benefit of their views. I did not object to that. And I saw also some of the older members of the House, who were as wearisome as ever in the length of their speeches; and, knowing that this was to be a short session, in fact that it was necessarily to be a short session, and that a great deal of work would have to be done, I thought the best way I could serve the country was by refraining from talking to my constituents through *Hansard*. But I am compelled to talk upon this subject; and I am also compelled to say a word or two on another subject. The position I have taken up this session seems to give offence to old friends of mine, and the honourable member for Christchurch North chooses to misunderstand the relation in which I stand with regard to him, and is evidently chagrined at my action. I desire to say this: that I supported the late Government in the late Parliament; but I came back to this House altogether unpledged. If the late Premier had remained at the head of the Government I should probably have been found supporting him now, notwithstanding other objections that I entertained in regard to his Government. But I would ask those honourable gentlemen who worked with me during the last Parliament to say whether I have for a second in the slightest way given in my adhesion to the Opposition during the present session. Have I ever attended any of their caucuses or meetings? Have I ever behaved as though I identified myself as one of them? I defy them to say that I have given them any reason for supposing that I was going to act with them during the present session in opposition to the Government. Now, my position is this: I desire to support the present Government until they have fairly brought their proposals before the country; and if other honourable gentlemen were actuated by the same feeling we should have less of that obstruction, less of that stonewalling, which seems to have been indulged in from the very opening of these doors up to the present time. So far as this Bill is concerned, I am not going to be led away by any herrings drawn across the scent by an Opposition which, on one plea and another, is trying to defeat the proposals of the Government. I say that any time is opportunity for doing that which is a good and desirable thing to do, and I look upon it that one of the greatest blots upon the expenditure of this country is the expenditure which is incurred in connection with this Legislature. In a report

of a Select Committee—which I had the honour to sign as Chairman—a session or two ago, that was pointed out; and I am glad indeed that the present Government have taken this matter in hand, and are endeavouring to clean out what I consider to be an Augean stable. For that reason I support the Government on this occasion; and for a similar reason I shall be found supporting them on other occasions when I think they are making proper proposals to this House, without declaring myself as a strong partisan on one side or the other. I ask the Opposition to consider that a person may possibly be actuated by proper motives, although he may not submit to be coerced by the abuse of some persons who descend to that kind of thing; and I prefer to be one of those who are not influenced by the vilification received at the hands of these people through their papers. I desire, as far as I can, to express my views upon every Bill brought up for the consideration of this House; but, if we all did that, it would be impossible to carry on the legislation of this country, and therefore it must not be considered that, because an honourable member is silent, he is not just as well able and just as desirous to express his views as others who are constantly occupying the time of the House. I do hope that, whatever hours may be decided upon for the procedure of the House, we shall endeavour to push on the measures that are brought down for our consideration by the Government in such a manner that they may have reasonable consideration; for I know perfectly well that if we do not do this now, if we persist in obstructing and wasting time as we have been doing, we shall have to pass them with indecent haste before the session is over.

Sir G. GREY.—I should not rise to speak to-night had it not been for the remarks which have been made upon subjects perhaps only remotely connected with the present question—remarks which I ought not to let pass in silence, as I do not concur in them. Amongst other questions which have been raised is one which we, as representatives of the people, can largely influence—that is, the question of the rate of wages. Now, we have heard it remarked that the rate of wages must fall, that it must do so necessarily, and that, if a short period of time ago wages were 10s. a day, and now wages are only 5s. a day, well and good; such must be the case. It is easy for us to say that, we who are above want and are not dependent for our daily bread upon our daily work; but such a fall in the rate of wages as that must absolutely be the difference between comfort and want. It is a very different question to those who have to undergo that change from what it is to those who only speculate upon what ought to take place. I say honourable gentlemen do not sufficiently reflect upon the nature of this country—New Zealand. It lies remote from all the world. It is not like England and Ireland, situated near together, and situated near to countries of Europe, where Irish labourers reduced to poverty can go for the harvest in England to earn high wages, or for

hop-picking, or other employment, from time to time. It is not even like Australia, the various colonies of which are close together, with great differences of climate, with great differences of occupation—some agricultural, some pastoral, and some manufacturing—where labourers can pass from one to the other to obtain varied employment. This is like a small estate separated from all others, in which the master may dictate almost the rate of wages that he pleases. Now, we are the masters of this country, and we can make the rate of wages what we like. And there is yet another thing to be considered, that we are remote from the observation of other people. In Australia each colony watches what the other does. They are close together; only an imaginary line separates them; and that prevents them from doing wrong. None of them could carry some improper, oppressive measure in a determined way, because of the public opinion that would be brought to bear against them from the other colonies. Now, we are free from that kind of observation. And, in the same way, we have no one great city with a large population, in which public opinion is created. Very bad things might be done in this Assembly, and very little would be known of what we do in other cities of the colony. There is no public opinion in Wellington to check us in wrong-doing to other parts of the colony—to prevent us from doing acts which we ought not to do. All these circumstances tend to gradually place the labourers in a very bad position in this colony—I say in a worse, a very much worse position than they are in in any other country. Now, I say that this question of wages depends greatly upon our legislation. If honourable gentlemen doubt that, let me take the simple subject of taxation. You put on a property-tax, a tax upon improvements. You compel men who are carrying on improvements which will only yield them a profit after a very considerable period of time to pay taxation; and that taxation induces them to stop improvements. They discharge labourers, and that tends to overstock the labour-market and to bring the rate of wages down. Then, again, in another way you gradually reduce the rate of wages. You create an enormous public debt. You agree to carry on public works which give, I may say, enormous value to the property of a few individuals at the cost of the whole community. What is the result? Having created that debt, a large amount has to be sent out of the colony to pay the interest on that debt. Who has to furnish that money? Why, it means that every labourer in the colony—The Premier cares little about these things, and makes a disturbance at the time the debate is going on, to prevent a person speaking. It is embarrassing; but these matters are of little importance to him. There is a certain line of policy that he is determined to carry out at all risk, and it is of little use to bring forward arguments. I was saying that the only way in which our debt can be discharged is by the labourers of the colony giving up so many

days' labour in every year without receiving any remuneration whatever for those days of labour. The greater you make the debt the greater is the number of days in each year on which they are required to give up their labour, and the more are they and their families impoverished. You cannot get out of that. It is the labourers and their work, and what they produce, that pays the debt. I say, therefore, that we ought to be very careful what steps we take, especially as regards our land, lest we increase our debt. Now, if you look up the lands of the country year after year, so that the people cannot get on them, it is quite certain that you reduce the outlets for labour and lower the rate of wages; you reduce the number of persons who cultivate and improve the country and make homes for themselves, and who employ labour, and you bring the rate of wages down. I contend that every one of your laws and regulations in reference to land for many years past has had that effect. What can be more cruel than those laws which prevented the land from being opened in sufficient quantities when men were anxious to settle on farms—when they were compelled to pay prices for deferred-payment land, for instance, which beggared themselves and their families, and have reduced the demand for labour in this country? Now, in every one of these respects you have borne against the interests of labour; and now, during the last few days, during this session, you have performed an act of greater cruelty than I have ever known the Legislature to perform before. You have taken from the labouring population of this country two and a half million acres of land, and other proposals are now being considered which will make the total land to be taken, I believe, nearly five million acres, and you have handed over that extent of land to what I might call foreign companies, persons residing out of this country; and you have told them that you will give them that land, which you have taken from the labouring population of the country—who are the principal landowners of the country—in order to enable them to borrow money to employ the labourers of New Zealand; but in return for so employing them they are to become the masters of the land, and I say—I am disturbed, but I must do my best to continue speaking. I am interfering with the business of the honourable member for the Bay of Islands, who is seeking to obtain a great kauri-forest to make a railway; and it is not desirable that he should be interfered with—

Mr. HOBBS.—I should like to know if the honourable member is speaking to the question.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Am I to understand that the honourable gentleman is speaking to a point of order?

Mr. HOBBS.—Yes. The point of order is this: The honourable gentleman accuses me of obtaining a vast kauri-forest—

Mr. SPEAKER.—That is not a point of order.

*Sir G. Grey*

Sir G. GREY.—I was complaining of disturbance. I was not aware that stating facts was a breach of order. Certainly what I was saying cannot be very palatable to those honourable gentlemen who desire to obtain land under the circumstances which I am speaking of. I wished simply to point out this, Sir: that these lands were being taken from the people of the country to enable a foreign population to raise on the land, by the sale of the land, the means of constructing a railroad in this country, upon which the labouring population is to be employed to make the road, and to give great value to the lands taken from them and their children; and the lands which they make valuable for a mere pittance for daily labour are to be handed over for ever to those persons, and to be lost to the labourers and their children for all time. Some honourable gentleman laughs at that, but it is a melancholy truth, and, if he is hard-hearted enough to laugh at what is really a very sad thing, that is for him to consider, but no human being will deter me from stating what is a terrible fact. I say this: that, if the Government meant well to the people of this country, they could have formed the labourers themselves into this body to sell the land for the purposes of employing labour upon it, and they could have employed themselves, and have entered into possession of the great part of the land afterwards. But there was no care taken to do that—it is all to go from them; and will anybody say that by doing that we must not greatly bring down the rate of labour? It must cut off hope from men—hope in every direction. If I were to trace out all these circumstances into their detail, I could make out entirely that we, this Parliament, are the masters of the community, and that we fix the rate of labour; and I agree entirely with the honourable gentleman who was attacked for having said what he said—namely, that this Railway Bill of the Government—which is to hand over to three Commissioners, who may be all taken from other countries, the complete management of the railways—may have the effect of very greatly indeed reducing the price of labour throughout this country. He was perfectly right in saying that. Why, to raise the price of travelling is to prevent the labourer from seeking employment in distant places, and to render it impossible for him to travel for any great distance. If you keep up the rate for travelling, the man cannot go into the country for any distance to work for a week, and return to his family on Saturday night, and pass Sunday with them, returning to his work on Monday; he must, in order to support his family, seek for labour close to the town, and in that way labour is concentrated too much on one spot. Throughout I could show that the whole tendency of legislation this session has gone in the direction of which I speak. Now, upon this very question of the Midland Railway, let us reflect on what has been done. I had no conception, at least until the other day, that the meaning of the thing was this: that enormous runs were to be secured in perpetuity to persons

who had already held them at a low rental for nearly twenty-eight years. I could hardly conceive that that was to be done when I heard that such was the case. What has happened? For a period of twenty-seven or twenty-eight years certain gentlemen have shut up all the pastoral lands in that part of the country. By those who have considered the subject it is admitted that they have so spotted these runs that, although they are nominally left open to purchase at the price of £2 per acre, it was impossible, almost, for any person to purchase them, because the richer parts were taken up, rendering the adjoining lands almost valueless. Well, now, the effect of that being continued for a long series of years was to shut out from occupation these vast tracts of land, which are now to be handed over in perpetuity to individuals who have so long withheld them from the public by their influence in the Legislature and in Government offices. That must have reduced the demand for labour throughout the entire country, and it must have forced the Government, to a great extent, to do that which they had to do—to contract debts to employ the people upon public works, and to concentrate people about the towns or other places where the public works were being constructed, instead of their being distributed throughout the country. They could form no homes for their families upon small farms, and could not get into the country; and so they became accustomed to a peculiar kind of labour: and I think the present positions of misery which a great many of them occupy are greatly to be attributed to that cause. And you have now an opportunity this session of giving them an opening throughout the country. I appeal to members in this House whether measures were not brought forward for consideration that would have thrown open country lands for population, and probably have induced them to go out and settle in the country. And, then, I ask whether the whole thing was not so managed that not one of those measures which I have proposed has been allowed to come forward to be discussed—to be heard; but they have all been hidden from the country under a mere mass of rubbish, which is what I will call the many Bills that have been placed upon the table, and which have covered everything else. Under this rubbish-heap are hidden what I believe would have been real treasures to the people of New Zealand, if they had been allowed to avail themselves of them. But they have never even been permitted to be discussed in this House, and the country is now ignorant of the things proposed for their advantage. And yet we are told that we are to be hurried on in this same course. Day after day has been taken from private members; and now all the spare time, the time that we have for thinking and for determining what course to pursue by reasoning upon the measures submitted for our consideration—every one of those opportunities is to be taken from us; and now, in a few days, we are to be compelled by a triumphant majority—I do not know by what term to call

them, but a majority against whom it is vain to contend—who do not reason,—I have not heard advanced any argument at all in support of the course they are pursuing,—we are to be compelled to pass a mass of Acts which many of us think hostile to the welfare of the country—which are to rob the public of vast tracts of land. One honourable member has stated that this is all part of one policy—a policy of retrenchment. We began with the salary of the Governor. That was a great thought on the part of the Ministry, a grand conception: the Governor's salary might be reduced. They soared to that height. And then they took away part of the honorarium of honourable members; and then—well, I hardly know what next. And now the number of members is to be reduced. But the sum-total of the whole thing is that these are mere blinds. The Governor is to be still left far too high a salary for what his actual requirements will be. The honorarium is retained to the members, and a fine title is given for what is simply payment of members; but it must not be called that, because that homely term would proclaim the whole position and the real merits of the thing. Some alteration is made in that, and now a trifling alteration is to be made in the number of members. And how has that been brought about? Why, the Government were pressed; the four Native members were in rebellion because they thought they were badly treated. And so they were; but they were treated in exactly the same way as others. You will find, if you take one member from four, that it is about the same thing as if you take twenty members from the whole of the European members of this House; but it was easier to compound by giving back the one member to the Natives than to restore the twenty to the others; and so those wise persons who regulate these things go to the Natives and say, "You shall have your one member;" and I believe the person they addressed themselves to was the very gentleman who was to have lost his seat, the honourable member for the Middle Island; and he, good-naturedly and unwisely, fell into the trap, and left those men who were fighting by his side to aid him—left them and placed the Government in a position of security with regard to this measure. Very well. Now, what is to be the next thing? How is that to meet the retrenchment that is to be absolutely made? Who are to bear the main mass of this retrenchment? I say, those who can least afford it. First it is to fall upon the Civil servants. Who is to defend their rights? We are to be sent away—we who could watch and do something to see that justice was being done; and in the hands of one man is to be left the power of dealing with all their interests. I ask, is that right? Ought not we to have had this brought forward at a proper time, when we could fairly consider these things? Then, again, I warn the people of New Zealand not to be led astray; not to think that the Governor is to pay the great deficiency that is to take place—that it will all come from his salary. Trifling indeed

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will that aid be. On every home in New Zealand will the burden come. There is no family that will not suffer; and I believe that exactly as you descend in the scale of income so will the suffering fall with greater and greater weight; and those who are the least able to support it will be those who will feel it most and suffer in the greatest degree. I think that yet this House ought to right itself. We have the power, in reference to these Bills, still to a certain extent to dictate to the Government, and to say we will not be hurried, we will carefully consider every measure; and I should be inclined to join any members who said this: "We will not go a step further until the financial proposals are brought down. We will not permit dust to be thrown in our eyes." The Premier, sitting there, knows that in his heart he has deliberately, and upon a plan, kept these financial measures back from our consideration. He knows in his heart that he could, if he pleased, at an earlier period than this, have brought them forward, and have afforded us an opportunity of fully discussing them, and of taking care that the burdens of these great reductions fell fairly and justly upon all; and we, in not insisting upon that, and leaving all power in his hands, and leaving him to do this, are truly responsible. Whatever unction we may lay to our souls, we are responsible for the miseries which are about to fall upon New Zealand if we allow this to continue, and do not insist upon having our rights conferred upon us of fighting for our fellow-men—because we are allowed now no such power, we have no such right. The Premier has taken it all from us by the manner in which he has conducted the business. He has killed our Bills, which might have done such good. He has not attempted to crush down that improper interference to prevent Bills coming on. I say that upon the mere question of throwing open the profession of the law to the whole country, at a time of difficulty like this, it was his duty to the House to pronounce his decided opinion that it should be discussed, and not to allow two or three men to prevent that discussion. He should have said, "I have the power to preserve the rights of the House; I am the leader of the House, and will exercise that power;" but he did not do it. In the same way, I say that the measures for the assistance of the deferred-payment settlers and the village settlers ought not to have been allowed to be crushed out of sight and to die unknown, as they have been. What will the poor people who would have been benefited know of what would have been done for them? They will know nothing, and for months to come they will still have to go on struggling with a misery of which they might have been relieved. They are not allowed now to have their minds set at rest, but they must fight on as best they can with the misery which oppresses them. How is it possible for the country to prosper when its inhabitants are allowed in multitudes to struggle on in that way when, in a few minutes, they might have been relieved if the Premier would have allowed these mea-

asures to be considered? I believe the House would have adopted them unanimously; and then, in three or four days, a message of peace could have gone throughout New Zealand which would have put new hope and new energy into the people. But we are not allowed to do that. Every one who gets up apologizes for speaking, and explains why he says anything and delays for a few minutes the going into Committee on a Bill which is not necessary now. The very time we have spent in this useless debate might have passed all the Bills of which I have spoken, and yet it is not allowed to be done. And why? What crime have the people of New Zealand themselves committed that they should be shut out from these benefits, those whom the honourable gentleman has so much injured?—for he really is the cause of the mass of these misfortunes. Pity might now have come to his heart, and he might have aided in doing all these things, for such a chance was never before presented. The House was ready to consider all these measures, and the country was anxious to receive them. Why did he not, with a powerful party at his back, allow these things to be done? I believe that it was greatly in consequence of some of us having opposed that Midland Railway, which was to bring about such great injustice, and which was not of half the consequence of those measures of which I have spoken. I say again that, if we had been an Australian Colony, situated, say, as Victoria is, with South Australia on one side and New South Wales on the other, with eyes watching all its movements, no Government would have dared to carry out such measures as those which this Government has forced upon the House. That, Sir, is my firm opinion. But we have no such allies around us here. The whole thing rests with ourselves; removed from observation, removed from sympathy, these things can be done, and are left unknown to the rest of the world. Now, with regard to this measure itself, I say also this: that by hurrying it on in the manner we are doing we are acting unfairly to the whole population of the country, because, with a proper measure of local self-government, a General Assembly of fifty members would be amply sufficient. This Parliament could easily be reduced to that number, and the members could receive a rate of pay which would place them in such a position that they could devote their whole time to the affairs of the colony, as members of Parliament do in other countries, and not come here in a hurried manner from their pursuits for a few months. By bringing in such a measure the honourable member could at once reduce both Houses of this Assembly, and could consider fairly the position of the Legislative Council, and deal with them in a much fairer manner than we have done in the Bill which we have passed. All that could be accomplished. But no; that is not to be done. This Bill, and nothing else, with a majority at his back, will he have. And how then? I firmly believe that no man will be more sorry than the honourable

member himself. But I also believe it was the carrying of that Midland Railway Bill and another measure or two of the same kind, and the hopes held out of other measures of the same sort, which have gained the majority that has accomplished all that has been done this session. In that I may be wrong, and I shall be sorry if I am; but I must say that it is my firm and settled conviction that such is the case: and it will bring future misery on the people of New Zealand—a wrong which must injure them for many, many years to come, in fact from which they will never recover, but which will plunge their children into poverty and make serfs of many of them, because we are shutting up an area of country half as large as Wales, and giving it to a few persons who have occupied and will continue to occupy it as runs, and let no people go on it. That is to say, sheep are to prosper and to be taken care of, while the people are to have no care taken of them. And, then, these persons, to whom unjustly such great advantages are given, are to derive large incomes from that source, and to spend them in England, in the same manner as do those 1,100 absentees who were dragged to light by the honourable member for Timaru, who own more than one-tenth of the real and personal property of New Zealand, and draw vast amounts from it to spend in England. That is how wages fall; that is how pauperism spreads wider and wider in New Zealand. And can it be otherwise? Ireland was never subjected to such a state of absenteeism. No other nation that I know of has undergone similar calamities in so short a space of time. And is no effort to be made to reverse these things? Are not even the people who live out of New Zealand, and draw immense incomes from it, to be compelled to pay the same taxation as we pay on the same sums of money, just as all other nations similarly circumstanced enforce taxation? Why are we to pay to persons not resident in New Zealand the full amount of interest upon our bonds, and not only that, but pay the cost of sending that interest to them out of our own pockets? Are they not to pay the same taxation on the bonds which is paid by persons resident in New Zealand? And yet there sits a gentleman who, by merely standing up to-night or at any other time, could relieve the people of a burden of £143,000 a year—a burden that they have gone on paying annually until upwards of a million has been paid since I first struggled to prevent this being done; and an additional annual interest on that million has been added on to us, because we have never had the means of paying this out of our own funds, and have had to borrow money for it. And yet there has been no voice raised in this House to prevent that. Well, I suppose it is still to be the same thing; and with this measure before us to-night we shall sit discussing it, apparently with the hope of coming to some conclusion of a different kind on it from that which was originally suggested to us by the Government; and yet we are here with a certainty that all our efforts are breath

wasted in the air, and will accomplish nothing; although I think that there are members whose hearts agree with every word I have said here to-night—and I firmly believe this is the case—and yet they will vote in an opposite direction. Well, we must submit. It is a hard life to struggle against these things—to know, with the great majority of the people, that the things stated are truths, and these things ought not to be allowed to exist; and yet, knowing that, to have to sit down with the consciousness that it is of no use struggling against it, and that nothing but submission—a sorrowful submission—is that which is left to one and all of us as long as a tyrannical majority rules this House.

Major ATKINSON.—What a comfort it must be to the House to know that at any rate there is still left one righteous man amongst us who will save us from the wrath to come! Talk, talk, talk, founded on the most egregious vanity ever seen in a public man, is the part which the honourable gentleman plays in this House. Sir, one would not think from his speech to-night that he has never raised a finger to aid the poor man, never devised a single scheme for his benefit. We know that, from the time he was Governor down to the time when he ceased to be Premier, he has done nothing but talk, talk, talk. He never raised a finger by any useful piece of legislation to serve the colony and the working-man, whom he has used as a stalking-horse to attain power; he has never made an effort to devise any useful measure to raise the working-man out of any difficulty he may have been in. To hear him talk you would think he never had any power in the land. Why, he laid the foundation of the big estates which are now the trouble in Canterbury, and he avowed his intention—that his object was that there should be a landed aristocracy in New Zealand. It was the honourable gentleman himself who gave out that as his intention; and I state that on the authority of Sir Frederick Weld, as stated by the honourable member for Auckland Central to that gentleman himself. He said, "We must have a landed aristocracy;" and he brought down the value of land in Canterbury to 10s. an acre, and a landed aristocracy was then founded. And yet to hear him to-night one would think that he was a friend of the working-man. Yes, Sir, in talk; but in nothing else. Then, he talked about local government. Look at his action when Superintendent. What was it? Living on the public-works money of the province, and sending out a telegram that the fleet was going to bombard Auckland. That was done by the honourable gentleman. All old members know what I submitted to from time to time in this House. They also remember the Piako Swamp and other matters. The honourable gentleman has forgotten it now, and has taken to the Midland Railway in the same style. And, then, when he came into power, with all this power, what did he do for the working-man? What did he do for local institutions? Did he raise a finger for the working-man or for local institutions? No.

*Sir G. Grey*

Where are the measures? Are they on the Statute Book? No; we know that he did absolutely nothing but talk.

Mr. SEDDON.—Land-tax.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; you had the land-tax, and you are going to have a great deal more. Where were the bondholders then? Were they taxed? No; they were not. He put on a land-tax, and threatened to make it 4d.; but the House, I am thankful to say, stepped in and said, "No, we will not allow men to buy land, and put it on mortgage, and escape;" and accordingly the House taxed the mortgagees. Was the honourable gentleman taxing the mortgagees? No; oh no! Sir, I shall not impute motives, although the honourable gentleman imputes motives to every one who is against him. And then, the insinuation that the majority of the House which is carrying these measures is caused through this Midland Railway Company! I say it is a disgrace to any member to make such a reflection on this House. It is a disgrace, I say; and the honourable gentleman ought to be ashamed of himself for doing it. But, Sir, there is one righteous man in this House who is going to save us. I venture to say some other character will be given to the honourable gentleman than that of the righteous man when the history of the country comes to be written. I do not care to say more about the honourable gentleman now. I may have occasion to do it. I say he did his best to place me in my present position. He knows my history. He urged me to take this position. Why does he now oppose me? Because I did not fall down on my knees and worship the honourable gentleman; because I dared to have an opinion of my own, and to do my duty to the country and to this House. Sir, the whole thing is utterly contemptible. The country will be saved by the Law Practitioners Bill! Only think of that! The country is longing and begging for it! And, then, there is another most crude, imperfect, and very unworkable Bill called the Land for Settlements Bill. The honourable gentleman tells me that it has cost him years of thought. Anybody who reads that Bill and knows anything about the settlement of land knows that it is an utterly unworkable measure.

Mr. SEDDON.—What about tenant rights?

Major ATKINSON.—I will come to tenant rights, if you want to deal with them. It is not measures the honourable gentleman wants on the Statute Book. What he wants to do is to gain a position by saying what he is going to do in the future; and, immediately a practical man comes forward to do something, the honourable gentleman accuses him of taking his measures. And his vanity was so great that he was quite indignant when the Government proposed to take up and deal with one of his measures. He said, "This is just like the Government! they are going to take my measures from me and get the credit for them." A patriot would only be too delighted to get his measures passed, no matter who was instrumental in passing them. But that is not what the honourable gentleman wants. What he wants is to do it himself

and get the credit for it. But to talk about saving the country by such measures as these is simply ridiculous, nothing more and nothing less; and nothing but the egregious vanity with which the honourable gentleman is eaten up could have led him to make such a statement. This House must have laughed, as the country will laugh, when they heard the honourable gentleman pathetically appealing to them to carry such measures as these, and saying that the Government measures are all trash. Why did he not carry his measures when he was Premier? The answer will be clear to every one: they are not desired to be carried, they are only wanted to be talked about. An old Maori once described the honourable gentleman in this way: There is a duck called the *whio*—I think a mountain duck; and its habit is this: It flies very rapidly, and wherever there is a little rough water you will see it suddenly dive in. The old Maori said the honourable gentleman was just like the *whio*—he always liked to be in troubled waters. He no sooner takes pains to get the Government in office than he immediately commences obstruction in every form and shape, simply because I did not bow down and worship him in the servile way he has all his life liked to see people worship him. Now I come to the Bill; I have done with the honourable gentleman for the present. And now, Sir, the position of the Bill is somewhat changed by the extraordinary statement of the honourable gentleman opposite. Last night he told us that he was not going to oppose the Bill going into Committee, and hoped the Government would allow it fair consideration in Committee. I assented to that.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I was not in the House at all last night. I stated in the afternoon that I should not oppose the second reading. Neither did I, and I did my best to stop the opposition on the second reading.

Major ATKINSON.—Then came the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara, and I found that the honourable gentleman was only trifling with me. Of course, when a gentleman in the position of leader of the Opposition tells the leader of the House that he is not going to oppose the second reading of the Bill, it goes as a matter of course that he is willing to get it into Committee, and then deal with it in a reasonable way. If he had not meant that, he ought to have told us that he was going to take the first opportunity of backing the amendment which the honourable member announced his intention to move.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Will the honourable gentleman excuse my interrupting him? I said I advised the honourable gentleman to take the second reading as a principle, but not to push the Bill further. I am not certain if I used these words. Let me tell him I am no party to this amendment, but I said I should vote for it. I did not lead the honourable gentleman to suppose that I had induced it to be brought forward.

Major ATKINSON.—I was assured in the lobby, before coming to this House, on what

appeared to be excellent authority, that the Opposition were not going to support the amendment—that they were going into Committee. An honourable gentleman asked me if I would agree to a particular clause, and I said I could not tell him. I am taken absolutely by surprise by the statement of the honourable gentleman to-night. I am not going to complain. Fortunately, I have kept my powder dry up to the present occasion, and I am happy to say I am in a position to resist whatever course the honourable gentleman takes. When an understanding of that kind is made, it is not fair parliamentary tactics suddenly to turn round and say that he will support such a resolution as that of the honourable member for Kumara. When he does that he takes upon himself the responsibility of all the obstruction that the honourable gentleman has given to this Bill. I will say nothing against anything in the shape of fair discussion; but two long speeches of an hour each have been made, reiterating all the stale arguments, nothing new, and the only object of which can be to delay the passage of the Bill. We know very well that the honourable gentleman does not care for local government. That was only a catch-vote to catch innocent supporters of the Government, like the honourable member for Wallace. But the utter innocence of the honourable gentlemen secures them from being caught in that way. The honourable gentleman said he was not going to be caught in a trap, and I have no doubt that before I have done the honourable gentleman will make up his mind clearly to vote for the Government. This has put it into a rather unfortunate position. I am very sorry the leader of the Opposition has taken this position, because it makes it much harder for the Government to leave it very free in Committee. My desire would be to so leave it that we might vote very freely; but I want the House distinctly to understand that this is one of the policy Bills of the Government, and the Government are going to do their best to carry it this session. I want the House to understand that distinctly. And I say the leader of the Opposition now, by taking up the motion of the honourable gentleman, has put the Government in a very awkward position. We shall be told by the honourable member for Kumara, whatever amendments are carried, "Oh, yes; I did all this; I forced the hand of the Government." Well, the Government are not going to be put in that position. I was willing and anxious to meet him in every fair way, but I will not be driven into a corner by the honourable member for Kumara; and I am quite sure the House will back me in that. I want to say a word or two about local self-government. That has nothing whatever to do with this. If the work of the House remained exactly as it is, seventy members are plenty to do our work. I say that distinctly. That is my opinion; and this matter has only been put forward as a trap, nothing more or less. But I say this with regard to local government: that I am as strongly in favour of local self-government as any man in this House—a great

deal stronger than the honourable member for Wallace, though he does not know it; and I say no man has done more for local government than I have done.—(No.)—That is only an opinion. Then, I want to say, further, that I will give this matter my careful consideration during the recess. If I can see any way of dealing more satisfactorily with the subject than now I shall, next session, bring forward a proposal to deal with it. But I say that those gentlemen who are always talking of local government, always declaring that we have not dealt with it, and what they could do in the way of local government—I say it is their duty to make suggestions on the subject. And now, Sir, every honourable gentleman who thinks he has a gift to propound schemes for local government, I ask him to submit his schemes; and, if from these suggestions I think I can devise a good measure, I shall approach them with every intention of doing so. I shall give them my careful consideration, and, if I find it practicable to suggest a scheme of better and more effective local government, then I shall be warranted, and shall be prepared, to bring down a measure next session. I do not know whether the honourable member or any other honourable gentleman wants anything more than that. But I am serious when I invite every one who thinks he has a gift to propound a scheme of local government to let me have his suggestions, and I will endeavour to give effect to them if I think them worthy of adoption. There is not a single member who talks about local government that I have not been to personally and said, "Give me your scheme on paper. We want an effective system of local government." But I have never had a single suggestion from one of those honourable gentlemen. The party who were going to give us this perfect system of local government were put into office and kept there for three years to do it; and then they went out, and all they had done was to slightly amend the Counties Act—"only that, and nothing more." We were told by the late Premier—who was very great on this subject—that the Government were placed in office to do it, and they were going to do it; and the late Treasurer announced at Christchurch that he was to devise the financial part of the new system, and the Premier was to devise the other parts—there was a fair division of labour, and they were to do it between them. And, Sir, we know what came of it.

Mr. SEDDON.—What about the charitable-aid system?

Major ATKINSON.—Nothing more ridiculous than the Government's own proposals on this subject was ever proposed in New Zealand, and now the Act has to come up to be altered session after session. That was simply nothing more or less than a device of the late Treasurer to throw the burden on the localities. That was all that was; there was nothing in that. However, I do not propose to go more fully into that subject now. I believe the late Government's proposals on the subject were entirely on wrong lines.

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Mr. SEDDON.—You have not proposed to repeal it.

Major ATKINSON.—No; but I have proposed a number of other measures which the honourable gentleman does not like, and which he is obstructing; and next session I shall have a lot more that he will not like.

Mr. SEDDON.—You will be on this side of the House then.

Major ATKINSON.—Then, if I am, I shall do my duty, and not obstruct. Now, Sir, this Bill is part of our general scheme for reducing the cost of the machinery of government of this country. It is part of the scheme, and as such we treat it as a Government measure. As I have just said, I shall be glad to meet in Committee any reasonable amendments; but I shall have to be very much stiffer in the back, after the very extraordinary conduct of the Opposition. What the Government wish to see done by the Bill is this—and we do not care for anything else: We wish to see the number of members fixed, upon which we can found our complete system of representation next session. I should very much like to have dealt with the whole question this session—the electoral rolls, the question of whether electorates shall be single or shall return three or four members—whether the town constituencies are to be amalgamated or not. All these questions I should like to have had considered this session, if we had had time. But we had not time, and therefore what I want to say for the Government is that, if by passing this measure we simply fix the number of members of the House, upon that the Government can base their proposals next session; because, I take it, we are all agreed that our whole system requires reform—that the methods of registration, of election, and everything else require alteration. We are all agreed that it is entirely unsatisfactory now; and there can be no doubt that the personation and roll-stuffing during the last election would have been disgraceful to any country. I say the whole thing has to be revised next session; and I therefore do hope that my friends will abstain from attempting to make this Bill do more than fix the number of members, and that all such questions as fixing the proportion between town and country representation and joining the electorates will be left over to be dealt with next session. I venture to think it would be only waste of time to attempt to do it now, when all we want to do is to fix a basis on which to form our representation system. As to the question of Maori representation, I want to say this: The Government, in bringing down this Bill, went on the principle of reducing the Maori representation in the same proportion as they proposed to reduce the European representation. There is nothing unreasonable or unfair in that. Now, at the present time, the Maoris have a double right in representation. They have the right to vote for their own Native members, and they have the right to appear on our electoral rolls and vote for European representatives. They have this double right, al-



though they do not pay rates and taxes which Europeans pay. They do not pay the property-tax, nor rates if their property is five miles from a road. Now, I have found since this Bill was introduced that the Maoris are quite willing to give up the right to vote in our elections if they are allowed to retain their four members. That seems to me quite reasonable. I am of opinion that it would not be at all wise to bring the Natives and the Europeans into one electorate at the present time. That, I think, would have a very bad effect on both races. As soon as English is the ordinary language of the Maori, then, I think, he may be put in the same electorate as the European, and I shall be very glad when that time arrives. At present he is only approachable through persons who have learnt the Maori language, who are but few; and it is very undesirable that the Natives should be put into the hands of a few persons, to be led practically by what they are told; for they have no access, practically, to our newspapers, or any of our general sources of information. Therefore it does seem to me wise that we should give the Maoris fair representation by their own race, and I think four members would be fair representation, and I think the Natives should be taken off our rolls. Therefore in Committee I shall propose that the number of Maori members be left at four; and next session, in our Bills then, we shall propose that Maori names be not allowed to appear on our electoral rolls. I understand that will be acceptable to the Maori representatives, and that is the history of what the honourable member for Kumara was pleased to call the negotiations that he says have taken place. I consented to it, without saying a word to one of the Native members. It embodies what has been my opinion for a long time; and I was informed, just before the House met this evening, that the Maoris would accept that as fair and reasonable, and the Ministry will be very glad to take that course. Sir, I think I have said enough to show that, in the opinion of the Government, this is one of the most important of their measures, and it is part of their scheme. I am strongly impressed—whether other honourable members are or not—with the necessity for reducing the number of members of this House, if we are to have true economy throughout the country. All this talk about the people not being properly represented is just simply talk; they will be as fully represented if this Bill is passed as they are now. And the reason why I cannot accede to the proposal of the honourable member for Christchurch North, that the Commissioners shall divide the country into the new districts during the coming recess, is this: that it would be putting us to a needless expense, and it would be doing no good at all. If we fix the number of members now as a basis, and then decide our electoral system generally next session, then, I think, it will be our duty to have the country divided into districts as soon as possible—that is, if we determine to leave the power still in the hands of Commissioners, instead of its being resumed by this

House. But I think that question, too, will have to be considered next session. I do not say that we shall propose to revise the new system, but I do say that we shall want to reconsider the question next session. Then, with regard to the census, the honourable member for Christchurch North made a great point of that, and so did the honourable member for Kumara; and I agree with them. I say it is an important point; and I say it will be our duty next session to make some provision for that. But that is the law at the present time—a law brought in by the honourable gentleman opposite, and supported by the honourable member for Kumara. It is all very well for that honourable gentleman to tell us that he voted against the late Government when their measures were bad; but he never did that when it was a question of keeping the Government in or putting them out. When that was in issue he always took care to vote with the Government, no matter how bad their measures were; and therefore the honourable gentleman is partly responsible for every one of their bad measures, because we know that the only way to stop bad measures is to put the Government out; and, as the honourable member helped to keep the late Government in, he must take his share of the blame for all their bad measures. I say the census is a very important point, and we must make some provision for it; but, if we are to go on a population basis, it is quite clear to my mind that any new House must be elected soon after a census. That seems to me to follow as a matter of course. I cannot say what the Government proposal in that respect will be; but I am very much impressed with the necessity of having a census as shortly as possible before an election—before the districts are fixed. I am sorry to have troubled the House at this length. I had not intended to speak on this occasion, but meant to give up my right to reply. I have refrained from talking throughout simply on account of the large amount of talk which some honourable members will give us on any subject. I, like many others, have sat perfectly still, even though I have desired to address the House, because of the undue time taken up in the obstruction of the Bill. I hope the House will distinctly understand—I do not say it in any way as a threat—that this is a Government Bill, and it is the intention of the Government to get it through; and the Government would have been prepared to give much more latitude in Committee if the honourable gentlemen opposite had not taken the extraordinary course they have taken. But I will go as far as this, because I am very anxious not to have any misunderstanding in the matter: If the honourable gentleman is really sincere in what he says, that he has been under a misapprehension, I am quite willing, if the honourable gentleman chooses to withdraw his proposal, to let the Bill go into Committee and discuss it as we should have done before; but, if his amendment goes to a division, then the position of the Government will be different from what it would be if we had

gone on with the committal in the usual way, as we were prepared to do.

Mr. FISH.—It was with very great regret, Sir, that I heard the Premier attack, in the violent and undignified manner in which he did, the honourable member for Auckland Central. I think that is a regret which must be shared by nine-tenths of the members of this House. The honourable gentleman's position in this House, the position he has held in the country, the age of the honourable gentleman, ought to have protected him, I think, from so savage an assault as the Premier thought it to be his duty to inflict upon him. It came, I think, with particularly bad grace from the Premier to indulge in such a terrible tirade of abuse against the honourable gentleman. It was most undignified on his part.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must hold that the honourable member is using too strong language towards the honourable member for Egmont.

Mr. FISH.—I was going to observe that it was most undignified on the part of the Premier to use such words as "disgraceful conduct," "he ought to be ashamed of himself," and "base." I do not think I have used such strong words as those. Those were the words which the Premier used towards the honourable member for Auckland Central; and I think the use of those words on the part of the leader of the House—a gentleman who is supposed to conduct the House with propriety, and to set an example to other members, and especially to new members—I think, looking at the position of the honourable gentleman, it was really very undignified, to use no stronger term, on his part to have used the words to which I have referred. It was in particularly bad taste, I think, too, for the honourable member to have used those words to the honourable member for Auckland Central, considering the fact that that honourable gentleman occupies the position, with regard to the Premier, of being a king-maker, that is to say—and I am justified, I think, in saying it—that the honourable gentleman was the means by which the honourable member for Egmont has resumed the position of Premier of this country. Does it not strike the members of this House, and would it not strike the public at large, as being somewhat passing strange that the honourable gentleman should say to the honourable member for Auckland Central that in all his life he had done nothing for the good of this country, that he was practically a marplot, that he had never done anything for the country, and was eaten up by vanity and self-conceit, and that he was useless to this House and the country? If the Premier is correct now in his estimate of the character of the honourable member for Auckland Central, he must have been aware of it long ago; and, if so, is it not strange that he should have offered that honourable gentleman, as I believe he did—I speak subject to correction—any position in the present Ministry, even if it had been the Premiership, which the member for Auckland Central might have

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thought fit to accept? How does the honourable gentleman reconcile his statement tonight with the fact that he has offered these things to the honourable member for Auckland Central so recently? The Premier has told the House and the honourable member for Auckland Central that one of his Bills, which he thinks is essential to the well-being of this country, and that it should be passed into law—the Land for Settlements Bill—is a perfectly unworkable and impracticable measure. If I mistake not, the Premier said a few nights ago that this measure was a much better measure than that introduced by the late Government. Strange inconsistency here, again! Then, did he not, in the course of some debate in this House this session, or, at any rate, did he not publicly state that the honourable member for Auckland Central would have been an excellent individual to have sent Home to induce a suitable class of settlers to come to this country? Was he doing his duty to the country in making a statement of that kind? Was it right or just that a man who is so eaten up with vanity or conceit as to make himself useless for all good purposes to the country—was it right to say that that gentleman was a fitting man to go Home to induce immigrants to come to this country? I am credibly informed that the honourable gentleman has said so. I shall not detain the House very much longer upon this point; but I do say that the language in which the Premier attacked the honourable member for Auckland Central was unjust, undignified, and improper, more particularly as coming from a gentleman occupying the position in the country that the Premier does, and to a gentleman who has occupied and does occupy the position of the honourable member for Auckland Central. The Premier looks upon the honourable gentleman now with contempt. He says all these things of him; and why? Not because the honourable member for Auckland Central expects that the Government, in a servile manner, should do what he suggested or wanted them to do, but because he finds that the honourable member for Auckland Central is not prepared to swallow the noxious doses dignified by the name of Bills which the Premier has brought down to this House this session. Is it because the honourable member for Auckland Central chooses to stigmatize those Bills as improper, not good for the well-being of this country, and because he has chosen to censure those Bills freely, and because he sees that the Premier and the Government are endeavouring to force measures upon an unwilling House and country in a premature manner;—is it because he has chosen to criticize these measures, and has expressed his dissatisfaction with them, that the honourable gentleman finds all these faults in the honourable member for Auckland Central? Sir, I contend that the honourable gentleman would not have been doing his duty, although he helped to put the Hon. the Premier in the position he occupies, unless he had freely criticized the measures brought before this House. The Premier has used the

language he has to the honourable gentleman on account of the fearless expression of his opinions upon these matters, and because he endeavours to protect the country from these measures being so hurriedly passed through the House as the Government is desirous to see. The honourable gentleman has said—and it shows part of the honourable gentleman's nature, a nature which, I venture to say, is perhaps the most repellent and pugnacious that is possessed by almost any one in the country, a nature so repugnant and repellent as to utterly unfit the honourable gentleman for the responsible position of leader of this House—

Mr. MARCHANT.—I rise to a point of order. I do not think it is quite within order for the honourable gentleman to refer to the Premier of the colony as possessing a nature the most repellent and repugnant of any in the colony.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the language is in its general tone too strong to be used. Such words must be personally offensive to the honourable gentleman referred to; and that is the test of unparliamentary language. I do not take exception merely to the word "pugnacious."

Mr. FISH.—I am surely entitled to stigmatize the honourable gentleman's manner as of such a pugnacious character as to raise the ire of members of this House. It is not the occurrence of to-day or yesterday; but, whenever the honourable gentleman's feathers are ruffled at all, he at once assumes a language and appearance—if I am not out of order in saying so—which is of a politically-ferocious character. In point of fact, the manner of the honourable gentleman is even worse than his matter, and he does endeavour to inspire in the members of this House a positive fear, which he uses without scruple in order to check the freedom of debate. It is notorious that the honourable gentleman is always assuming that position and that manner, and it is upon that account that so much friction arises from time to time. The honourable gentleman told us a short time ago that this measure shall not be considered in Committee in a fair and proper way. He has declared that he will make it a party measure. He will make a Bill for the representation of the people—a Bill which will, for good or evil, interfere with the rights of the people—he has made this a party measure, and has called his followers to his back, and he will force this measure down our throats, to the detriment of our health and to the injury of our strength; and he will make it the law of the country. By expressions such as these, and by the attempt to force things in this way, he will raise up equally strong and determined wills against his own. We should be forgetting our duty to the House and the country if we were to allow ourselves to be influenced by the use of such language as this. By the endeavour, as I say, to impede and obstruct the expression of opinions by members of this House which they think it necessary and desirable to give in the interests of their constituents, he will raise up equally determined and pugnacious opposition to himself; and I

leave the honourable gentleman to say how far that will be for the good of the country. The honourable gentleman must not be surprised if his own conduct and language should tend to raise up this most undesirable feeling. I am more than sorry that the honourable gentleman himself should be the cause of so many scenes of this kind in the House. I could not refrain from expressing my intense indignation at the unwarrantable attack, as I take it, which the honourable gentleman made upon the honourable member for Auckland Central; and as long as I am here I shall not allow an attack of that kind to pass by without raising my humble voice in protest against it; and I do not think I should be doing my duty unless I had taken the course which I have taken on this occasion.

Major STEWARD.—I rise to move the adjournment of the House, in order that the honourable gentleman at the head of the Opposition may make a statement, which he would not otherwise have an opportunity of doing.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The honourable gentleman has been kind enough to enable me to make a few remarks in consequence of the extraordinary speech which has fallen from the honourable member at the head of the Government. And, Sir, he impugned my conduct in supporting the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara; but if the Premier had not been led by the very strong feeling that he exhibited this evening he must have understood clearly from the remarks that I made that I was no party to the amendment which the honourable member for Kumara was moving. As to my not being at liberty to oppose the Bill going further than the second reading, I think that the honourable gentleman misunderstood my remarks yesterday, because I stated that, although I could not support the Bill, I would not oppose it, and that I thought the honourable member should be content with the second reading. Indeed, I used all the influence I had yesterday to prevent a division against the second reading. I also indicated in my remarks that I thought the honourable member for Kumara would better serve his purpose by allowing the vote to be taken on the question of your leaving the chair; and if that had been done no political significance would have attached to it. It would simply have been an indication on the part of the House that they do not desire to proceed further with the measure during the present session. The Premier said he would have been prepared to receive amendments in Committee, but would not now, because, if he did, the honourable member for Kumara would gain a victory. But I would point out to him that such an excuse does not hold water. Surely, if we go into Committee on the Bill it will mean a victory to the Government, because, to get into Committee, they must defeat the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara. It seems to me that the honourable gentleman's remarks were inconsistent, and that he was

manufacturing the reason for refusing to allow us to consider those amendments in Committee, which, I have pointed out, we ought to have the fullest opportunity of dealing with. Later on the honourable gentleman gave us an explanation, to which I shall refer before concluding my remarks. But, Sir, I cannot allow it to be said that I have acted in this matter otherwise than fairly to the honourable member—indeed, I may say, in a friendly spirit. Now, I wish to say a few words upon the unprecedented violence of the attack made by the head of the Government upon the honourable member for Auckland Central; I may do so without introducing into the matter any personal significance, for it is well known that the honourable member for Auckland Central is in the habit of attacking me in the House; and it is also known to honourable members that I uniformly abstain from replying to those attacks, feeling as I do that something more than ordinary respect attaches to an honourable member who has played so large a part in the history of the colony. But that the honourable member for Egmont should presume to speak in the terms of bitter contempt in which he indulged towards a member, a veteran politician, who, as compared with himself, Sir, is as a father to a child, appears to me to be not only a display of want of taste on his own part as an individual member, but, as leader of the House, an insult to every one in it; and I am much mistaken if there was a member who listened to that violent attack, that impassioned attack, in which he exhibited such bitter hatred, who did not feel ashamed that the House should be led by a member who had so little control not only over his passions, but also over his expressions of thought. To say that the honourable member for Auckland Central has had no influence over the history of the colony is absurd. Does the honourable member for Egmont think that, in the time to come, or in the present time, or in the past, there is anything to compare between his position in the colony and the position of the honourable member for Auckland Central? If the honourable member lived a hundred years he would not impress upon the history of the colony anything like so indelible a mark as the honourable member for Auckland Central has done. To the labours of the honourable member for Auckland Central is owing the fact that the people of the colony take a very large interest in public affairs, an interest which a few years ago was quite unknown. I have not disguised, as regards my own part in public affairs in former times, that I looked on the colony as a machine for colonising and enabling persons anxious to settle to lead prosperous careers; and I cannot help thinking it was for the material interests of the colony to advance its settlement, as has been done to an extraordinary extent. Since I have been back in the colony it has struck me as nothing less than remarkable the feeling on the part of the people of the colony to build up a distinct and individual nationality. For many years I hoped the time would come when

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the whole of the British dominions would be federated, so that the colonies would not be called on to exercise independent functions. But I confess late events have dimmed my hopes of federation. That being the case, I cannot view with indifference the fact that the people of New Zealand are taking upon themselves a knowledge and responsibility which may fit them in the future to become a separate State of a large and independent character. This, I say, is owing to the efforts of the honourable member for Auckland Central. While I was away from the colony I was not unwatchful of what took place. Honourable members will bear me out in saying that when the honourable member for Auckland Central advocated, as he did, views of an extremely democratic character, it became the habit of other leaders who swayed the government of the country to try and persuade the colonists that they held more democratic opinions. The honourable member at the head of the Government is an example. After he had succeeded the honourable member for Auckland Central, he tried to persuade the country that he held strong views in the way of giving greater liberties and privileges to the people than the honourable member whom he succeeded. Sir, what the honourable member for Egmont says about the Ministry over which the honourable member for Auckland Central presided is, in my opinion, not fair. I watched the progress of that Government, and, though I am free to confess that it adopted a very bold policy, I have never concealed my opinion that, when the present Premier and his friends succeeded to power, had they not refused to proceed with that policy the condition of the colony at the present time would have been very different. They succeeded to power at a time when there was a large financial difficulty. But why was there that financial difficulty? It was because, when the Grey Government came down in 1877 or 1878, I am not certain which, and asked for a loan of three or four millions, the honourable member for Egmont's party were sufficiently strong to prevent them from obtaining the money required. Consequently a deficiency grew up; and when the honourable member for Egmont came into power he reaped the results of his own work in finding that the colony was in this position: that it had spent so large a sum of money in advance of obtaining the necessary means by loan that he was forced to enter the English money-market for a loan for an amount then unknown among colonial loans. Had the loan asked for in 1877 or 1878 been granted, the subsequent difficulty, when the old Government succeeded to power, would not have taken place. The English money-market knew the exact position of the colony, and knew it would be absolutely necessary to float that enormous loan; and they took it on very onerous terms, and with the requirement that for three years there should be an abstention from further borrowing on the London market. At the time when the Grey Government ceased to exist and the Atkinson

Government came into power there was—and I am speaking advisedly—a feeling at Home in favour of settling in this colony; and I believe that if this feeling had continued we should have had the most valuable settlers New Zealand could have had. Emigrants, who afterwards went to Manitoba, were prepared to come out to New Zealand, but were deterred from doing so when they read the opinions of the Atkinson Government upon the condition and prospects of the colony. That was the time when the farmers of England were looking out for a home, and were turning their attention to New Zealand, which was the home that would have been chosen had it not been for the way in which the then Government ran down the resources and prospects of the colony, in order to throw discredit on the Government they had succeeded. Sir, this is a matter of history. I was at Home at the time, and I knew what was taking place. I knew that at that time I could have gone on sending shipload after shipload of farmers, with capital, and knowledge, and everything that would have made them valuable colonists; but they were prevented from coming owing to the accounts given of the condition of the colony by the then Government. Now, there is another matter I should like to say a few words about, and that is as regards the attack made by the Premier on the honourable member in connection with the establishment of provinces. Sir, it was with great regret that I, who had known and felt the valuable work which the Provincial Governments had done, felt myself compelled, owing to the exhausted finances of the provinces, to move that the provinces of the North Island should be suspended. I take my full share of the responsibility in connection with the more general measure subsequently introduced by my colleagues during my absence. But I need not disguise my opinion as to the value of the work done by the provinces, and I say, had it not been for the system which enabled the various parts of New Zealand to progress, we should at this stage be twenty years behind the position to which the colony has now attained. If it had been colonised from one point—Auckland—the flourishing Provinces of Canterbury and Otago would have been little better than large sheep-walks to-day. The plan adopted gave to all parts of New Zealand the opportunity of progression and self-government, and in the then state of the colony it would have been impossible for one centre to have made the extraordinary progress that New Zealand has made through the industry and ability of the settlers who have made it their home and colonised it. But, Sir, I should like to ask the honourable gentleman this question: If he has such a bitter and contemptuous feeling towards the honourable member for Auckland Central, how could he have reconciled it with his self-respect to adopt the attitude he did, and accept the patronage of that honourable gentleman? How can he reconcile to himself the language he has used towards the honourable member for Auckland Central this night with the fact

that he was willing to follow the honourable gentleman if he would become Premier, to be a member of his Government—how could he reconcile his conduct towards the honourable gentleman a few weeks ago with the views he has expressed of him this evening? And, moreover, how can he reconcile himself to speak in the bitter terms he has employed of the Land for Settlements Bill of the honourable gentleman, when during the election he expressly stated that it was a better Bill than the Bill of my honourable colleague, and a Bill which he saw no objection to being passed? How he could approve of a Bill during the election to which he has used such language as that we have heard from him to-night I leave to him to explain. I can only say this: that unless the honourable member is prepared to come down with an ample apology for what he has said to-night he must rest under the stigma of having come into office with the assistance of the honourable member for Auckland Central by expressing sentiments which led the honourable gentleman to suppose that he held towards him feelings of a very different character from those which he really held—in other words, that he was prepared to do anything in the way of securing support and countenance from the honourable gentleman in order to obtain office, although he held such poor opinions of the lifelong efforts of the honourable gentleman. I think that every member of the House must regret the exhibition we have seen this evening. And now, before I conclude, I should like to say a few words upon the new light thrown upon the measure that we are now discussing. It is true that in the Financial Statement the honourable gentleman used these words:—

“I may here take the opportunity of informing the Committee of some proposals of the Government, which, as involving economy, are properly mentioned here, but which are of considerable political importance—namely, that the Government intend this session to introduce a Bill to reduce the number of members of the House of Representatives to seventy, inclusive of the Maori representatives; though this change cannot take effect until the end of the present Parliament; and next session they will submit a Bill to the House altering the mode of election, with other necessary reforms of the electoral laws.”

Taking these words in the fullest significance of which they are capable, I think that the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government has not acted fairly in bringing down the present measure without stating that it was the mere forerunner of the political changes of which the honourable gentleman has to-night told us. He has told us that next session we may be asked to do away with single electorates, that he may ask us to do away with the Bill passed last session, and to make other changes of a radical nature—altering, indeed, the whole of our electoral system. I think I may, without giving too large a significance to the words he has used this evening, ask if it was right of the honourable gentleman

to move this Bill without any remarks in explanation, and without acquainting us with the fact that it was merely the commencement of large and important changes. Why, the Bill itself goes in an exactly opposite direction to that which we are led to expect by the language of the honourable gentleman this evening; for does not this Bill refer expressly to the Commissioners appointed by the Act of last session? Does it not say that they are to do this work? And if it was in the mind of the honourable gentleman to abolish these Commissioners, I ask, was he treating the House fairly in withholding that information until it was drawn from him in a moment of passion? Honourable members will conclude with me, I think, that the Bill before us now has a totally different signification from what we understood it to have before. We are now told that it is the beginning of vast changes of which we have no adequate knowledge, and as to which he leaves us to make such deductions as we may be pleased to draw. All we know is, that there is to be an attempt to introduce a system under which minorities will be represented, and that there are to be changes in every department of our representative system; and surely we have at least a right to know, before we enter upon these changes, something of the broad principles upon which the honourable gentleman intends to proceed. I think that the House is not being treated fairly in the matter, and that, if this Bill is really to be the commencement of a new system, we should have a larger knowledge of the changes of which it is intended to be the forerunner. Whilst yesterday I said I should offer no opposition to the second reading of the Bill, now that I know that the Bill is merely a part of a policy of the extent of which, or, indeed, of the nature of which, I am ignorant I feel myself justified in supporting any amendment that goes in the direction of stopping the further progress of the Bill. Then, lastly, let me say this: that the explanation which the honourable gentleman has given of the reason why he was going to make provision for four Maori members instead of three, as proposed by the Bill as brought down, is a lame and halting one. I understand he intends to keep the Maori representation as it now stands, whilst he proposes to reduce the European representation by 25 per cent. And he says he does so because he is going to take away from the Maoris the privilege they now possess of voting as ordinary electors, and which, in my opinion, is the best and highest inducement to come under our laws and civilisation which could possibly be offered to them—the best inducement to them to place themselves upon an equal footing with Europeans in the way of obtaining votes in the ordinary manner. At the commencement of the session an honourable gentleman representing a Native constituency gave notice of a motion which honourable gentlemen admired in the extreme, whether or not they thought the time had arrived for giving effect to it; and the object of that motion was that we should place the Maori

*Sir J. Vogel*

race upon a footing of equality with and under equal laws and responsibilities to Europeans. Am I to be told that that honourable gentleman would, for the sake of obtaining an additional representative in the House, forego the privilege which the Maoris now possess of becoming entitled to vote on registering themselves, the same as Europeans? If the Native members are inclined to do that they are making a great mistake, and I cannot believe that the bargain which the honourable gentleman has explained to us this evening is one which the Maori members have concurred in. I am sorry that I should have troubled the House at such length, but I think the course taken by the Premier amply justifies my having spoken on this occasion.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—Just half a dozen sentences. I am one of those who supported this Bill upon the second reading, and am in favour of its going into Committee at once; and, though I am opposed to certain of its provisions, I do not wish to inflict upon the House a *réchauffé* of what I said on the motion for the second reading; but I wish to refer to some remarks which fell from the honourable member for the Buller. The honourable gentleman attempted to make, this evening, a sort of explanation of his conduct during this session,—of his conduct towards the party of which he was not long ago a member.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—Never.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—I shall not trouble the House by wasting words over the honourable gentleman and his explanation. I shall not take up the time of honourable gentlemen by going into such a business. The House knows what it knows, and the Committee can take the honourable member's explanation for what it is worth. But the honourable gentleman made a personal reference to me. He complained of the treatment he had received, of the abuse which had been levelled at him by an individual, and of the vilification he had received from a newspaper controlled by that individual. It is perfectly well known that that remark was levelled at my head; and I will only say this: that, if the honourable member for the Buller fancies that anything he can say here or anywhere else, or that anything he can do anywhere, is going to gag any newspaper and prevent any man worth his salt from speaking the truth regarding him, he makes one of the greatest mistakes that even he ever made in all his life.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I am very sorry that I should have been the cause of so much disturbance; but I wish to make a few observations on what has taken place. I trust you will pardon me for remarks I wish to make with every possible deference; but I feel it due to the honourable member who first spoke in my defence—entirely without any knowledge on my part that he was going to do so—to say that I confess it was with feelings of great pain and concern that I heard you interrupt him from the chair and speak to him with regard to the strength of the language he was using, especially when I remember the violent lan-

guage that had been used towards myself, which drew no protection for myself from the Chair, and which language called for remark on the part of the honourable gentleman I speak of. I feel certain that when you peruse the *Hansard* report of what has taken place you will regret having spoken to the honourable gentleman and interrupted him in the manner in which you did. I say this with all deference; but I feel it necessary to say it, in justice to the honourable member for Dunedin South. Now, I think it quite unnecessary to make any remarks upon anything of a merely personal nature that was said in reference to myself. I have lived so long that I care little for anything of that kind; and I feel very often that things which may be said may be in some respects deserved, and that it does no harm, when you so often hear praise of yourself, to hear contrary language used from time to time with regard to yourself in your own presence. I think that perhaps that is a useful discipline for any man to undergo. I myself offer no objection to it. It does not hurt me, and it may be that it does me good. But I cannot help feeling sorry when an individual goes wrong, and uses language which, if it injures himself, does not injure me. So far as an individual has a right to use that language he does me good. When he is wrong he injures himself more than he injures me. I now wish to remark upon one or two things which have been said of my public acts. First, it was said that I was the cause of the gigantic mistakes which have arisen in Canterbury; to which I answer that it is really an entire mistake. What prevailed in Canterbury was this: There was a law in force that no lands could be bought for less than £3 an acre, and, of this £3, £1 was to be paid to an association of persons belonging to a particular religious body, to be used for the support of the Church of England and the establishment of bishoprics. And these Canterbury gentlemen were not satisfied with having obtained that right over a million acres, but procured an Act of Parliament to be passed in England, which enabled the Secretary of State to extend that rule to every part of New Zealand by writing under his hand executed in the Colonial Office; so that the whole of New Zealand lay at the mercy of a party in the Church of England, the High Church party, and purchasers might be compelled, in time, to pay £1 per acre extra for every acre bought in any part of New Zealand, which pound was to go to the support of the Established Church of England. I felt it my duty to resist what I thought was a great abuse, and which abuse was even being pressed upon the country in language that shocked me, because, to justify the course they were taking, this language was used: that it was worth while for all persons of every Christian denomination, for Mussulmans, Jews, heretics, and infidels, to pay £1 an acre additional for land, because the appointment of bishops to the colony added to the respectability of it, which would raise the price of the land and give fortunes to the people in that way. Well,

Sir, I felt it my duty to stand against that, for it was repugnant to Christianity. I was fortunate enough to be able to defeat that intention. The Act of Parliament, I believe, still remains upon the Statute Book, and I sometimes think of bringing in a Bill to repeal it; but there it is, law as far as New Zealand is concerned. The object of that law was also this: It was the avowed intention of the persons who passed it to prevent labourers from becoming landholders. They thought that, by raising the price of land, they would defer the time at which labourers could lay by the means to free themselves from daily toil and become the owners of land; and it appeared to me desirable and proper that land should be reduced to a cheap rate, at which every man might hope easily to acquire it; and my belief was that that system would have been protected, as it was intended should be done, by the imposition of a land-tax. I found lately, the other day, a public paper of mine upon that subject which was printed in 1854, showing what the intention then was; and, if they had done that, I believe it would have been the most beneficial land system that has ever been introduced into any colony, and that it would have been almost in advance of public opinion at the present moment with regard to a land-tax, preventing the acquisition of large properties. But I had to leave the country before the General Assembly met, and was unable to bring in that measure myself, and it was brought in by no other Government, and it was in consequence of that omission to impose a land-tax that any evils that were perpetrated in Canterbury took place. But the system itself worked well, even without the land-tax. It continued in operation in Otago until I returned a second time as Governor, and it was continued in the Province of Auckland for a long period of time, and with perfect success. I think, therefore, I may say upon that subject that it was selfish maladministration in Canterbury which then produced evil, and that the attacks that have been made against me have arisen from a misunderstanding. Now, the next thing I come to is this: It is said that I intended to set up a landed aristocracy; and that particular statement rests upon an alleged conversation with Sir Frederick Weld. The details of that conversation are not given, and whether what he may have said is rightly repeated I do not know; but, Sir, I would have everybody to remember this: that people's ideas of what is a large landed estate are very different. That I might have used words in conversation, carelessly, which would have produced an impression upon the hearer's mind in consonance with his own wishes and his own desires, and that he might consider that what I said gave some assistance to those views that he himself held, and were spoken in support of them, is quite possible, while I might have meant a totally different state of things. It is known to everybody that I might have acquired land in cities, in villages, and in the country everywhere here, and might, I suppose,

have realised a very large fortune indeed; I suppose I might have been as rich as any man living almost, if I had done that in the early days of the colony: but I never did it, because it was obnoxious to me to take a step of the kind. I thought it wrong to use official power, or knowledge acquired from position or knowledge, or power in an office, to benefit myself. The acquisition of land was never any object in my life, and, my own desires being so simple as they were, I might have used expressions, in reference to landed property, which those who desired to acquire a large extent of lands might have interpreted in a totally different sense from what I meant. But I ask any one to look at my actions. Has any single action that I ever took shown any intention on my part to set up an aristocracy of the kind spoken of? Look at what I did in the Wairarapa: did I set up an aristocracy there, or small farmers? Look at the pensioners' villages: what did I do there? Look at what I did in South Africa: what did I do there? In every case my efforts were directed to the establishment of people upon small farms, and to dividing, as far as possible, the land equally between the whole population. It will be found that my first act, when I had power, was to limit the extent which any runholder might acquire for his farmstead. That was extended by the Superintendents, or through their requiring the thing to be done, subsequently; but I had fixed limits of a most moderate kind. I simply ask any one, when he hears again that language used with regard to myself which has been used this day, to try to find any single act that was ever performed by me to show that I had any intention of that kind. I am sure they cannot find any such act, either in reference to myself or in reference to others. Now, so far I have disposed of the attacks that I think I ought to answer. With regard to any other attacks of a personal kind, if I deserved them, well and good, let me bear them; if I did not deserve them, they will make no great impression upon anybody. I was very sorry to hear the Premier say one thing. He said, "I shall be much stiffer in what I do with regard to alterations in the present Bill than I should have been, in consequence of the conduct of the Opposition." Now, I say, Sir, that he has no right to punish the Colony of New Zealand in consequence of anything that may be done by the Opposition in this House. These, were words of passion, and I have no doubt he will not carry them out, and I think it is very unfortunate that he gave the example of making use of any expression of the kind. Then, I should like to speak upon what was said with regard to the Natives. I think that he had no business to make any exception or alteration in an Act of this kind to get votes. What he admits he did was this: that whilst the Bill was under our consideration he came to an arrangement with the Natives by which they are to have the fourth member left, and are to forego the privilege of voting for European members. The honourable member for Christchurch North re-

*Sir G. Grey*

ferred to that in a very admirable manner, but he did not point out what I believe to be the great blot. He spoke only of its effect upon the Natives—its deteriorating effect upon them; but I say that a constitutional alteration of that kind ought not to be made by a private arrangement in a Bill which was already before the House. If he intended to follow a course of that kind it should have been intimated to us from the first, and not have been taken to obtain votes. I say it was an unworthy proceeding. I do not call it a concession; I call it misleading the Native race, and I think that the Premier was not justified in making the alteration in the manner in which he stated he did. Then I say, again, that the thing is a mistake. He distinctly stated that the policy he was pursuing with regard to the Natives in this matter was this: that he thought it undesirable to grant the Maoris the same privileges as Europeans, because they could not speak English; and until English began to become their common language he did not think they ought to enter into privileges of the kind. If that policy had been adopted, what would have become of the Canadians? Why, one part of the population of Canada can speak nothing but French, and another can speak nothing but English, but there meet in one common Chamber persons speaking those two languages. Where would their privileges, their liberties have been if, in a population of that character, they had adopted the rule the Premier intends to follow? Then, take the inhabitants of South Africa. They meet in a House in which the Dutch and the English are about equally divided. Many of the Dutch do not understand a word of English, and many of the English do not understand a word of Dutch; but they all meet upon common ground in one Assembly, and from their joint wisdom result measures of a most beneficial character. So should the same take place between the Maoris and ourselves. I say if that is the policy of the present Government they are pursuing a wrong policy, and one which will be disastrous to the country, and which it is unworthy of this House, I think, to adopt. I wished to make these few remarks. I am sorry to have been the cause of so much trouble to the House to-night; but I felt it right to defend myself from the accusations I have spoken of. As to the personal accusations, I treat them with the indifference which I feel they deserve.

Mr. SEDDON.—I think there is no other member of this House who has more reason to complain than the member for Kumara has. In the fit of temper that the Premier has indulged in I have been spoken of in most disrespectful terms. I have been accused by the Premier of an attempt to drive him into a corner; and, notwithstanding the language he applied to the honourable member for Auckland Central has been more violent than that which he applied towards me, still I say this: that he owes me, and every member in this House, an abject apology, not only for the remarks he has made, but for his demeanour in this House. I,



Sir, from the bottom of my heart, pity him; I pity him, considering the position that he holds, for making such an exhibition of himself as he has done, instead of setting a good example to this House. I say that he is to be pitied, and that I can well afford to pity him. Sir, how would he, in the position he holds, like me to say this: "Your actions are disgraceful; they are from base motives, and you should be ashamed of yourself"? If language of that nature, and under existing circumstances, is applied to honourable members as it was applied to the honourable member for Auckland Central, where is it to end? I believe that you, Sir, did not hear the words "base," and "base motives," or you would have asserted your position in the chair, and, recognising no difference in the position of honourable members in this House, would have called on the Premier to withdraw them. There is nothing so provocative as language of that sort. So far as anything I have done or said in connection with this matter, all I have to say is this: that I believe God defends the right, and we are fighting for the rights of the people, whilst the Premier and his followers are trying to take away those rights. The debate which has sprung up has had this effect, at all events: that the Premier of New Zealand has got up and had to admit, "I am not going to be driven into a corner by the honourable member for Kumara." And, when he said that, he looked across at me as though I were not made of the same flesh and blood as himself, and represented a constituency different from all others. Why should he refer to any member of this House in such undignified terms, and say, "I will not be driven into a corner by him"? He is doing wrong, and he knows, and those who are fighting for the right know, that the right will prevail. And what has this debate disclosed? It has disclosed that the honourable gentleman is going to do away with single electorates, that he is going to amalgamate electorates and introduce Hare's system, or some system of which we know nothing. He has been driven to disclose that. It was the force of the arguments of the honourable member for Auckland Central which caused the Premier for a moment to act honestly; and in a fit of passion he has been led to let us have an insight into his policy which we had not before. I will not say to him that it arises from base motives. No, Sir; I represent a community who would not be pleased were I to use such language to the Premier of the colony or to any member of this House—such unbecoming language as has been used to myself and Sir George Grey; but I will say this: that, for motives best known to himself, which are in the interests of his party and in the interests of those he represents, the Premier wishes to destroy the liberties which the people possess, and it is for us to struggle to maintain those liberties. I do not wish to draw comparisons, but I feel that I am sent here to do what is right and just. I came to New Zealand a Lancashire lad, with only one friend in the colony to

assist me. I did not come here having the assistance of friends in either branch of the Legislature or in other positions of power. But the honourable gentleman has had all and every one of those advantages. I may say that it is not necessary for my existence that I should hold office or receive pay from the colony. When we have exhibitions of this kind, when honourable members are debating that which they think is in the interests of the country, and when the Government turn all questions, however trivial, into party questions, I should infer that if the honourable gentleman should leave the Government benches his living would be gone. Surely things are not so bad that he cannot exist without office. If that is so, I pity him; for I can always make a living in this country, and earn the respect of the people with whom I am associated. I have done it before, and am ready to do it again, and, no matter what language the honourable gentleman may apply to me, I shall do what is right and just, and fearlessly go on in the straight path. No doubt I have made mistakes—what man in public life has not?—but I have always endeavoured to do what is right and just. Perhaps my reward may be the same as that given to the honourable member for Auckland Central. When, Sir, I heard the Premier stand up in his place and tell us that the people of New Zealand have received no benefit from the honourable member for Auckland Central, and when I know the honourable member himself knows that the very Constitution under which we are working, and which is the freest perhaps that has ever been given to any country, was framed and fought for by the honourable member for Auckland Central, and from that Constitution all the liberty we possess has sprung, and then to be told that he has done nothing, that he is a vain, useless old man, who has never been of any use to the country, made my blood boil, and I said to myself, "I cannot allow that to pass unchallenged." Sir, in 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, and 1884 the honourable member for Auckland Central dragged the Hall Government and all the party at his chariot-wheels. Act after Act was placed on the Statute Book; and who forced them to place those Acts there? The honourable member for Auckland Central. Who forced the Government to pass the Triennial Parliaments Bill? The honourable member for Auckland Central. Who gave us manhood suffrage? The honourable member for Auckland Central. Who gave us the present electoral laws? The honourable member for Auckland Central. Who reduced the property-vote? The honourable member for Auckland Central. He has left his mark on all those measures, not because he was in power, but because he was in the position which he still occupies. If a wrong was being done he strove to right it, and if a right was demanded by the people he was its advocate. And who placed the Premier on those benches? Does not the Premier make the admission that he offered the position he holds himself to the honourable member for Auckland Central?

At the time he offered him that position did he tell him that in his heart he believed he was a vain and useless old man? I hope that when he gets the *Hansard* proof of what he said this evening he will come down to the House and say that he has erased those expressions from it, so that it may not be handed down to posterity that the Premier of this colony, who should weigh full well every word he utters, could have used such expressions and made accusations which could not be substantiated. I should like to see those words erased, for, if there was anything disgraceful, it was in the words used by the Premier, of which he ought to be ashamed, as he ought to be also of the exhibition he has made of himself before us this evening. Sir, let us draw a veil over that as far as possible. But what does all this arise from? Is it an exceptional thing that in dealing with such an important question as the representation of the country we should have taken some eight or nine hours in discussing it? When the Premier says that he is going to change the whole electoral system of the country, is it to be said for a moment that that is too long a time to take in discussing the question, or that it should cause the exhibition of temper which the Premier of the colony has shown to-night? I say that, from what the Premier has now told the House, not a word too much has been said on this measure. I feel, and have felt throughout, that underneath this Bill, simple as it appears before us, there was underlying something which would be detrimental to the interests of the country, and that until we had a clear and full explanation of what the Government proposed in regard to it we had no right to allow it to go one step further. I tell the Premier there has been no consultation between me and the leader of the Opposition. So far as the Opposition are concerned, I am not working with them in this matter; they have deserted me. I disagree *in toto* with the action of the Opposition in regard to this question, for I consider that in regard to this and other large questions which have been brought before the House the Opposition have not performed their constitutional functions, because those measures should have been fully discussed and some concerted action taken with regard to them. But, as I say, there is no concerted action with regard to this matter, and I have only been actuated by what I consider to be my duty to the people of the country. I have done my best to understand the several measures which have been placed before us, and have taken individual action on them. I care not what the opinion of any honourable member may be. If I believe a thing is wrong I think I am only doing my duty if I tell the House how I consider it is wrong, and if I vote to satisfy myself and my constituents I consider that I have done all that is necessary. I have to satisfy those who have sent me here, and, when I have done that, I have done my duty. I am not here to please the Premier or the Government, or even those on this side of the House; it is

*Mr. Seddon*

not for them to say when I shall speak or what I shall do or say. I am responsible alone to those who sent me here, and if I feel satisfied with the action I have taken I am indifferent to the contempt or sneers that may be hurled at me; and as long as I am doing my duty to the colony I shall certainly not swerve from my path for anything the Premier may say. I have already danced two or three times on the political coffin of the honourable gentleman, and if he goes on as he has done to-night it will not be long before I have an opportunity of dancing another jig: a little more rope is all that is required, then political suicide; and the undertaker will very soon be here. It is not such action as he has displayed to-night, attacking, as he did, the honourable member for Auckland Central, and then again, when the leader of the Opposition began to speak, walking away, and not even leaving a member of the Government to listen to what the leader of the Opposition had to say, that will take him through this Parliament with the members who are now in this House; and if he thinks so he will find himself very much mistaken. We believe in fair-play, and fair fighting, and decorous conduct. Conduct of that kind will not tend to raise the honourable gentleman in the eyes of his own supporters or in the eyes of members on this side of the House; and if he adopts that course towards us we are bound to retaliate, and in the end the honourable gentleman will not profit. I like to see party warfare carried on in a fair and manly way. I have always been accustomed to that through life. I do not believe in hitting below the belt, and the Premier has done it to-night. We do not intend to do the same. We do not agree with the Bill, and I have proposed an amendment to the Bill as a protest because nothing is done in the shape of local government, and an intimation that this Bill should not go further than the second reading this session. I am sure the Government will carry the motion for the commitment of the Bill; but as a number of amendments have been given notice of, I will ask the Government to allow them to be placed on the Order Paper, and not attempt to force the Bill further after carrying the motion to commit.

Mr. MOSS.—I said all I wished on the Bill itself last night, but wound up by hoping that an amendment to the effect that the Bill should not proceed further until some measure of local government had been brought down, would be moved on the motion that you, Sir, should leave the chair. I regarded that as a very proper course to take. I said I should vote for such a motion if some other honourable gentleman would bring it down. I had written such an amendment, and had shown it to the honourable member for Auckland Central. I had a hope—I had no ground, I am bound to say, to warrant the hope, but I had entertained a hope that, knowing how strongly the honourable gentleman felt on the question of local government, he would bring it down. The honourable gentleman has not thought fit to propose the amendment, but

it has been taken up by the honourable member for Kumara. It has been traversed by the Government, who declare that they will regard it as a motion of confidence or no-confidence.—(No.)—The leader of the Government distinctly said so. I shall be very glad indeed to hear it now denied. I think it a wrong course. I do not think that the freedom of honourable members should be interfered with in this case. The Premier is not doing justice to himself or to the House. The question ought to have been decided on its merits; but, as this is not to be done, it places me in a position that I feel bound to explain. There were two honourable gentlemen who figured prominently before the country during the elections—the one, the gentleman who is now Premier; and the other, the gentleman who is now leader of the Opposition. The honourable gentleman who is Premier had the misfortune to be the *bête noire* of the South, and the present leader of the Opposition was the *bête noire* of the North. I did not sympathize with the feeling, or think it right to ostracize any single member in this way. As far as the leader of the Opposition was concerned, that honourable gentleman will do me the justice of saying that, during the twenty-five years I have known him, it has never been my good fortune to be on the same side of the House with him. We were always opposed in political ideas, though personally I hope we have the best feeling towards each other. I wish now to avoid any step likely to restore the leader of the Opposition to power at the present moment. As the question has become one of want of confidence, and as the honourable member for Auckland Central did not see fit to propose the amendment, I shall not be in a position to support it, coming from the honourable gentleman who is undoubtedly the lieutenant of the leader of the Opposition, and who very ably fills that position. I should like to make one remark on what fell from the Premier. He particularly addressed the honourable member for Wallace, and urged him to remember that local government existed already, that he had established it; and in the very next breath he begged that honourable gentleman and any others to make suggestions that would help him to establish it. He said, "What I want is a system of local government." That is exactly what he does want, and until he finds it I am certain all his measures will be futile in restoring peace and economic government to the country. The honourable gentleman has let another cat out of the bag in a most extraordinary way. He says that this is part of a scheme. If the scheme includes the proposal to establish a limited Legislative Council we shall have a perfect reaction, and the honourable gentlemen who are assisting the Premier to bring about this reaction certainly have professed principles very different in the past. The honourable member for Auckland Central was made largely the means of bringing into power the present Government and those who are supporting them. The honourable gentleman's great influence and power

was largely used in influencing the elections in favour of those who are now supporting the Premier. Especially was it used by the Minister for Public Works in Auckland, who stated that he, and those with him, were working with the able assistance of the honourable member for Auckland Central; and I found that the cry was one of the most formidable difficulties I had to combat in my own election. I am extremely sorry to see this reaction following the great advance made in Liberalism and democratic progress during the last few years. Some of the Liberal measures we formerly carried are now endangered, and, in some degree, by the action of those who assisted in passing them. There are now behind the Premier honourable members who have figured as Liberals and democrats of a more extreme character than myself. The scheme of which this is a part is a scheme only fit to culminate in a limited Legislative Council. I heartily hope that things will take a better turn, and that this House will not allow itself to be used in undoing by sideways what it took so many years of hard fighting to perfect. Only let the Premier feel that he has a majority—and they will excuse me for saying a blind and obdurate majority—and there is no one so bold. I know that of old. But let that majority dwindle, and we shall hear no more of this stifling of free debate by making Government questions of important measures of every kind, although they do not affect the power of the Government to administer the affairs of the colony. For the reasons I have stated I shall vote against the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara.

Mr. BARRON.—The honourable member for Christchurch North said, very properly, that probably there is not a member of this House who will not be ashamed of the exhibition we have witnessed to-night. The services of that honourable gentleman and of many other veterans in politics have, no doubt, been very dear to this country; but I put it to them, are they not rather exacting a little more than the value of those services from the country by delaying the public business on all conceivable occasions for the purpose of exhuming old musty references to the buried past, when we should be rather proceeding in an orderly and decent way with the present business? Such irrelevant reminiscences and autobiographical self-laudations may be very interesting to the veterans who have indulged in them and to the other opponents of the Bill, but it may not be too much to say that they are neither interesting nor profitable to the country, and it is evident that other members of this House would rather be spared inflections of the kind that have been placed on them to-night, and would very much rather proceed in a proper and businesslike way with the Bill which is now under consideration. If honourable gentlemen would choose some other time and place for the purpose of reciprocating compliments and endeavouring to outvie each other in quoting forgotten passages from ancient history it surely would greatly facilitate public business. Let us hope

that the House is now prepared to proceed with the business in hand, and that we may be spared further exhibitions such as the honourable member for Christchurch North has so justly condemned.

Mr. O'CONOR.—It is unpleasant to have to refer to the tactics of parties when those tactics are not what can be called of a respectable kind. I have been subjected to a considerable amount of annoyance because certain persons thought I should follow the honourable member for Christchurch North in this Parliament, and have been disappointed. It has been said by the honourable member for St. Albans that I belong to the party he belongs to. But he is new in the House, and takes a great deal on himself, and dictates to older members as to what party they should belong to. I have never given in my adhesion to that party, and they have no right to claim my support in any way; and if that honourable gentleman does correspond with the *Lyttelton Times* he will do better to keep his own influence to defend his own actions. Let him explain why there is such a difference between his hustings speeches and the speeches he has made in this House. Let him explain how he changes his opinions as to dealing with the Upper House, which he said to his constituents he would reduce by a half, and also reduce their honorarium. I am now quoting from the paper he knows something about, and in that paper, I expect written by himself, his speech to his constituents was described as having enthralled his audience. That was his own description of his own speech. As I differ from him, I have no doubt he will describe me as something very bad indeed, and will hold me up to ridicule. But I must tell him that honourable members in this House have not a right to retail lobby-gossip, and they have no right to use their position as editors or proprietors of newspapers in order to coerce honourable members to vote contrary to their convictions. The honourable member for St. Albans has said that he will not be bullied by anybody. Does he forget that he tried to drive the poor constable out of his living at St. Albans? He had great sympathy with the members of the Upper House; but what was his sympathy with the poor policeman and his family at St. Albans, whom he thus persecuted by his position here! He need not take upon himself to lecture members of this House. Let him take care and use discreetly the vote which has been intrusted to him for the first time, and not be so fond of indulging in his newspaper paragraphs. Whether it pleases the honourable member or anybody else, I know what my duty is to the people of the country and myself. I say distinctly to the honourable gentlemen on the same side of the House as the honourable member for St. Albans and to the leader of the Opposition that he has no claim whatever on my support, and that I never tendered it.

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes.

Mr. O'CONOR.—The honourable gentleman who now interrupts certainly, in the first in-

Mr. Barron

stance, seemed to think that he controlled my vote; and he has addressed me in a most impertinent style this session. Sometimes I had to tell him that I would draw the Speaker's attention to it.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honourable member should withdraw the word "impertinent."

Mr. O'CONOR.—I used it in a parliamentary sense. I defy any honourable member to say that upon any occasion, either publicly or privately, I placed myself as a follower of the honourable member for Christchurch North—Sir Julius Vogel. No man can say it, and no man has a right to contradict me in that. I say distinctly that is the case. While I was supporting Sir Robert Stout during the last Parliament I expressly declared at the time my condemnation of his alliance with the honourable gentleman. I said that on the very first occasion; and it was known by those honourable members in my confidence why I was supporting the late Government notwithstanding that alliance. I know the party in the House to which I do belong, and I regret very much that some members of the other party in this House should have taken action which I can have no sympathy with. I do not agree with honourable members who find fault with one proposal after another, simply because those proposals are not brought forward by their particular party. They say, if a proposal is brought forward by their opponents instead of by themselves, that it is an outrage on the people, and will do an enormous wrong to the country. The very proposal which if brought forward by themselves they would advocate and support they now condemn in the strongest and most unfair way. Sir, I think it is a most scandalous and pernicious thing to have the time of the House wasted purely for the purpose of party obstruction. These are party tactics of such a nature as will, if continued, make this House a by-word in the country. We sit here for months; and what have we to show for it? A *Hansard* filled with long and empty speeches, consisting largely of personal abuse from one side to the other—long, dreary speeches, repeated over and over again from Parliament to Parliament—wearisome platitudes that we have all grown heartily tired of listening to years ago. Sir, I say we shall have to face the condemnation of the people of the country if we allow this to go on. I wish certain honourable gentlemen would mend their own actions and not endeavour so unfairly to influence the action of others. Every one in this House is supposed to have a conscience of his own and a mind to direct his own action, and, certainly, as the honourable member for Kumara said just now, every one is answerable to his constituents for what he does, and also to take his share of the responsibility for the action of the party which he supports. I think honourable members, and especially young members, should learn to tolerate independent action of one another; and members whose action is such as I have stated in regard

to the honourable member for St. Albans have done what they have no right to do.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—May I be allowed to say, in personal explanation, that it is quite contrary to the fact that I ever advocated the reduction of the number of the Upper House by half? I did advocate a large reduction in their honorarium.

Mr. SEDDON.—May I also be allowed to say, in personal explanation, that I interjected a "Yes" when the honourable member for the Buller was speaking not at all to offend the honourable member, but to express my dissent from what the honourable member was saying? I will recall to the honourable gentleman an occasion when, I being present in the whip's room on a Sunday evening, in the second session of 1884, he asked the honourable member for Christchurch North to peruse a pamphlet he had written on the Westport Harbour. The honourable member for Christchurch North went into the financial phase of that question, showing how the same would require to be altered before it could be effectively worked on a sound and proper basis. That was after the first Stout-Vogel Government had been defeated, and after the vote had been taken defeating the succeeding Atkinson Government. The whole question of the Westport Harbour was gone into by the honourable member for Christchurch North, who proved to the honourable member for the Buller that what he suggested was workable and should be done; and I wish to say that the language used by the honourable member for the Buller then differs somewhat from what he uses now. That is why I ejaculated "Yes."

Mr. O'CONOR.—I think the honourable gentleman, who has taken upon himself to repeat a private conversation, ought to repeat the whole of it. I absolutely deny that any conversation has taken place in which I pledged myself to support the honourable member for Christchurch North, either then or since; and I think the honourable member for Christchurch North, whom I have known for thirty years, has too much honour to say it is so.

Mr. CARROLL.—I do not intend to detain the House, but I rise simply for the purpose of saying that the Government made no compact with the four Maori members: at any rate, so far as I am concerned, that has not been the case. Neither do I think that the action taken by the Government in that portion of the Bill relating to the Maoris was taken with the object of catching votes, because, although we in this House are only four in number, I think we are quite able to take care of our own affairs. I think that will be made quite manifest to the House as we go on. However, I do not altogether approve of what fell from the Premier this evening in regard to Native affairs. I do not think he has placed the position of the Natives fairly before this House: that is to say, I do not think he is altogether alive to the great disadvantages which they labour under, and his statements this evening were not altogether to the point. First of all, the Natives are to

be deemed as born subjects of Her Majesty—that is, according to the Native Rights Act passed in 1865; but under present circumstances they do not enjoy all the rights and privileges the European subjects of Her Majesty do. The Premier says that they do not pay rates or taxes. Well, I venture to say that they do—that their lands pay. County rates are charged on Maori lands in many cases, and, although they do not pay the rates directly, in some cases the Government pay them, and make it a charge on the land under the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act. Not only that, notwithstanding that they are paying these rates, they are not allowed any voice whatever in the local bodies. They are not represented in the County Councils. There is not a County Council in the whole country where you will find a Native representing. Although they pay rates they are not placed on the electoral rolls as ratepayers. The Maori can only vote in European elections when he has qualified himself by holding a freehold of land in severalty to the value of £25. Without that he cannot exercise any vote whatever in any European election. When you come to consider the difference between the European and the Maori on that score, I think the House will admit that the Maori is somewhat at an unfair disadvantage. Take the Europeans, for instance. They come into this colony, and, after being here twelve months, or six months in any district, they are entitled to vote under the residential qualification; while the Maoris, who live here, who were born in the country, and who may be said to be the children of the soil, are not at all entitled to vote on that qualification. That is totally unfair, especially when we know that throughout New Zealand there is a large floating European population who have a voice in the elections of the country, a very powerful voice too, and who exercise it only too freely. I am one of those who consider that the time has arrived when all distinctions between the two races should be swept away—that all unnecessary distinctions should, wherever practicable, be obliterated, and that we should legislate in that direction. I may be wrong, but that is my opinion at the present time. I look at it in this way: If you admit us to have a voice in this Legislature, why not admit us to be on the same footing as yourselves in the control of our own affairs and the affairs of the country? What is the position now outside this chamber? We Maoris have not the control of our own property; it is managed for us by the Government. I myself consider that I am capable of managing my own property, but, under the law of the country at the present time, I am not allowed to do so. Is that fair? I say it is not. There are all these things to be considered; but I do not think there is time to go into the subject this session. I thought this session was to be a very short one, and that is why I did not proceed with my resolutions; and I am very glad the Premier has thought fit to defer this part of the question until next session. Still, I think he

will deal with it more definitely by amending the Maori Representation Act in the direction I ask. I do not believe in a retrograde step such as is proposed in doing away with the dual vote. We do not want concessions. We want only what is right. If we are entitled to four members, let us have four; if we are entitled to more than four, give us more than four; if we are entitled to no more than three, we do not ask for more than three. All we want is what is just. And I hope that when anything affecting the Native people comes up in this House for discussion all party considerations and all party prejudices will be set aside, and that both sides of the House will enter into the discussion free of bias and with the desire of doing what is necessary, and what will be beneficial not only to the Natives, but to both races and to the colony generally.

Mr. SEDDON.—I have been requested by a number of honourable members to withdraw my amendment, so that we may fairly test the main question on the proposal to go into Committee. I therefore, without any idea of any other amendment being proposed, ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The House divided on the question, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair."

#### AYES, 43.

Allen	Hobbs	Russell
Anderson	Hodgkinson	Seymour
Atkinson	Jackson	Steward, W. J.
Barron	Lawry	Stewart, W. D.
Beetham	Mackenzie, T.	Taipua
Bruce	McGregor	Tanner
Buchanan	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, R.
Dodson	Mitchelson	Valentine
Fergus	Monk	Ward
Fisher	Newman	Whyte
Fitchett	Peacock	Withy.
Goldie	Pearson	
Graham	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hamlin	Richardson, G.	Fraser
Hislop	Ross	O'Connor.

#### NOES, 21.

Duncan	Kelly	Parata
Feldwick	Kerr	Perceval
Fish	Levestam	Taylor
Fitzherbert	Loughrey	Vogel.
Grimmond	Macarthur	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Moss	Marchant
Jones	O'Callaghan	Seddon.
Joyce		

#### PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Moat
Cowan	Turnbull
Fulton	Samuel
Hall	Ballance
Izard	Richardson, E.
Mills	Walker
Ormond	Pyke
Thompson, T.	Buxton
Wilson.	Lance.

Majority for, 22.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Carroll

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—House of Representatives to consist of seventy members, whereof three to be Maoris.

Mr. MOSS moved, That the words in the first line, "expiration by effluxion of time," be struck out, and the words "thirty-first day of December, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight," be inserted in lieu thereof.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

#### AYES, 63.

Anderson	Jackson	Perceval
Atkinson	Joyce	Reeves, W. P.
Beetham	Kerr	Rhodes
Blake	Lawry	Richardson, G.
Bruce	Levestam	Ross
Buchanan	Loughrey	Russell
Carroll	Macarthur	Seymour.
Dodson	Mackenzie, M.	Smith
Duncan	Mackenzie, T.	Steward, W. J.
Feldwick	Marchant	Stewart, W. D.
Fergus	McGregor	S. Menteath
Fisher	McKenzie, J.	Tanner
Fish	Mitchelson	Thompson, R.
Fitchett	Moat	Valentine
Fitzherbert	Monk	Ward
Goldie	Newman	Whyte
Graham	O'Callaghan	Wilson
Grimmond	O'Connor	Withy.
Guinness	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Peacock	Allen
Hobbs	Pearson	Barron.
Hodgkinson		

#### NOES, 5.

Grey	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly	Fraser
Taylor.	Moss.

Majority for, 58.

Amendment negatived.

"On the expiration by effluxion of time or other sooner determination of the present General Assembly, the number of members to be thereafter elected," &c.

Mr. STUART-MENTEATH moved, That the words, "or other sooner determination," be struck out, with the view of inserting the word "only."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

#### AYES, 36.

Allen	Hobbs	Ross
Anderson	Hodgkinson	Seymour
Atkinson	Jackson	Steward, W. J.
Beetham	Lawry	Taipua
Bruce	Mackenzie, T.	Tanner
Buchanan	McGregor	Thompson, R.
Dodson	McKenzie, J.	Valentine
Fergus	Mitchelson	Whyte
Fisher	Monk	Withy.
Fitchett	Pearson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Goldie	Rhodes	Barron
Graham	Richardson, G.	Peacock.
Hislop		

#### NOES, 30.

Blake	Feldwick	Fitzherbert
Duncan	Fish	Fraser

Grey	Macarthur	Seddon
Grimmond	Marchant	Smith
Guinness	Moat	Stewart, W. D.
Jones	Newman	Taylor
Joyce	O'Callaghan	Ward.
Kelly	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kerr	Reeves, R. H. J.	Mackenzie, M.
Levestam	Reeves, W. P.	S.-Menteath.
Loughrey		

Majority for, 6.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. W. D. STEWART moved to insert the words, "not earlier than the eighth day of October, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine," after the word "determination."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be inserted."

AYES, 36.

Blake	Kerr	Seddon
Duncan	Levestam	Smith
Feldwick	Loughrey	Stewart, W. J.
Fish	Mackenzie, M.	Stewart, D. W.
Fitzherbert	Marchant	S.-Menteath
Fraser	McKenzie, J.	Taipua
Grey	Moat	Taylor
Grimmond	Newman	Valentine
Guinness	O'Callaghan	Ward.
Hodgkinson	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Jones	Reeves, W. P.	Fitchett
Joyce	Ross	Reeves, R. H. J.
Kelly		

NOES, 31.

Allen	Goldie	Rhodes
Anderson	Graham	Richardson, G.
Atkinson	Hislop	Seymour
Barron	Hobbs	Tanner
Beetham	Jackson	Thompson, R.
Bruce	Lawry	Whyte
Buchanan	Macarthur	Withy.
Carroll	Mackenzie, T.	
Dodson	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fergus	Monk	McGregor
Fisher	Peacock	Pearson.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Cadman	Moat
Cowan	Turnbull
Fulton	Samuel
Hall	Ballance
Izard	Richardson, E.
Mills	Walker
O'Connor	Vogel
Russell	Perceval
Thompson, T.	Buxton
Wilson.	Lance.

Majority for, 5.

Amendment agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to three o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 7th December, 1887.

Second Readings—Parliamentary Honorary and Privileges Bill—North Dunedin Cemetery Extension Bill—Native Bills—Native Land Administration Act Repeal Bill—Maori Real Estate Management Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### SECOND READINGS.

Sounds County Hospital Representation Bill, Napier Harbour Board Amendment and Endowment Improvement Bill, Akaroa Borough Council Reserves Vesting and Reclamation Bill, Native Land Court Bill.

### PARLIAMENTARY HONORARIUM AND PRIVILEGES BILL.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—At a distant time there was a Parliament from which, for reasons best known to the lieges, lawyers were rigidly excluded. That Parliament came to be known by the classical nickname of "Parliamentum Indoctum"—"the Know-nothing Parliament." In these days of ours, however, we have so large an infusion of the legal element that we are not at all in any danger of being called by that term—"the Know-nothing Parliament." But I think that if we do not do very much more than we are invited to do at present we may be distinguished in the future by the nickname of "the Screw Parliament." Economy is highly to be commended as a domestic as well as a public virtue, provided it be systematic economy and wise economy. If it be not systematic economy and wise economy, there is a danger—on the public side, at any rate—that small savings in one direction may be made to excuse or justify extravagance in another. What, I want to ask, has brought us into our present financial straits? Is it because we have paid a moderate and reasonable salary to Her Majesty's representatives in this colony? Is it because we have paid such salaries as were not too much to Ministers who have charge of the public business of the colony? We have been paying them less every year for years past than is received by the responsible officers of any banking corporation doing a reasonable amount of business in the colony. Is it because we have provided for the payment of members of the Legislature? Are all these three sources of expenditure sufficient to account for the financial distress in which we find ourselves now? They make a mere drop in the bucket of our responsibilities. We have come to these financial straits for these reasons: that we have been making railways beyond the necessities of the colony; that we have been spending millions on railways which have been described by the term "political railways," and which deserve no other character. When we have made our railways we have been authorising the ex-

penditure of enormous sums of money—hundreds of thousands of pounds—for the purpose of constructing artificial harbours to deprive these railways of the traffic they were intended to carry. We have been every year wasting tens of thousands of pounds upon goldfields for the purchase of parliamentary support: only because it was necessary to purchase parliamentary support would any legislative body in the world have consented to the waste and extravagance which, since the discovery of gold, has been going on, is going on, and, I fear, will go on. We have been spending every year tens of thousands of pounds in what is called opening up land for settlement, and we have no settlers. Not only have we no settlers, but we are doing, apparently, everything in our power to prevent settlers from coming here and to drive away those who are here. That is what we have been doing. We have been changing every year our land-laws, so that no man who leaves England to-day can be sure that when he arrives in the colony he will find the same land-laws existing which existed when he left England. More than all, while we have been doing these things it will have been patent to every man who gave the subject one hour's serious consideration that, having incurred all this expenditure to prepare the colony for settlement, it was our duty also to import settlers to occupy the lands. We have done nothing of the sort. A craven fear of trade-unions and of the professional unemployed has prevented us from doing what was a manifest duty—prevented us from turning even a rill of the enormous stream of money that was going to waste into a channel so profitable and useful as assisting immigration and settling the land. It is not by small savings that we can recover ourselves in this way. We may save cheese-parings and candle-ends in the kitchen, but we shall not keep the Official Assignee from the door if we have riot and waste in the hall; and we have had nothing but riot and waste in the hall in times past. We shall do very little now by small savings unless, as I have before said in this Council, our whole fiscal system is altered, and we return to economy systematic and wise. We are directly invited by the Bill now before us to set an example of what ought to be done in the way of retrenchment. I venture to say that there is no member of this Council who will not willingly make a sacrifice when it is required by the colony; but I hope there are few members of this Council who do not feel that an indignity is put upon the Council by the different treatment which is proposed by the Bill which is before the Council to-day. This treatment is invidious, and it is wholly unjustifiable. The Act of 1884 bears this title: "An Act to provide for reimbursing Members of the General Assembly their Expenses in Attendance on Parliament." What are the expenses of members in connection with their attendance on Parliament? Every man who lives at a distance from this place is obliged to give every year three or four months of time to the service of the

public. He is obliged, besides, to neglect his own business, if he has any; and there are very few members of this Council who have not some business which suffers by their absence from their homes. A member is obliged to neglect his business, and to suffer very much in his purse in consequence. He is obliged to incur considerable expense in living here, and he is obliged to expose his health to very great danger in a local climate which, I venture to say, is the most inhospitable in this favoured colony. Sir, we have here a modern Cave of the Winds, with but a weak substitute for the Æolus of old, who, controlling storms, was still but the servant of the Olympians. Captain Edwin is not strong enough for the place, and is forced to content himself with giving warnings of the approach of the furies whom he cannot command, and who appear to be constantly "on the loose." Is it nothing that a man incurs such expenses and such risks as I just have referred to? These are arguments which ought to be considered. But those expenses and these inconveniences are common to all the members of the Legislature—to the members of this Council and to the members of the House of Representatives—and so far the recognition of their services has been equal, and I am content. But there is another provision which is proposed to be made in the Bill, to which I object. The Bill says that there are "additional expenses necessarily incurred" by members of the House of Representatives for which provision is to be made. I am curious to know what is the nature of these additional expenses. There are, no doubt, the expenses of election; but there is not opposition at every election. Some members are elected unopposed and without expense: the consideration, nevertheless, is general. When the Regulation of Elections Act established the practice of voting by ballot, there was also passed an Act known as the Corrupt Practices Prevention Act. The purpose of that Act was to limit, as far as possible, expenditure at elections, so that, as it was said, a poor man and a rich man might be placed on an equality in their efforts to serve their country. Have the provisions of that Act been observed, we will say, at the recent elections? My own political apprenticeship was served in a provincial district in which electioneering was one of the fine arts. The rolls were scientifically stuffed in those days. I have known a cargo of immigrants expected, but who had not yet arrived, who recorded a block vote for a particular party. I have known teams of working bullocks so moved by the prevailing excitement as to "vote early and vote often" for their favoured candidate. I have known Returning Officers in out-districts who converted themselves for the nonce into spiritualistic mediums, and enabled incorporeal electors to plump for the man of the people. These things occurred in the old times. In the recent elections in that particular district which was under my observation it was not without a certain pleasure that I noticed that the

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"humours" of old times were in some sense restored. Whiskey, in its natural form of mountain-dew, descended from the skies and moistened the refractory clay of independent electors. In committee-rooms conjurors produced long-beers without number from empty hats, whilst the inexhaustible bottle poured out streams of all kinds of liquors to satisfy thirsty politicians. On the eve of the elections a very curious metamorphosis occurred. Some fairy, I suppose, touched every cab in the district with his wand, and converted it immediately into a private carriage, and the private carriages were lent next day to the candidates for the purpose of bringing electors to the poll. Every morning we see in the public journals a report of the proceedings upon an election petition before Judges of the Supreme Court in a part of the world not very distant from here. It is as plain as daylight to any person who reads between the lines that there has been gross corruption—gross violation of the law—in that district; but, excepting "the Man in the Moon," nobody knows anything about it. Money has been flying about in all directions; nobody has received it; nobody has paid the money. The member who was returned declares that he has not paid any money, and does not intend to pay any money. Will he receive any share of the subsidy which is proposed to be given to reimburse members of the House of Representatives under these circumstances? If our benevolence in this matter is so great, and if we are so anxious to reimburse candidates for their election expenses, why should that benevolence be confined to the winning candidate? Is it *ex victis* always? Is there no virtue on the losing side, and are we to suppose that the defeated person's desire to serve the public is less than that of the gentleman returned in opposition to him? If it be not, why should he be deprived of a share of the public benevolence we propose to bestow on successful candidates? I think that there are there an inequality and an injustice which certainly require remedy. I listened, not without sympathy, to the piteous moans of the defeated candidates on the hustings, when the numbers were up and the result was declared. The wailings as to falsified promises, the immorality of the ballot, and all the rest of it, were really sad. We are told again that members of the House of Representatives necessarily incur a considerable amount of expense because they are obliged to travel through their districts in order to make themselves acquainted with the wants of those districts,—and, I suppose, to submit occasionally to that process which is familiarly known as "heckling," and which is pleasant to the operator, if not to the persons operated upon. We are told by the terms of the Bill that there are additional expenses necessarily incurred by members during the session. What are the necessary expenses? A member is troubled, no doubt, during the session of Parliament by frequent communications from his constituents. These may be very important matters for the candidate himself; the question is, Are they of

sufficient importance to the country generally to require a national monetary recognition? Payment of members is as old as representative institutions. There was a time in English history when the monarch was all-powerful, and the people were almost helpless. In those days the localities represented paid their own members. Now and here, when the people are all-powerful, and the Crown is but an emblem which we all revere, the whole people provide the pay for the members of the Legislature. It would seem, under these circumstances, but fair that, when expenses are incurred which are necessarily local or personal, these expenses should be defrayed by the localities or persons concerned, and not, as now proposed, by additional taxation upon the whole of the people of the colony. That seems to be a proper solution of that question. It is unfair to ask that the State shall, in advance, make a general and fixed money-provision for contingencies which have not even the recommendation of being common, or of being constant, or of being equal when they arise. Sir, I ask, why is this distinction of treatment between the Chambers made? Why, in these times of difficulty and distress, should an exceptional burden be imposed on the taxpayers of the colony, to meet contingencies which I have endeavoured to show are not constant, which are not equal when they occur, which affect only individuals or localities, and which, I think, should be provided by the districts and localities which they affect? It is in order that I might obtain this information that I have given the notice standing in my name, and which I now move.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That this Council will concur willingly with the House of Representatives in any reduction of allowances to members which shall maintain the equality of treatment between the two Chambers established by 'The Parliamentary Honorary and Privileges Act, 1884.'"—(*Hon. Dr. Pollen.*)

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—Sir, I think, if a stranger had been listening in the gallery to what my honourable friend Dr. Pollen has been saying, he would have wondered what in the world it was he was talking about, and what the subject was that was under discussion. He would have said to himself, in the first instance, that it was railways, because my honourable friend made that subject an important part of his speech. Then, he might have thought that we were merely passing time, because my honourable friend related a lot of curious stories, which I have never heard before, and in which I have no doubt he himself was interested. My honourable friend told us a story about bullocks voting. I suppose he must be acquainted with the circumstances, which, I presume, must have come under his own personal observation. Then, the honourable gentleman spoke in reference to immigration, and I have no doubt that when the stranger heard his remarks he would have thought that the subject under discussion was the question of immigration. I say that nine-tenths of what the honourable gentleman said

contained nothing relevant to the question before the Council. I will not follow my honourable friend in all the mazes through which he has attempted to lead us. His speech has been, as regards the question before us, something more of sack than of bread. There has been a gallon of sack to a pennyworth of bread—in other words, nine-tenths irrelevant to one-tenth relevant. But, Sir, I will leave that part of his speech alone, and I will confine myself, as far as I can, to the subject really under discussion. I will notice one thing to commence with. The honourable gentleman has not waited for the Bill relating to this subject, which has yet to be discussed, but has taken the bull by the horns, and not only traversed the Bill but the whole policy of the Government in anticipation. It appears to me, in reference to the several Bills now here, that, any one of them falling, the rest must necessarily fall too; and it might be very well said, in reference to the motion of the honourable gentleman, that to a certain extent a portion of it was of the nature of a no-confidence motion. No doubt it could be interpreted, to a certain extent, to mean that. The honourable gentleman commenced by traversing this Bill and the general policy of the Government; and I ask whether, in his remarks, he meant to say that we have been going on extravagantly. I understood him to say that we had been going on extravagantly, and that we are now going on extravagantly, and that we shall go on extravagantly; and I presume he means that to be a reflection upon the Government—that an ill example has been set by other Governments, which carried on extravagantly, and that the present Government intend to carry on extravagantly also. Sir, that is a very wide charge; but I would call to the mind of the Council that the present Government have, at all events, initiated something in the shape of retrenchment, and the very first occasion when the question of retrenchment comes before the Council my honourable friend gets up and treats with the strongest possible opposition the whole of the policy of the Government. Now, Sir, I may, at all events, express my impression that my honourable friend has invited us to assume a very false position; and I regret to say that, if the Council follow the lead of my honourable friend, I am sure, before long, they will see strong reasons to regret it. My honourable friend says he wants an equality—

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—Sir, I rise to a point of order. I am sorry to interrupt my honourable friend, because we always listen to him with very considerable pleasure. Now, I understood him to say that we should very soon see something worse if we followed the lead of the Hon. Dr. Pollen.

An Hon. MEMBER.—He said we should have reason to regret it.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I am sorry if I have misunderstood him.

The Hon. Mr. WHITAKER.—I did not know that there was a point of order. I was not

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able to catch the observation that the honourable gentleman made.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I understood the honourable member was complaining of certain words used by the honourable gentleman. Perhaps the honourable gentleman will be good enough to explain what was the point of order.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—Sir, it was this: I was under the impression that the remarks of my honourable friend meant a threat to this Council that by following the lead of the Hon. Dr. Pollen there might happen something of a worse character. These are not the exact words, but that was the impression left on my mind by what I understood him to say.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—The words were these, so far as I heard and understood them: that if the Council adopted the plan suggested by the Hon. Dr. Pollen they would soon find reason to regret their action.

An Hon. MEMBER.—“Follow the lead” were the words.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I did say “follow the lead;” and I apprehend that the Council, if they do follow the lead—

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I did not object to follow the lead of the Hon. Dr. Pollen; I should be very well pleased to follow his lead. But I am complaining of the remarks made by the Hon. the Attorney-General.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—Then I will leave the question to your decision, Sir, as to whether my remarks were of an offensive character, and if so I will withdraw them.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—There is nothing out of order in what the honourable gentleman has said. The honourable gentleman may proceed with his remarks.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—I wish to raise a point of order, Sir. May I ask whether it is strictly in order to anticipate the discussion on the second reading of a Bill which is on to-day's Order Paper? It is the eleventh order of the day on the Order Paper, and when that is reached we shall necessarily have to go through the discussion all over again.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I would call your attention, Sir, to the fact that the mover of a resolution must base his remarks upon the Bill. I think this objection should have been taken at the time it was moved.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—I do not object to it.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The question is one that very naturally arises, and, in anticipation that it might be raised, I have looked up a ruling on the subject, which I will read to the Council:—

“On the question of the second reading of a Bill all amendments must ‘strictly relate to the Bill.’ Resolutions may be moved declaratory of some principle adverse to, or differing from, the principles, policy, or provisions of the Bill; or expressing opinions as to any circumstances connected with its introduction or prosecution; or otherwise opposed to its progress; or seeking further information in relation to the Bill by Committees, Commissioners, the production of papers, or other

evidence. A resolution of this kind, to be admissible, must deal with the particular Bill, and not with other Bills, or Bills generally; and should not be a mere negation of the principle of the Bill."

I think, under that ruling, which appears to me to be in accordance with other authorities, that the Hon. Dr. Pollen is perfectly in order in moving the motion.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I also looked into this matter, and I found it was perfectly competent to move the resolution which the Hon. Dr. Pollen has moved, and I think he was perfectly at liberty to say what he has said on this occasion. Whether he should have dealt with the question in the manner that he has is another matter; but I find no fault with the way—the point on which he has opened it. The honourable gentleman objects to what he calls an "inequality;" but the very object of this Bill is to place the members of the two Houses upon an equality—that their expenses, whatever they may be, should be provided for. There are two ways of dealing with the question of remunerating honourable members for the expense and trouble they are put to in attending Parliament: one is the reimbursement of their expenses only, and the other is their payment. The £100 which it is now proposed should be given for attendance at a session is the same as was formerly given. Subsequently to that an alteration was made, and the sum was increased to £210, and that could only be treated as a payment of members, because the £100 which they had received was more than amply sufficient to pay the expenses of attending the session at Wellington, and therefore in the £210 we have at present payment of members. The new Bill proposes to revert to the old policy—that is, the reimbursement of the expenses of honourable members in attending the session. The members of the House of Representatives are necessarily put to other expenses which the members of this Council are not put to. My honourable friend opposite has given notice to ask a question regarding a return showing the particulars of the "additional expenses necessarily incurred by honourable members" in respect of which provision is intended to be made by the Bill. The expenses of a member of the House of Representatives—and I can speak from experience—are very considerable. There are the expenses necessitated by attending the election, and other expenses afterwards, which members of the Council are not at all subject to; and, if we are to affirm the principle of reimbursement, we must take into consideration the expenses they are put to not only in coming to Wellington and in remaining in Wellington, but other expenses which are necessarily incident to a seat in the House of Representatives. It may be insinuated—and I so understood my honourable friend when he spoke of all these different things which were done at elections, and which were so objectionable—that the proposed £50 was intended to cover those and other expenses of a like description and character.

But it is to cover the expenses to which I shall allude presently that this £50 is proposed to be given. If honourable members refer to the Corrupt Practices Act of 1881 they will find there that a number of expenses are legalised. We know, from experience and from what is now going at Wanganui, that the Act is an extremely stringent one. It is an Act taken, with some modifications, from the Act of the Imperial Parliament; and, in giving effect to it, no doubt people get into trouble and lose their seats. What will be the result of the present proceedings at Wanganui we are unable to judge. We do find evidence of a variety of proceedings which come within corrupt practices according to the Act, but, Sir, there are also a number of legitimate expenses. The expenses which are legalised by the Corrupt Practices Act are these:—

"1. The personal expenses of the candidate.

"2. The expenses of printing, and the expenses of advertising in newspapers.

"3. The expenses of stationery, postage, and telegrams.

"4. The expenses of holding public meetings.

"5. The expenses of a number of committee-rooms, not exceeding one committee-room for each polling-place in an electoral district.

"6. Expenses in respect of miscellaneous matters, not exceeding twenty-five pounds, so nevertheless that such expenditure is not incurred under this head in respect of any matter constituting an offence under this Act, or in respect of any matter or thing payment for which is expressly prohibited by this Act."

So we see that there are these enumerated expenses which necessarily fall upon every candidate for a seat in the House of Representative, more or less. A very large sum may be spent on these, or a smaller sum. But the man who can carry through an election for anything that is proposed to be given here I am sure will find that he is doing it upon a very economical scale indeed. Then, when a member is elected, what are his expenses? Honourable members can well understand the innumerable telegrams that are sent to members, and the variety of expenses of one kind and another which members of this Council are very free from. I think the immunity they get from being worried with regard to different things required by constituents repays them for having something less than members of the House of Representatives, who are subject to all these troubles. Now, I really wish the Council to consider its position in the matter. It is not my intention nor is it my wish to insinuate, nor is it my belief, that there is any improper motive or desire on the part of members of this Council in objecting to the proposed reduction; but I will ask the Council to consider what will be the result as regards the public. The whole opposition will be put down to a desire to acquire public money. I, for one, repudiate altogether the idea that that can have any effect in influencing the decision of the Council in this matter; but I am equally well satisfied on the other hand that it will be put down by the country generally to a desire to retain this

£210; and the action which my honourable friend has taken is—I will not say intentionally—calculated to produce that result. Now, I ask the Council whether or not they feel themselves in a position to hear all these things necessarily said in consequence of what takes place here to-day. I am quite sure of one thing, and that is that it will be attributed to no other motive; and, whether or not that may have influenced any honourable members around me—I do not insinuate that it has—I do repeat that the country will necessarily put it down to that motive. Members of the Council are taking up this view not only on their own account but on account of members of the other House, who are equally desirous that this amount should be retained. And I am satisfied that the country will give credit to both Houses for a desire for the retention of this money. I say that is a very unfortunate position for the Council to place itself in; for honourable members, I am quite sure, will recollect that during the elections there was a demand that the money should be saved by reducing the number of members of the House of Representatives, and the necessary consequence which would follow, that the members of this House should also be reduced. At almost every election which took place the subject was discussed. The subject seemed to be universally considered; and a universal demand was made that the number of members should be reduced. It was thought that the number of members at £210 was wholly unnecessary for carrying on the business of the country. And I think so, too. I think the number of members excessive, and I think the payment is excessive also. If we are to go in for the payment of members, then let them be properly paid, if it is the will of the country they should be; but it is not. At present we are not in a position to pay members, and it is not proposed by this Bill to do so; but it is proposed simply to reimburse the expenses they are necessarily put to and that are incident to their position as members of this Council. I am sure that members of this Council will be quite satisfied that £100 is fully sufficient to cover all the expenses they are put to here; and this Bill, if I understand it rightly, puts members of the Council and of the House precisely in the same position in that respect. But, in order to put the members of the other House on an equally fair footing, it is necessary that they should receive reimbursement of expenses incident to their position in that House. Now, Sir, in consequence of what took place during the elections, members were in a great measure returned to the other House with the object of carrying out some reform in the way in which the popular intention went. It was considered that some alteration should take place in the Upper House and in the payment they should receive; and it was the general impression that there should be a difference made between the two Houses, apart altogether from what is proposed in this Bill as to what they should receive. In Auckland—I do not

say it was universal—the feeling was very freely expressed that the members of this House should not be paid at all. I do not agree with that. If we adopted it I believe it would impair the utility of this Council, because it would shut out many desirable men who could not afford the expense. But there is a strong feeling throughout the country, I may say, that what has been received by the members of this Council has been a great deal more than they ought to have received. Well, Sir, the object of the Bill is to put the matter on a different footing. The House of Representatives is representing the country, and its members are sent here to represent the country; and, when we find that the country and the House are in unison, I ask the Council whether it is prepared to enter into a contest with the House, backed by the will of the country. The Council must give way. It is impossible to resist it. When the country has resolutely made up its mind that a certain thing is to be done it must be done, and this Council cannot resist it. Now, I ask, is the Council prepared for such a contest as that? because a contest inevitably stands out before us. Will they place themselves in a position to traverse the policy of the Government with regard to their retrenchment proposals? That policy has been received by a very large majority of the House, and evidently is in perfect unison with the intentions of the country; and I warn this Council that it would be an unwise thing, it would be a very unwise thing, it would be a foolish thing, for them to enter upon such a contest. No doubt the Council might make some delay in the matter, but eventually they will necessarily have to yield, backed as the policy is by the country and the House of Representatives. That decision is not to be resisted successfully by this Council. It would be impossible it ever could be, and therefore it is that I wish to point out to the Council, that if they follow my honourable friend into the division, necessarily they will get into such a position. I do not know whether my honourable friend alluded to the fact that some years ago a contest arose in the Imperial Parliament with regard to their financial measures; and I suppose that for the future the same policy would have been adopted here as there in order to overcome the resistance of the House of Lords. What was done was to put the whole of the financial measures of the Government into one Bill, and it was impossible for the House of Lords, as it would be for this Council, to throw it out. But if all these financial proposals were placed in one Bill, and that Bill was now before the Council, I ask this Council whether they are in a position to say that such a Bill should not pass. Then inevitably the result would be to throw the whole country into confusion. However, at present it is not in that position. The Bills are brought in separately, propounding the different financial measures of the Government. Now, I see before me that if these measures are rejected the consequence will be of a very serious character; I feel the result

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will be that the Council will not come off best in the matter. I am quite sure the Council eventually will have to give way. Therefore I wish to impress upon honourable members that they have a very serious matter before them at the present time. It is not a question whether there is to be a difference between members of one House and the other, but involves a much larger and wider question, and it is well honourable members should consider that, and not confine their views simply to what is contained in this Bill, but look at the question generally. I admit that, if this resolution should be carried, it does not necessarily throw out the Bill now standing on the Order Paper—that is, the Honorarium Bill. All I can say, therefore, is that, whatever may be the result of this proposal, I shall, having the power to do it, to-morrow place upon the Order Paper the Bill itself, and, whatever the result may be of this division, I shall endeavour to impress upon the Council again the propriety of passing that Bill. It will be said this does not necessarily throw out the Bill; but, if it is intended to carry out this resolution, some other motion will be proposed to throw out the Bill, by moving that it be read this day three months, or six months, or, on the other hand, that it should be laid aside; but, if that should be carried—and I hope it will not, whatever the result of this motion—the result would be of a serious character, and the Council would find themselves in a conflict from which I am sure we should retire with disgrace. I therefore oppose this resolution.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—I will just say a few words to express what I think will be the wiser course to adopt with regard to this resolution. You have ruled—and, I have not the slightest doubt, correctly—that the resolution was not out of order, although it refers to the main principle of a Bill which is on the Order Paper for second reading. The Attorney-General has also followed your ruling; but I think it would be inconvenient to anticipate the possible result of the second reading of a Bill by a resolution of this kind, placed on the Order Paper on the very day that the second reading of the Bill is announced. I think, therefore, it will be better, having had the advantage of hearing opinions expressed on both sides of the matter, to decline to come to a decision on the resolution, and to apply ourselves to the question again when the Bill does come on. I cannot but think, although older parliamentarians than I may be able to take a different view of the matter, that those who, like myself, are young and inexperienced, will find that course to be the far wiser one, and the easier to follow. We shall then discuss the Bill, though I may say I shall take no part in it, because I quite approve of the measure as it stands; but those who are disposed to discuss the measure will discuss its merits on the question of the second reading of the Bill itself, and not by anticipating the measure by coming to a premature decision. I shall now therefore move the previous question.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I am going to

support the Bill as it has been brought in, and, though I do that with a probable loss to my pocket, I feel that I can certainly do it without any loss to my dignity as a Councillor. However, I think that the Hon. the Attorney-General has mistaken this resolution somewhat. I do not see any reason whatever why the Council, if they so please, should not pass this resolution and also vote for the Bill. We might, I think, quite properly do both. This resolution only says that we will gladly accept any reduction that the other branch of the Legislature puts upon itself, but it does not say that we will not go any further than that; it does not affirm the principle that we are not to go any further. Therefore I think it would be perfectly proper to vote for this resolution and to vote for the Bill, and that there would be no inconsistency in so doing. As to the question of equality, as one who has been a member of the other House for many years I feel that I had demands upon me as a member of that House—legitimate demands—that I never have had since I have been in this Council. As the Attorney-General put it, there are legitimate expenses incurred in the election of members of the other House. It is a fact that considerable sums are spent on advertising, even when it is conducted upon the most economical principles. One gentleman whom I am acquainted with spent £46 in advertising alone.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—It was his own choice.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—Sir, it was not his own choice, for, unless he was prepared to expend that, it would have been better for him not to stand. There are others who spent large sums. I know of one gentleman who spent £180 in advertising and in getting his speeches reported and printed; and there are other expenses which appear legitimate enough. In some of these elections it is quite true, as the Hon. Dr. Pollen says, and as the former Premier gave it out—and, I presume, he spoke feelingly—that as much as £800 and £1,000 is spent in election expenses. I think there were very few elections in the colony that cost anything like those sums; but, I presume, the late Premier was able to speak feelingly and from personal experience upon the subject. These, of course, were not legitimate expenses; they are sums which if a candidate chose to spend he could, if he was simple enough to be preyed on by professional electioneering agents. Still, there are certain expenses that are fairly chargeable against a member of the other branch of the Legislature as election expenses, and there are large amounts paid by them for telegrams alone. When anything exciting is going on, people send them telegrams from all quarters, and they must answer them, and cannot make the replies "collect." I have myself known members of the other House pay £2 a day for telegrams; and they had to pay it—they could not well get out of it. I think, therefore, that they are perfectly entitled to an extra amount to reimburse them for their expenses connected with the sittings of that House. Now to come to the measure of

the Government. I think myself that it would ill become this Council to simply thwart the present measures that are being carried out by the Ministry for the good of the country. The Government have started on a course in which they need our sympathy and our support. What I feel is that, when we commence at the top, when we commence with ourselves and go down, every one downwards will accept it, even to the labouring-man. Would the labourer be content to accept less wages if we do not reduce our own pay?—for you may call it pay or honorarium, as you like. I ask honourable members, will the labourer on the railways accept less wages unless we show him an example? But I venture to say that, if we do set that example, and it is put to them fairly, they will be perfectly willing that their wages should be reduced, notwithstanding what may be said to the contrary. In the other House you hear new members say that the legitimate pay of these workmen—6s. 6d. a day—must not be reduced. How many members of this Council have half the income they had five years ago? How many of them have one-fourth of what they had then? And if, after the luxury we have been living in, we find it necessary to level down, is it not wise in us to show an example in this levelling-down? As has been said, those who at present are receiving salaries and wages are the best off in the country. Where are the merchants in the southern parts of the colony that are doing anything more than holding their own? Where is the cockatoo, working from daylight to dark, that is earning even 3s. 6d. a day for himself now?—and, as against that, the railway employes must not be touched; and the whole of the cockatoos of the country, and all the labouring people, are to be taxed to uphold the extra wages. These men are receiving 6s. 6d. a day, and alongside them, near my place, the men who are working for the County Council are receiving 5s. a day, and they are quite as good as the men who are working on the railways. The few men I have employment to give to ask me 5s. a day, and they are good men, and are well satisfied with that; and one man the other day said he was quite ready to take 4s. 6d. a day, and that he thought that quite enough under the circumstances. You have to take into consideration all these things to get the people below you to accept the inevitable, and to come down in their demands, so as to comply with the present circumstances of the country, without which the country cannot become prosperous again. It is necessary, I think, that some expression of opinion should go forth on this matter of retrenchment, because, as we cannot touch the Bills themselves—that is to say, cannot alter them—we must either accept or reject them, and my strong feeling is that we must commence with ourselves. The reduction of members in the other branch of the Legislature has been desired by the electors of the colony, and I venture to say that some of the honourable members who have pledged themselves to carry that Bill, and who are now stabbing it in the back and trying to kill it by a sideward,

*Hon. Mr. McLean*

should they succeed will have to account to their constituents for their conduct. I feel very strongly that such a Bill should pass, that it is a fair Bill, a just Bill, and one that the Council should accept without any hesitation.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—I have no doubt that the motion of my honourable friend Dr. Pollen has been entirely misunderstood. I did not hear very well what he said, but I know the exact character of his genius, and that there is infinite humour in the drift of his intention. The most important consideration, in his view, is the securing of a continuance of the equality of privilege between the Chambers which was established by the Parliamentary Honorarium and Privileges Act of 1884. Now, the Hon. the Attorney-General has demonstrated that, in the matter of expenses, there is no equality of sacrifice between the two Houses, but that the equality of treatment consists in this: that in each House each member is to receive an honorarium of £100. My honourable friend Dr. Pollen must have wished, therefore, simply to resist the only inequality of treatment evidenced by the Act, the inequality of treatment shown towards the members of the House of Representatives resident in the City of Wellington and resident members of the Council. You see such is the true drift of my honourable friend's motion. It is the delicate way he has of touching the whole thing. He exhibits a refinement in the furtherance of his object which, for my own part, I have not tact enough to show. Therefore you will see, Sir, it is incumbent on us to send the members of the House of Representatives of the City of Wellington away without any honorarium, and to give them £50 for expenses, in order to secure the necessary equality of treatment. It is towards that blot in the Bill—that inequality—that my honourable friend points: any one will see it. To his acute mind the absurdity of the thing must appear very striking, because the Bill talks about "the expenses" of members of the House of Representatives as being £50; but, notwithstanding the extra trouble and expense to which honourable members of the other House are subjected, according to the lucid explanation of my honourable friend Sir Frederick Whitaker and my honourable friend Mr. McLean, I find that members of the other House resident in the City of Wellington are to be only allowed £25 for this purpose. Now, the just mind of the Hon. Dr. Pollen, holding the whole subject in an even balance in the true scales of his experience, shows him the absurdity of this in an otherwise admirable measure. I fully agree with him in this view. For my own part, if it were possible, I should be happy to assist in depriving the members of the other House resident in Wellington of their honorarium; but, as I am not in a position to do that, I can only contribute to the general retrenchment by depriving myself of my own, and I shall be happy to do it.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I must say I was very much disappointed with the remarks of the Hon. the Attorney-General, which

seemed to be greatly of the special-pleading order: they were certainly and entirely lawyers' argument. He asked if the Council is prepared to enter into a conflict with the House of Representatives. I say the Council is not prepared—I certainly am not—to enter into a conflict with the House of Representatives; but, at the same time, I am prepared to speak my mind, and I say that the conflict is not with the House of Representatives, but with the honourable gentlemen sitting on the Government benches. I know this proposal is not the wish of the people of the colony. I have had opportunities of mixing with the people of the colony in my own district, and I have told them times without number, when I was a representative in the other House, that I would not come to Wellington and serve them, giving my time, without any remuneration whatever, and at the same time be out of pocket. I feel perfectly certain that the public have no desire to have our services without paying our travelling-expenses. The Hon. Mr. McLean has said that we should not thwart the Government in carrying out their policy of retrenchment. I do not think there is a single member of this Council who is at all anxious to thwart the Government in any measures they have brought forward to effect retrenchment. I hold that the remarks of the honourable gentleman in that respect are libelling the Council. Now, when the question of a reduction of members was before the Council I suggested that the proper course would be to refer to the Committee then appointed such questions as this of the honorarium and others; and I think it would have been well if the Hon. the Attorney-General had accepted my suggestion and referred that matter to the Committee. By this means the Council might have expressed its opinion on the question now before us, and thus have avoided any chance of a conflict with the other branch of the Legislature. When the Act of 1884 was passed, it was considered that members of Parliament, when attending to their legislative duties, were entitled to be recouped their travelling-expenses at the same rate as Ministers of the Crown when travelling on business connected with the Government; and, if the rate of travelling-allowance for Ministers is reduced, I say it is quite right that the allowance to members of Parliament should be reduced also. But the allowance should not be reduced to what is totally inadequate to meet honourable gentlemen's expenses. I may here remark that I think the word "honorarium" is altogether misapplied, and should be replaced by the words "payment of members' expenses when absent from their homes attending to their parliamentary duties." Now, the Bill to effect reduction has not been drawn upon any principle, as far as I can see. It is what I should call a most irritating Bill, and intended to create a feeling of irritation on the part of members of this Council. Now, considering that the so-called honorarium is intended to recoup members their expenses when absent from their homes attending to their parliamentary duties, it

is a question whether those honourable members who reside within a reasonable distance of this House of Parliament should or should not receive any honorarium at all; but, supposing we assume either that they should or should not receive any honorarium, I ask, for what reason does the Bill provide that such members belonging to one House should receive honorarium, while members belonging to the other House should receive none? That is making an inequality between the two Houses which, I think, no Government, with a proper sense of their responsibilities, should entertain for a moment. Then, there is another inconsistency in the Bill. The Act of 1884 provides for "reimbursing members of the General Assembly their expenses in relation to their attendance at Parliament." The present Bill does not purport to do anything of the sort. Sir, as it is now near four o'clock, when we pass to the orders of the day, I move the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I will take this opportunity of stating to the Council, in reference to my ruling just now, that May says,—

"That all aids and supplies, and aids to His Majesty in Parliament, are the sole gift of the Commons; and all Bills for the granting of any such aids and supplies ought to begin with the Commons; and that it is the undoubted and sole right of the Commons to direct, limit, and appoint in such Bills the ends, purposes, considerations, conditions, limitations, and qualifications of such grants: which ought not to be changed or altered by the House of Lords."

Motion for adjournment agreed to.

#### NORTH DUNEDIN CEMETERY EXTENSION BILL.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER said, in this case he was rather in a position of some difficulty. For himself he was opposed to the Bill, but the promoters of this Bill in the other branch of the Legislature found it almost impossible to find a member of the Council willing to undertake the conduct of this Bill through the Council; and in that difficulty—they having previously applied to him and he having declined to take charge of the Bill—they again applied to him, and he said that, rather than a Bill which affected the Town of Dunedin should not be taken before the Council for its consideration, he would, *pro forma*, consent to assume the charge of the Bill. It was a Bill intended to permit the Corporation of Dunedin, who were the trustees of the Town Belt for the purposes of public recreation, to help themselves to an additional portion of that Town Belt for the purpose of extending the cemetery. He thought the Town Belt was a reservation of so much value to the public for the purposes of recreation and health that he very much regretted that this design should have been entertained, and he did not think it was at all justifiable. He knew that the Corporation of Dunedin had made a large sale of allotments in the cemetery that had already been taken from the Town Belt, and he thought that, instead of helping themselves to another portion, they should buy land elsewhere. He

did not know whether, after moving the second reading of the Bill, it would be in his power to vote against the Bill; but, if he were allowed to vote against it, he certainly would do so.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL said there was scarcely any room left for an amendment: The honourable gentleman had moved the second reading of the Bill in such a strain that really one almost seemed to hear the words "this day six months," though the honourable gentleman had not used them. The Bill was gone through very carefully by the Local Bills Committee to which it was referred, and of which he (Mr. Mantell) was a member, and in that Committee they had had a good deal of discussion upon the Bill, and a great deal of evidence on both sides had been given. The Committee finally reported in favour of the Bill by the vote of the Chairman.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The casting-vote.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL said he did not use the words "casting-vote," because the Chairman of the Committee had only an original vote. There was a great deal to be said in favour of the measure, and the Committee had an opportunity of knowing that when the Bill came before them. There was also a great deal to be said against the measure, which the Committee had had an opportunity of hearing. But his own objection to the measure was that it proposed to continue the practice of intramural interments, which was so much against the instincts of modern civilisation; and it should be considered whether this should be allowed in the case of Wellington. It was more than twenty years ago that the then Superintendent of the province gave to the Seat of Government Commissioners in his presence a positive assurance that if Wellington were made the seat of Government the cemetery should be removed. Still, it had not been removed; it was yet unclosed, and nothing had been done towards that end. The main drains in the neighbourhood of the cemetery passed one to the north and the other to the south of Government House, and would doubtless carry to Her Majesty's representative the odours which arose. However, this was not a matter which affected the citizens of Dunedin. He should vote against the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS thought it but right that he should explain the exceptional position of this Bill. In the settlement of Otago by the New Zealand Company and the Otago Association provision was made that a reserve should be made right round the town for the purposes of recreation and amusement. That was what was called the Town Belt, or it might be called the Domain of the City of Dunedin. The Otago Block was purchased by the Association, and each person who became a purchaser under that became also a member of the Association, and had a full interest in all the reserves within the Otago Block, which consisted of 1,440 properties of sixty and a quarter acres each—fifty acres rural, ten acres suburban, and a quarter-acre of town lands. Each one of the purchasers under the

Otago Association and the New Zealand Company had a vested interest in this Town Belt; also all those in the City of Dunedin and suburbs who had acquired it since. He might explain to honourable members who had never seen it that this was merely a strip of land going right round the town. In some places it was ten chains in width, in other places less, and in other places more. Now, if honourable members would refer to the Bill they would see that the preamble declared that, by a Crown grant, the Queen granted to the Superintendents of the Province of Otago the Town Belt, to hold in trust for the purposes of recreation for the inhabitants of Dunedin and its suburbs; and by subsequent legislation after the abolition of the provinces it was re-enacted, and the reserves were vested in the Dunedin Corporation in trust "for the specific purposes for which such reserves were made." They were made for the recreation and amusement of the inhabitants of the City of Dunedin and its suburbs, and also of those who purchased land under the Otago Association. Then, again, the preamble stated that the Belt was to be held in trust by the Corporation for the purpose of the public recreation and amusement of the inhabitants of the city and suburbs. The preamble showed clearly what was the intention of the Act—it handed it over in trust to the City of Dunedin. Now, the present Bill diverted this portion of the Town Belt from the purposes of recreation and amusement; for he held that it could hardly be considered that a cemetery was a fit place for recreation. And there was no necessity for it, inasmuch as the Corporation could get land elsewhere. They had a surplus from the Cemetery Fund on the 30th September of £3,246 14s. 7d., and had that surplus been invested at interest it would have amounted by this time to between £10,000 and £12,000. This surplus was on their books; but they had spent the money, and they had the surplus only on paper. They had spent it illegally; and, had he called their attention to the illegality of using it for the purpose to which they applied it, they would have said that that was "no matter," and they expected an Act of indemnity would be passed in order to get over the difficulty. This accumulation had been effected through the sale of plots for interment, and these plots were sold at the following rates: £10 for a 10ft.-by-10ft. plot, £3 for one 8ft. by 10ft., and £1 5s. for a plot 8ft. by 4ft.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—Is that an advertisement?

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said it was not; but he wanted to show that the cemetery was paying the Corporation very handsomely, and that they were spending all the money they were getting from it on other city works in order to save themselves taxation. The Corporation had an annual revenue from reserves, in addition to this—he was not certain of the amount, but he knew it was over £15,000 per annum; so that they were not badly off, and could repay this £3,240 if they liked, and buy land for a cemetery. They had twenty acres adjoining the

*Hon. Mr. Oliver*



southern cemetery, and it had been urged that they could use that for the purpose of a cemetery; but they said, "Oh, no; we want this for revenue purposes, and we will get a piece out of the Town Belt for a cemetery, and make a revenue from that too." The actual difficulty was that they had spent the money, as was proved by the evidence of the Mayor of Dunedin last session before a Committee of the other House. That gentleman stated, in the course of his evidence, "It is the most beautiful site in or near Dunedin;" and, further, "It has been suggested that we should go into the country and get a piece of land; but we have no means with which to purchase land." Having spent all the money, they had no means with which to purchase land. Then, the Mayor was asked, "What is the amount to the credit of the fund now?" and he answered, "Nearly £3,000: but we have not the money. It is merely a matter of account." A question was put to him by Sir Robert Stout, and that was the answer. On the 30th September last the amount to credit was £8,240, as he (Mr. Reynolds) had already stated. Then the Mayor went on to say, "We have not the funds nor the power to get any." So that the whole difficulty was that they had spent the funds, and now they wished to filch another piece of the recreation-ground, in order to get more money to squander in the town, and to do it contrary to law. The Mayor was asked by Sir Robert Stout, "I should think you might get another site further from the city: this neighbourhood will be built upon. You might try to get the other boroughs to purchase, jointly, a cemetery, say, at Green Island, or elsewhere; and the expense of funerals would not be increased." Then, the answer was, "But if you get land there, where is the money to come from? We have no power to raise money." Then he said again, "We cannot get land without paying for it; and, inasmuch as, through bad management by the City Council in the past, the Council has got to the limit of its borrowing powers, and there is no prospect of reducing its overdraft, we have neither funds nor the power to get funds." He merely quoted these statements to show that the whole object of this Bill was to get a portion of the recreation reserve for cemetery purposes from which they could derive a large revenue. The Local Bills Committee of the other House last session fully considered this Bill. That Committee consisted of Mr. W. F. Buckland, Mr. Conolly, Mr. Hursthouse, Mr. Reese, Mr. Reid, Sir Robert Stout, Mr. Hislop, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Kerr, and Mr. G. F. Richardson, only the last four of whom were now in Parliament. That Committee were unanimous in making the following report: "Your Committee beg to report that the evidence shows it to be inadvisable to grant the powers asked for by the Bill." Then the Bill was dropped; but, under a resolution passed by the other House, that local Bills dropped last session might be taken up this session at the stage at which they had been dropped, this measure was again brought before the House of Representatives,

and had now been passed on to the Council. Now, he might say that the City Council were in favour of this Bill; but not so the public. Those who were interested in the reserve in this Town Belt were opposed to any part of it being used for any other than recreation purposes and amusement. On one occasion the City Council put up a fever hospital on it, and the citizens subscribed money and brought an action in the Supreme Court, and the hospital had to be removed, at a loss of about £4,000. The citizens, in this, were actually fighting themselves with their own money.

An Hon. MEMBER.—An Otago free-fight.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said he believed it was very likely—he was not certain—that next session the citizens of Dunedin would ask Parliament to pass a Bill taking away from the City Council the control of the public reserves and vesting them in the Public Trustee in trust for the special purposes for which those reserves were made, and it would be very wrong for the Legislature to anticipate such action by taking a part of this reserve from the citizens. He urged the Council not to assent to this Bill, and moved, as an amendment, That the Bill be read the second time that day three months.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY had no desire whatever to enter into this Otago free-fight; but, in the peculiar position in which the Hon. Mr. Oliver was placed, he thought it was only right and due to the honourable gentleman whose name was on the top of this Bill that some consideration should be given to him, and that this Bill should receive some better treatment than it now appeared to get. If in order, he would move, That the debate be adjourned. He would not refer to the Bill now, but would simply explain his reasons for moving the adjournment of its consideration. His honourable friend had explained that several members of the Council had been asked to introduce this Bill, and had refused. He had been asked to support this Bill, and he should support it. He was not asked to introduce it, or he should have done so. He thought it was only right that, the promoters of the Bill having gone to the trouble to introduce it, some consideration should be given to it; and therefore he moved the adjournment of the debate, in order that further time might be given for the consideration of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI was rather taken by surprise by the manner and conduct of the Hon. Mr. Oliver in taking charge of a Bill and then asking the Hon. the Speaker's ruling whether he could not vote against it.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER wished to say, in explanation, that Mr. W. D. Stewart, the member of the other Chamber whose name appeared on this Bill, told him that he had tried in vain to get an honourable member to take charge of it; and he himself had asked many members of the Council to relieve him of the difficulty in which he found himself placed by consenting to move the second reading. So that the peculiar position he occupied in regard to this Bill was not one of his own seeking.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI accepted the honourable gentleman's explanation. At the same time, he would say this: that it looked rather peculiar to young members, as some of them were, to find that an honourable gentleman who had been in the Chamber for some years should take charge of the Bill, move its second reading, and then ask leave to vote against it. But after the honourable gentleman had spoken he was rather surprised to find the Hon. Mr. Reynolds getting up and making a long speech and telling them all about how the reserve was dedicated to the Corporation by the New Zealand Company, and giving the whole history as to the charge for interment, and information of that kind. He (Mr. Shrimski) thought that when the Hon. Mr. Oliver and the Hon. Mr. Reynolds were both Ministers of various Governments at various times—

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said he had moved the adjournment of the debate, and the honourable gentleman must confine himself to the question.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said the Hon. Mr. Shrimski must confine himself to the motion for the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said he was speaking to the adjournment, and his reason for so speaking was to show that the measure should receive further consideration, and receive what was always desirable in the Council fair-play from all parties, whether they approved of a Bill or not. That was his reason for supporting the adjournment of the debate. This was not the first time that public reserves had been taken from the public for other purposes than those to which they were originally dedicated. He had known the Hon. Mr. Oliver, when a Minister, to take something like sixty acres in the place he (Mr. Shrimski) came from—

The Hon. the SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must confine himself to the motion for the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said he would support the motion for adjournment.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—(First sentence inaudible.) If the Bill were taken into consideration, then he would explain that there were good reasons for taking a favourable view of it. Further provision was required for the interment of the dead, and the particular spot of ground referred to adjoined the existing cemetery. The drainage from the greater part of the land, so he understood in Committee, ran into the harbour. For various reasons he need not now recapitulate he would ask the members of the Council to suspend judgment until they heard what could be said on the other side.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN thought the honourable gentleman had plenty of time to discuss the matter now. If he had such good reasons for supporting the Bill he should give them, and they would be listened to at once. They might just as well be given now as postponed. For himself, he disapproved of the Bill, and he thought the Council should not agree to the adjournment. He would ask the honourable

gentleman to give the reasons why the Council should pass the Bill.

The Council divided on the question, "That the debate be adjourned."

AYES, 9.

Buckley	Kenny	Shepherd
Dignan	Mantell	Shrimski
Hart	Scotland	Wahawaha.

NOES, 22.

Acland	Miller	Richmond
Barnicoat	Oliver	Stevens
Bonar	Peacock	Swanson
Fraser	Peter	Taiaroa
Holmes	Pharazyn	Waterhouse
Lahmann	Pollen	Whitaker
McLean	Reynolds	Williams.
Menzies		

Majority against, 13.

Motion negatived.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES said it appeared to the Committee, from the evidence they received, that additional ground was urgently required for cemetery purposes in the neighbourhood of Dunedin, and that this particular spot had to a certain extent already been set apart for this purpose, the locality being very suitable. He was led to understand, as a member of the Committee, that the drainage of this land ran into Pelichet Bay, and, consequently, away from the inhabited part. He had subsequently been informed, however, that a portion of the drainage went in a different direction; but the one great object was to keep it clear of the thickly-inhabited parts, and the drainage would run clear of such parts. Although it might be possible to find cemetery-accommodation at some distance from the town, none could be found so near as to enable the poorer classes to bury their dead without incurring large expense. No doubt a site could be found somewhere alongside the railway, but, if such a site were selected, the expenses to the poor would be very much greater than if the locality selected were within a short distance of the city. The point the Hon. Mr. Reynolds had referred to had also come up for consideration by the Committee, and it appeared that, though the Council had, as a matter of account, a considerable amount of funds, or ought to have a considerable amount of funds, at its disposal for this purpose, yet they could not readily obtain that money and make it available for the purchase of the site required for the necessary cemetery-accommodation. Land in the neighbourhood of Dunedin had risen very considerably in value, and, in order to obtain a sufficient area, a large sum would be required. The Committee had also taken into consideration the fact that if the portion of the reserve required to give the extra accommodation necessary were given it would not seriously impair the value or the convenience of the recreation ground in the neighbourhood; and the Committee finally decided that the Bill should go further. He might say that he maintained no very strong opinion on either side. It seemed to him that it would be very con-

venient to have the cemetery enlarged, and that there were fewer objections to taking this course than to rejecting the Bill, and thereby subjecting the inhabitants of the town to the further inconvenience of insufficient accommodation for burials.

The Council divided on the question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

#### AYES, 5.

Acland	Hart	Shrimski.
Buckley	Menzies	

#### NOES, 21.

Bonar	Miller	Shephard
Dignan	Peacock	Stevens
Fraser	Peter	Swanson
Holmes	Pharazyn	Taiaroa
Lahmann	Pollen	Wahawaha
Mantell	Reynolds	Whitaker
McLean	Richmond	Williams.

#### PAIR.

For.	Against.
Barnicoat.	Campbell.

Majority against, 16.

Second reading negatived.

#### NATIVE BILLS.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said that, with regard to the three Native Bills on the Order Paper, he found, on consulting the Standing Orders, that they must go before the Native Affairs Committee. He therefore thought it would be better if these Bills were read a second time *pro forma* and sent to the Committee, and that the debate should be taken upon them when their committal was moved. This course would relieve honourable members from the necessity of returning in the evening, which otherwise they would require to do.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY hoped the Council would not take any such course. The Bills were very important, and they should not affirm their principle in the manner suggested. They knew nothing about the Bills, and the Hon. Mr. Taiaroa told him that he had not even read them. The Bills should not be pushed forward in this way.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER did not wish to push forward the Bills. The Hon. Mr. Taiaroa was a member of the Committee, and would have an opportunity of considering them, and their principle could be debated when the Bills came back from the Committee. He merely suggested this as a convenient way of dealing with the Bills.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI thought these Bills were of great importance, for they changed the whole system of dealing with Native lands. Having been a member of the General Assembly for eleven years, he knew, as a member of the other branch of the Legislature, that it had endeavoured to pass measures to protect the Natives, and that it had, to a great extent, at last succeeded; but here it was proposed that in one moment the whole of that legislation should be reversed. This was a very serious question, and he, for one, should object to its

being dealt with out of the ordinary course. Ever since he had been in the Council Bills referring to land had been, after the first reading, referred to the Waste Lands Committee, and he did not see why on this occasion they should depart from the rule hitherto adopted. The procedure was according to Standing Orders, and he did not see why it should be changed. For his part he had no objection to sit long after Christmas; but it appeared to him strange, after being in session nearly nine weeks, for eight of which they had been doing literally nothing, that in the ninth week the honourable gentleman should wish to have great measures forced through in the manner he evidently desired; and for his (Mr. Shrimski's) part he must raise his voice against this method of proceeding with the business.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said that if honourable members objected he did not wish to press the proposal. He had made it simply for the convenience of honourable members, and had no doubt it would be for their convenience. There was no intention to press the Bills through, but it was intended merely to refer them to the Committee, and to take the debate on the principle of the Bills subsequently.

The hour of five o'clock having arrived, the Hon. the SPEAKER left the chair.

#### COUNCIL RESUMED.

The Hon. the SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

#### NATIVE LAND ADMINISTRATION ACT REPEAL BILL.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER. — Sir, in moving the second reading of this Bill—the Native Land Administration Act, Repeal Bill—it is unnecessary for me to trouble the Council at any great length, because the Bill, after being read a second time, will have to be referred to a Select Committee, and when it comes back it will be open to us to consider it fully on the motion for going into Committee, and also in Committee. In 1856 Parliament passed an Act called the Native Land Administration Act, the object of which was twofold. First, it was to make provision for the future as to the disposal of Native lands; and, secondly, it was to clear up a large number of transactions in land already begun but not completed, and to give persons who had fairly and honestly dealt with the Natives for their land by purchase completed titles. In both of those objects the Act has failed entirely. The Act has been in force nearly eighteen months, and I am informed that not a single transaction has taken place under it, as the Natives will not bring their land under its operation. The consequence is that the whole of the Native lands are completely shut up, because the Natives are quite unwilling to sell under the Act, and the Europeans are therefore unable to buy. As I have said, the Act has also failed in its second object. There were very many cases in which, under the Native Land Act of 1873 and other

Acts, purchases of Native lands were incomplete. They were not illegal, but they were incomplete, because, by the Act of 1873 and other Acts, it was required that a purchaser should get the signatures of all the owners of a piece of land before he could get a Crown grant or any title to any part of it. Of course, where there are a large number of owners in a piece of Native land, it is a matter of very considerable time and difficulty to do that. In some instances there are over a hundred owners in a block, and sometimes even several hundreds, and the consequence is that there are a great many persons who have bought the interests and obtained the signatures of a considerable proportion of the owners who are yet quite unable to get a title under the legislation that is now in force. It was sought to make provision, by clause 24 of the Act which this Bill is to repeal, to enable those persons who had already obtained a number of signatures, but had not been able to complete their title, to go on and have their cases heard before the Native Land Court, so that they might have what they had bought partitioned off from the remainder and get their titles. A person who had bought interests in a block of Maori land was given the right to bring his case before the Court; and the Court, on being satisfied that the transaction was a proper one in all ways, had power to take steps to give the person a title to what he had bought: the Court had first to give a certificate that the transaction had been an unobjectionable one, and then the buyer had the power to ask for partition of the land. For instance, if a man had bought the interests of, say, twenty in a block in which there were fifty owners, the Court was given power to give him a title to the proportion he had bought, and to give a Native Land Court title—with or without restrictions—for the remainder to those Natives who had not sold. There was a special provision in the Act that nothing should be done in regard to dealings with Native lands, except in the ways pointed out, and all the Native Land Acts then in existence were repealed, there being some sixteen or seventeen of them, I believe. At the present time, therefore, this is the only law in relation to Native lands; and, as I have said, it is entirely inoperative. It is inoperative in both its objects: that is, it is inoperative in its object of providing a way for the buying and selling of Native lands, because the Natives will not bring their lands under its operation; and it is inoperative as to closing up incomplete transactions, because a decision of the Supreme Court has shown that what was intended to be done under it cannot be done. The Legislature fully intended, in passing the Act, that the provisions as to closing incomplete transactions should apply to dealings in which the land was held under certificate of title, memorial of ownership, or Crown grant; but in a case brought before the Supreme Court the Court decided that, looking at the terms of the Act and its general scope, the Act could only apply to land held under Crown grant, and the result is that nineteen out of twenty of

the incomplete cases for the Land Court to deal with are precluded from being dealt with according to the intention of the Legislature. Of course honourable members will see it is quite clear that something will have to be done; the matter cannot be left in its present state. The Natives are very dissatisfied with the Act, and have expressed their dissatisfaction through deputations from all parts of the country to the Native Minister and the Premier, and they are desirous that it should be repealed. I think it is quite hopeless to expect that the Act can have any effect if it is continued in operation, for, as we have already seen, the Natives will not bring their lands under it, and therefore no one can buy their lands. As for winding up old and incomplete transactions, every one, I suppose, desires that the intentions of the Legislature should be carried out, and that people who have already incurred very considerable expense in bringing their cases before the Native Land Court and presenting their claims should be enabled to get their cases heard; for, as I have said, through the decision of the Supreme Court, nineteen out of twenty of them are now shut out. I will say nothing of the interpretation of the Act by the Supreme Court: to my mind it is not a correct interpretation; but it is a decision of the Supreme Court, and, that being so, of course the Native Land Court immediately stopped all further proceedings, and the matter is now brought into the position that nothing further can be done unless that part of the Act is repealed by the Legislature. Whether or not this Bill, as it stands, will meet the difficulty is for our consideration. It will first be considered by the Native Affairs Committee of the Council, and then it will be open for the whole Council to fully consider it in Committee. I believe the Bill—in the framing of which I have taken a considerable part—will effect the purpose for which it is intended. There is a special provision of some importance stopping all fresh transactions in Native lands until a new Act has been passed by the Legislature. In the Financial Statement the Colonial Treasurer stated that it was proposed to pass a temporary Act to enable the Land Court to close up incomplete transactions in many cases, which by the decision I have referred to, were excluded from hearing; and that next session—which will be in a very few months—the subject should be dealt with comprehensively, and a Bill brought in providing how Native lands shall be dealt with in the future. It is the intention of the Government to ask the Natives throughout the country to make suggestions during the recess as to that intended legislation. Whether we shall be able to produce a measure which will operate to the satisfaction of both races is a matter that only the future can determine. Looking at our past experience, I must confess that I have not very great hopes of it, but, at all events, there must be fresh legislation, and we must do the best we can to make that legislation satisfactory. The present Bill is intended only to meet the difficulty partially and tem-

*Hon. Sir F. Whitaker*

porarily until the Assembly meets again. I do not think, in the meantime, it is of very great moment whether the whole of the Native Land Administration Act is repealed or not, because it is entirely inoperative as to its chief object; but, as to its second object, that of enabling the Land Court to complete unfinished transactions, I think that we should remedy the deficiency the decision of the Supreme Court has shown to exist, and let the intention of the Legislature be carried out by empowering the Land Court to hear and determine cases where persons have bought Native land but have been unable to get a title. That, I think, would be sufficient in the meantime; but, as far as I can learn, the Native mind is very dissatisfied with the Act, and will be satisfied with nothing short of its repeal. They object very much to its provisions, and refuse to act under it at all; and therefore it does not effect the purpose in either part for which it was intended. In the present session, to frame and consider a Bill dealing with the whole subject of Native lands would be impossible; and it is necessary, before any legislation is passed, that the Natives themselves should be consulted, and that we should see what they want; for it is quite clear that in any Native Land Bill to make it operate satisfactorily we must carry the feelings of the Natives with us. Whether we shall be able to do so is a matter of doubt; but, at all events, we shall have to try our best next session, and, if Parliament is able to do that, it will do a very good work. I do not think I need say more now; but I will ask the Council to read this Bill a second time *pro formâ* as it were, and it will then go as a matter of course to the Native Affairs Committee, who will report on it, and I shall then have an opportunity of addressing the Council in regard to it when moving that it be considered in Committee of the whole Council.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—I think it is right I should make a few remarks on this Bill, a copy of which, by the way, I have only received to-day. Some of its clauses are rather complicated, and I do not quite understand them yet; and, no doubt, it takes some little time to turn over and consider them before one can thoroughly understand their effect. I quite agree with the Hon. the Attorney-General in saying that the Native Land Administration Act of 1886 has caused the Natives considerable trouble. I feel satisfied of that, because I notice that nearly all those Native members of the other House in the late Parliament who voted on that measure were not re-elected at the last election. But I do not think the desire of the Natives is carried out by the provisions of this Bill. Some of the Natives desire that the Native Lands Administration Act should be entirely repealed, while others think that the Act should be allowed to remain, but that some parts of it should be amended. I think at the time that Act was being passed the Native members of the other House, like myself, did not fully understand some of its clauses. I said at the time that the Bill ought not to apply to lands sold by one Native to another

Native, or which were held by them in severalty; also to land which had been mortgaged by consent of the Government before the passing of that Act, and to other lands similarly situated. It has been since shown that where a Native bought land from another Native and desired to raise a mortgage on it he was precluded from doing so by the provisions of the Act of last year. Now, in the interpretation clause of "The Native Land Administration Act, 1886," it explains that "land" means "land owned by Natives," except land purchased under Crown grant or conveyance, or such as is owned individually. It was in reference to that portion of the Act that the Natives desired some amendment should be made. I should like to know from the Hon. the Attorney-General what position those lands would be in after the passing of the Bill now before the Council. As far as I can see, this Bill only applies to lands which were being negotiated for, but the negotiations for which had not been completed before July last, and will not apply to any land which has been mortgaged or leased since that date. The Natives complain that they have suffered through the transactions which have taken place since last July. They thought that the Bill did not come into force until the 1st of January last, and they therefore thought that they had up to that date to carry out any further transactions they wished. I did not see the *Gazette* myself, but I have been told by Natives that it distinctly said that the Bill would not come into force until the 1st January, 1887. I am pleased to hear that this Bill is to be referred to the Native Affairs Committee, where they may make amendments or such suggestions as they may see fit. I would like to give an instance, which will perhaps explain my meaning better. My youngest son bought a piece of ground from Natives. It was fifty acres in extent. He paid for it in cash, and the deed was passed and signed by His Excellency. The land has been lying comparatively idle for a long time, but my son is now beginning to farm it. Before the passing of the Native Land Act of 1886 he had borrowed some money for the purpose of improving it, but he had not received the money when the Act came into force. He arranged with some one to have a mortgage raised upon the property for a short period—three months. At the end of the three months he found that he could not receive certain moneys which he expected, and he arranged for an extension of the mortgage. Just before the meeting of this Parliament the deeds were sent up here, in order to get His Excellency's permission to the mortgage. It was forwarded here, together with letters on the subject, from his solicitors. Mr. Lewis, Under-Secretary to the Native Department, said these lands, although they had been bought from other Natives, could not be mortgaged. I may add that this mortgage had been previously assented to and approved by the Frauds Prevention Commissioner. The Government lawyers said that, although it was land purchased from another Native, it could

not be mortgaged, because clause 3 of the Native Land Administration Act debarred any such transaction. I mention this case because I know the particulars; but there are a great many more cases in similar positions. I trust the Bill will now go before the Native Affairs Committee, in order that Mr. Lewis, Under-Secretary, Mr. Mackay, and the Government lawyers may attend, and perhaps we may make the necessary amendments. I think that we should bear this in mind: that when mortgages become due the Natives will consider that it is through the provisions of that Bill that they will be prevented from raising loans, and that by that means they will lose their properties. The mortgages to which I refer are all complete, with the exception of having the Governor's permission, which is preventing their being carried out. I think this Bill will amend the difficulties to which I have referred.

Bill read a second time.

#### MAORI REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT BILL.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—This Bill is for the purpose of reviving two Acts which were repealed last session, one of which was the Native Land Court Act, to which I have referred, and the Maori Real Estates Management Acts of 1877 and 1887. I have not been able to understand why those two Acts were repealed. There were no provisions made in their place, and the consequence has been that there is a quantity of land in the hands of trustees which cannot now be dealt with, and the whole thing is in a state of confusion and difficulty. The object of this Bill is to revive those two Acts. I have been informed that the operations of those Acts were satisfactory; and all I can now say is that it is very unsatisfactory that lands of this character should be in such a position. I propose the second reading of this Bill. It will be necessary for it to go before the Native Affairs Committee as well as other Native Bills we are passing. In point of fact, the whole three are for the purpose of curing difficulties which already exist.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—Sir, I do not wish to oppose this Bill, but I would like to ask the Hon. the Attorney-General if he remembers a question which I asked him, and which was on the Order Paper of the 4th November, as follows: "Whether the Government will, during the present session, bring forward a measure to enable the properties of a person dying intestate to be disposed of for the purpose of liquidating his debts?" and I think that the Hon. the Attorney-General then assured me that he saw no objection to this, and that he would consider the matter when any Bills were brought before the Council relating to the subject. I hope that the Council, in Committee, will see fit to insert some such provision in this Bill, so that the successors to the property of Natives who have borrowed money and have died intestate, or who have given promissory notes to pay certain sums of money, should pay the debts due by the deceased. And the Native

Hon. Mr. Taiaroa

Land Court has invariably stated that it awarded the land to the rightful successor, but it could not take any steps with reference to the debts of the deceased. I make this explanation because I know that both Maoris and Europeans have suffered from that cause, and I hope this course will be adopted with reference to those debts which a Court of law may be satisfied are *bona fide*. I do not wish such a provision to apply to any debts which may be said to be owing, but to such debts as it may be proved to the satisfaction of the Court are genuine liabilities, or that something may be done for securing the payment of these sums, either by holding back the land until the debts are satisfied or by some other means.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—In reference to what the Hon. Mr. Taiaroa has submitted to the Council, I perfectly remember his giving me a letter pointing out the same thing which he has just now brought before the notice of the Council, and I recollect telling him that, so far as I saw, there was no objection to do what was asked, and I would bear it in mind when the Native Land Bill, which is to be brought forward by the Government next session, comes up for discussion. The object of the Native Land Act which is now repealed was to prevent any dealings in Native land except those specially provided for in the Bill; but there was no provision in which cases of the present description could be dealt with; therefore it is an entirely new feature. I have no objection that this matter should be considered in Committee, and, if it be found convenient and proper to add a clause to it of the nature proposed, I have no objection. It is a new subject and will require legislation; and the most proper time to consider it will be when deciding, next session, on the legislation which is to take place in connection with Native lands generally. But, if there are any urgent cases to be provided for, we may make some temporary provision in the present Bill till then. I wish to assure the honourable gentleman that I have not forgotten what he pointed out to me. I have kept it in mind, and intended to act upon it.

Bill read a second time.

The Council adjourned at fifteen minutes past eight o'clock p.m.

#### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 7th December, 1887.

Representation Bill—Privilege: Words used by Sir J. Vogel—Representation Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at eleven o'clock a.m.

PRAYERS.

#### REPRESENTATION BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, in consequence of a division which took place in Committee early

this morning, I ask the House to adjourn till half-past two o'clock. The Government do not propose to go on with questions to-day, but to postpone them till to-morrow. If the House will consent to adjourn till half-past two, I shall be prepared to make a statement to honourable members.

Motion agreed to.

#### HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past two o'clock.

#### PRIVILEGE: WORDS USED BY SIR J. VOGEL.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, before the Orders of the Day are called on I wish to make a few remarks, and I will place myself in order by moving a resolution. I presume we shall have from the Premier, in redemption of the promise that he made the day before yesterday, a statement as to the course of business during the rest of the session. Before he makes that statement, I wish to call his attention to the fact that I have a number of resolutions on the Supplementary Order Paper. I invited the honourable gentleman to tell me whether he would give me special opportunities of moving those resolutions, as to which I have received no reply from the honourable member since. Now that all the heat in connection with the immediate question is at an end, and that the result remains in a resolution on the records of the House reflecting on my conduct, I think no honourable member will begrudge me an opportunity of placing before the House my view of the position and of the occurrence which led to it. Sir, the occurrence arose out of a question put by the honourable member for Marsden—Mr. Robert Thompson. Now, I wish to say that, had I not been interrupted, I am quite sure that the remarks I should have made would not have been of a nature to cause the honourable gentleman more than a slight temporary irritation. I think the honourable member had a perfect right to information on the subject on which he sought information; but the mistake the honourable member made was in the way in which he put this question. If I have, or if any other honourable member has, an improper use of officers of the Government, the fault is not with me or with other honourable members; it is with the Government. It is the Government which is responsible for allowing any misuse of the services of Government officers; and therefore, if the honourable gentleman had put his question in a way which would have asked the Government whether it was true that they were allowing one or more members to improperly use the services of Government officers, there would have been no objection to the question, and, moreover, it would have afforded me an opportunity of setting the matter right. But the honourable member put the question in a manner which was, to say the least, offensive. Sir, there has not only been that question, but we have seen within the last day or two that other honourable members, or

another honourable member, has felt himself warranted in putting a personal question relating to myself. And in this case the honourable gentleman has stated that he was put up to it by some other honourable member. I rather admire the chivalry of the honourable member for Marsden in taking the whole responsibility of his action upon himself. It is quite clear the honourable gentleman could not have had sufficient knowledge of the matter to have moved in it without having been put up to it by some other honourable member; but, in a spirit of chivalry, he has considered it necessary to shield that honourable member. I myself am in a rather peculiar position. I should like to illustrate by an anecdote the position I consider I have occupied since 1884. There was at one time in a school an old French master who had the misfortune to lose one of his legs, which was replaced by a cork leg. It became the fashion in the school to creep under the master's desk and stick pins into this cork leg, and every new boy was expected, as a matter of etiquette, to do this. On one occasion a rather clumsy new boy set himself to the task; but, unfortunately, he stuck the pin up to the head in the wrong leg; and I need not point out how the master strongly objected to a proceeding of that kind. I had been subjected to a great deal of annoyance, and it seemed to me that the time had arrived when I should put an end to it. Owing to my not being always able to hear what honourable members say, I am at a great disadvantage as compared with other honourable members. On looking over *Hansard*, for instance, I find that the honourable member for Waipawa suggested some time ago that I was a professional politician, and also that I ought to go to America to get up bogus companies. That was the meaning of his remarks, and I dare say the honourable gentleman would be very much offended if I suggested that he should go to some country where he could chase Natives up trees. As regards the question put to the House, I rose to make what seemed to me a mild protest against the question, and I was met with an opposition which, I cannot help thinking, was totally opposed to the spirit of the precepts which rule in Parliaments generally. I heard last night and yesterday language used unchallenged which was certainly of a much more serious nature than any language which I had used when I was stopped. Then, I was told that, when any honourable member attacked me, I had a right to defend myself, but not to attack him in return. Unfortunately, the whole course of our debates, from one end of the session to the other, is, with slight exception, of the character known as the *tu quoque*. It is the custom, in conducting our debates in Parliament, when one member is attacked, for the attacked member, instead of replying to the attack and confining himself to the matter raised in that attack, to resort to the line of argument that enables him to say to his assailant, "You're another." That is a practice which goes unchallenged in this Parliament, and also in others; and yet I was told I could not make

a counter-attack. Well, Sir, then some words fell from me that I subsequently withdrew, and a discussion took place upon a resolution moved by the Premier. But on the second day of the discussion a new departure altogether was taken. The form of the original course was abandoned, and a new resolution was substituted. I do not know whether it is within the knowledge of members of the House, but I may state that after that resolution was moved I sent word to the Speaker and asked him for permission to come before the House, but I was told that I could not be allowed to come to the House unless I confined myself simply to an apology. So that, although a new motion had been made in reference to me, I had no opportunity of addressing the House on the subject. As regards the matter generally, I may say that there is no doubt that the wrong Standing Order was acted upon. In fact, there was no Standing Order which could be acted upon save that referring to the taking-down of words objected to, and, as in this matter they were not taken down at the time they were spoken, it had become impossible to take them down at all. So that the whole proceedings were certainly irregular. Then the resolution was passed. But since that time a newspaper of which a member of the Government is a large proprietor has used language in reference to the matter which, as compared with what I said, is as wine to water. We were told that the newspaper was to apologize at once; but it did not, and in the following week another newspaper belonging to the same proprietor, having exhausted its power of language in the previous week, exhausted its pictorial power in the following week, and, with pre-Raphaelite cruelty, indulged in charges against members of this House which went far beyond anything I had said or hinted. Now, I ask, is it right that an honourable gentleman should sit calmly, unchallenged, on the Government benches, without being called upon to appear before the bar of the House, under these circumstances, while I should have this resolution recorded against me? I appeal therefore to honourable members, as a matter of fairness, to say whether that resolution against me, which was the result of mistaken action, should be allowed to remain upon the records of the House. I think, in view of the fact I have stated, and of the further fact that it is obvious that the proceedings were irregular, that the Government can have no difficulty in withdrawing that resolution and cancelling it. I should like the Government to give me an answer as to whether I am not entitled, as a matter of justice, to have that resolution cancelled, and whether they will not enable that to be done. I will not press the Premier for an answer to-day, but I will ask him to take the matter into consideration, and give me an answer to-morrow or next day.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The question is, That this House do now adjourn.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Am I to understand that the Government refuse to give me any answer as to whether they will consider this matter?

*Sir J. Vogel*

Do they intend to leave me entirely to take my own remedy?

Major ATKINSON.—I understood that the honourable gentleman did not want an answer till to-morrow. But I am quite prepared to give him an answer now. The Government will not give him any facility for moving his resolutions.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Then I shall be obliged—I will not say positively till I consult my friends, but it seems that the honourable gentleman will force me to take a course which I shall be sorry to take—to bring this matter up, as I can, by a question of privilege. I shall not undertake to say when I shall do so. I understand that the honourable gentleman will pay no heed to the appeal which I have made to him. Therefore, as he will not give me facilities, I must throw upon him the responsibility of whatever course I may deem it necessary to take in this matter.

Motion for adjournment of the House negatived.

#### REPRESENTATION BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, it will be in the recollection of the House that last night, upon a certain amendment being put on a clause in the Representation Bill, and being carried, the Government thought it necessary to ask that progress should be reported, in order that we might consider the effect of the amendment. The Government have now come to the conclusion that they will invite the House to go into Committee again upon the Bill, go through the Bill, and then to recommit the Bill, in order to have the amendment made in the clause reconsidered.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Will the Government give an intimation of the course that business is likely to take? The Premier promised yesterday and on the previous day to make such a statement.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; I had intended to make the statement to-day, but it is impossible for me to do so until I see how the honourable gentleman is going to act to-day. Upon that depends very much the course of business. The opposition with which the Government have been met by certain honourable gentlemen, of which we have again had a specimen this afternoon, makes it impossible for the Government to make any statement at present, but I will do so as soon as I can.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Simply with the object of facilitating business, I will ask the honourable gentleman to consent to the postponement of the further consideration of the Representation Bill till half-past seven to-night, so that the honourable gentlemen who are acting with me may consider the course that they will take. Without mentioning anything more specific, I think I may say, with a tolerable amount of certainty, that he is more likely to save time by agreeing to that proposal than otherwise. Certainly it is not fair, seeing that we have only just had this announcement made to us, that we should be asked to go into Committee again upon this Bill. I ask, therefore, that the



matter may be postponed till half-past seven o'clock.

Major ATKINSON.—I am sorry that I cannot accede to the request of the honourable gentleman. After the honourable gentleman first pledging himself to support the Bill, and then yesterday coming down and saying that he should oppose the Bill in all its stages, I am not prepared to postpone it for any purpose whatever. I shall therefore ask the House to go steadily on with the work.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I shall only say that I did not give any pledge whatever, and that I did not say yesterday that I should oppose the Bill in all its stages.

The Bill was then further considered in Committee.

## IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—House of Representatives to consist of seventy members, whereof three to be Maoris.

Mr. SEDDON moved the insertion of the following words: "and after a fresh census of the population of the colony has been taken."

The Committee divided.

## AYES, 28.

Blake	Joyce	Smith
Buxton	Kelly	Steward, W. J.
Cadman	Kerr	Taylor
Feldwick	Lance	Turnbull
Fish	Larnach	Vogel
Fitzherbert	Loughrey	Walker.
Fraser	Perceval	
Grey	Reeves, R. H. J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Reeves, W. P.	Levestam
Jones	Richardson, E.	Seddon.

## NOES 49.

Allen	Hodgkinson	Pearson
Anderson	Izard	Pyke
Atkinson	Jackson	Rhodes
Barron	Lawry	Richardson, G.
Beetham	MacKenzie, T.	Ross
Buchanan	McGregor	Seymour
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Taipua
Cowan	Mills	Taiwhanga
Dodson	Mitchelson	Tanner
Fergus	Moat	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Monk	Ward
Fitchett	Moss	Wilson
Fulton	Newman	Withy.
Goldie	O'Connor	
Graham	Ormond	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Parata	Bruce
Hobbs	Peacock	Macarthur.

## PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Ballance	Hall
Duncan	Russell
Guinness	Valentine
O'Callaghan	Whyte
Samuel.	Stewart, W. D.

Majority against, 21.

Amendment negatived.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word 'seventy' stand part of the clause."

## AYES, 54.

Allen	Jackson	Reeves, R. H. J.
Anderson	Jones	Rhodes
Atkinson	Larnach	Richardson, G.
Beetham	Lawry	Ross
Blake	Macarthur	Seymour
Bruce	MacKenzie, T.	Steward, W. J.
Buchanan	McGregor	Taipua
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Taiwhanga
Cowan	Mills	Tanner
Dodson	Mitchelson	Taylor
Fergus	Moat	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Monk	Turnbull
Fitchett	Moss	Ward
Fulton	Newman	Wilson
Graham	O'Connor	Withy.
Hislop	Ormond	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hobbs	Parata	Barron
Hodgkinson	Pearson	Peacock.
Izard		

## NOES, 20.

Buxton	Grimmond	Richardson, E.
Cadman	Joyce	Smith
Feldwick	Kelly	Vogel
Fish	Lance	Walker.
Fitzherbert	Levestam	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	Loughrey	Perceval
Goldie	Reeves, W. P.	Seddon.

## PAIRS.

*For.*

Hall  
Russell  
Stewart, W. D.  
Valentine  
Whyte.

*Against.*

Ballance  
Duncan  
Samuel  
Guinness  
O'Callaghan.

Majority for, 34.

Word retained.

Major ATKINSON moved, That the word "four" be added.

The Committee divided.

## AYES, 49.

Anderson	Jackson	Pyke
Atkinson	Larnach	Rhodes
Beetham	Lawry	Richardson, G.
Blake	Macarthur	Ross
Bruce	MacKenzie, T.	Seymour
Carroll	McGregor	Steward, W. J.
Cowan	McKenzie, J.	Taipua
Dodson	Mills	Taiwhanga
Feldwick	Mitchelson	Tanner
Fergus	Moat	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Monk	Walker
Fish	Newman	Ward
Fulton	O'Connor	Wilson.
Graham	Ormond	
Hislop	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hodgkinson	Peacock	Buchanan
Izard	Pearson	Hobbs.

## NOES, 30.

Allen	Goldie	Kerr
Barron	Grey	Lance
Buxton	Grimmond	Levestam
Cadman	Jones	Loughrey
Fitchett	Joyce	Moss
Fraser	Kelly	Perceval

Reeves, W. P. Taylor Withy.  
 Richardson, E. Thompson, T. *Tellers.*  
 Samuel Turnbull Reeves, R. H. J.  
 Smith Vogel Seddon.  
 Stewart, W. D.

Majority for, 19.

Word inserted.

Mr. SEDDON moved the addition of the following proviso: "Provided, however, that subsection three of section three of such Act shall be read as if the word 'twenty-five' had been inserted therein in lieu of the word 'eighteen.'"

The Committee divided.

AYES, 18.

Buxton Kelly Walker.  
 Fitzherbert Lance  
 Grimmond McKenzie, J. *Tellers.*  
 Guinness Richardson, E. Kerr  
 Joyce Steward, W. J. Seddon.

NOES, 48.

Allen Jackson Ross  
 Anderson Lawry Seymour  
 Atkinson Levestam Stewart, W. D.  
 Barron Mackenzie, T. S.-Menteath  
 Cowan Mills Taipua  
 Dodson Mitchelson Taiwhanga  
 Feldwick Monk Tanner  
 Fergus Moss Taylor  
 Fisher Newman Thompson, R.  
 Fish O'Conor Thompson, T.  
 Fitchett Peacock Ward  
 Fulton Pearson Whyte  
 Goldie Percival Withy.  
 Graham Reeves, W. P. *Tellers.*  
 Hislop Rhodes Bruce  
 Hobbs Richardson, G. Macarthur.  
 Izard

Majority against, 33.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the following proviso be added to the Bill: "This Act shall have no force or effect until the altered electoral boundaries necessary thereunder shall have been made by the Commissioners, and a description thereof laid upon the table of the House."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 19.

Buxton Kelly Taylor  
 Feldwick Kerr Walker  
 Fish Loughrey Ward.  
 Fitchett Moss  
 Fitzherbert Reeves, W. P. *Tellers.*  
 Grimmond Samuel Guinness  
 Joyce Smith Levestam.

NOES, 47.

Allen Fisher Lawry  
 Anderson Fulton Macarthur  
 Atkinson Goldie Mackenzie, M.  
 Barron Graham Mackenzie, T.  
 Beetham Hislop McGrogan  
 Bruce Hobbs McKenzie, J.  
 Cowan Hodgkinson Mills  
 Dodson Izard Mitchelson  
 Fergus Jackson Moat

Monk Rhodes Valentine  
 Newman Richardson, G. Whyte  
 O'Conor Ross Wilson  
 Ormond Seymour Withy.  
 Peacock S.-Menteath *Tellers.*  
 Pearson Taipua Buchanan  
 Pyke Thompson, T. Thompson, R.

Majority against, 28.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 3.—Commissioners to give effect to Representation Act and this Act.

Mr. LEVESTAM moved, as an amendment, to omit the last words of the clause, for the purpose of inserting words to the effect that the colony be divided into districts, to be defined in a schedule to the Bill.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

AYES, 54.

Allen Izard Richardson, G.  
 Anderson Jackson Ross  
 Atkinson Macarthur Seymour  
 Barron Mackenzie, M. Stewart, W. D.  
 Beetham McGregor S.-Menteath  
 Bruce Mills Taipua  
 Buchanan Mitchelson Taiwhanga  
 Cadman Moat Taylor  
 Cowan Monk Thompson, R.  
 Dodson Newman Thompson, T.  
 Fergus O'Conor Valentine  
 Fisher Ormond Ward  
 Fitchett Parata Whyte  
 Fulton Peacock Wilson  
 Goldie Pearson Withy.  
 Graham Pyke *Tellers.*  
 Hislop Rhodes Lawry  
 Hobbs Richardson, E. Mackenzie, T.  
 Hodgkinson

NOES, 13.

Feldwick Kerr Turnbull.  
 Fish Loughrey  
 Fitzherbert Samuel *Tellers.*  
 Grimmond Seddon Guinness  
 Joyce Smith Levestam.

PAIRS.

For. Against.  
 Carroll Walker  
 Tanner. Lance.

Majority for, 41.

Words retained.

Mr. FITCHETT moved to add the following words to the clause: "Provided always that the Commissioners shall, within six months from the passing of this Act, report the names and boundaries of the electoral districts fixed by them to the Governor, who shall forthwith proclaim the same in the *Gazette*; and such Proclamation shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, have the force of law from the date of such Proclamation."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the proviso be added to the clause."

AYES, 25.

Blake Feldwick Fraser  
 Buxton Fitzherbert Grimmond

Guinness McKenzie, J. Taylor  
 Jones Moss Turnbull  
 Joyce Perceval Walker.  
 Kerr Reeves, R. H. J.  
 Lance Reeves, W. P. *Tellers.*  
 Larnach Richardson, E. Fitchett  
 Loughrey Stewart, W. D. Seddon.  
 NOES, 48.

Allen Izard Richardson, G.  
 Anderson Jackson Ross  
 Atkinson Lawry Seymour  
 Beetham Mackenzie, T. Taipua  
 Bruce McGregor Taiwhanga  
 Buchanan Mills Tanner  
 Cowan Mitchelson Thompson, R.  
 Dodson Moat Thompson, T.  
 Fergus Monk Valentine  
 Fisher Newman Ward  
 Fish O'Connor Whyte  
 Fulton Ormond Wilson  
 Goldie Parata Withy.  
 Graham Peacock *Tellers.*  
 Hislop Pearson Barron  
 Hobbs Rhodes Macarthur.  
 Hodgkinson

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Levestam	Pyke
Steward, W. J.	O'Connor
Vogel.	Carroll.

Majority against, 28.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. SEDDON moved the addition of a proviso making the allowance in the quota in favour of mining districts 25 per cent. instead of 18 per cent.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 9.

Grimmond	Reeves, R. H. J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Samuel	Duncan
Kerr	Seddon.	Turnbull.
O'Callaghan		

NOES, 44.

Allen	Lance	Seymour
Anderson	Lawry	Taiwhanga
Atkinson	Macarthur	Tanner
Bruce	Mackenzie, T.	Taylor
Buchanan	McGregor	Thompson, R.
Dodson	Mitchelson	Thompson, T.
Fergus	Monk	Valentine
Fisher	Moss	Walker
Fulton	Newman	Ward
Goldie	Pearson	Whyte
Graham	Reeves, W. P.	Wilson
Hislop	Rhodes	Withy.
Hobbs	Richardson, G.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Jackson	Ross	Barron
Kelly	Russell	Mills.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Smith.	Larnach.

Majority against, 35.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. SEDDON moved the addition of a proviso exempting the Provincial Districts of Nelson, Westland, Taranaki, and Marlborough

from the operation of the Bill, the electorates in those districts to remain as if the Bill were not passed.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 7.

Guinness	Samuel	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	Turnbull.	Grimmond
Kerr		Seddon.

NOES, 46.

Allen	Lance	Russell
Anderson	Lawry	Seymour
Atkinson	Macarthur	Taiwhanga
Barron	Mackenzie, T.	Tanner
Bruce	McGregor	Taylor
Dodson	Mills	Thompson, R.
Duncan	Mitchelson	Thompson, T.
Fergus	Monk	Valentine
Fisher	Moss	Walker
Fulton	Newman	Ward
Graham	O'Callaghan	Whyte
Hislop	Pearson	Withy.
Hobbs	Reeves, W. P.	
Izard	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Jackson	Richardson, G.	Goldie
Kelly	Ross	Wilson.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Marchant.	Stewart, W. D.

Majority against, 39.

Amendment negatived.

The Committee divided on the question, "That clause 3 stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 44.

Allen	Izard	Ross
Anderson	Kelly	Russell
Atkinson	Lawry	Seymour
Barron	Macarthur	S. Menteth
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Taiwhanga
Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	Tanner
Dodson	McGregor	Thompson, R.
Fergus	Mills	Thompson, T.
Fisher	Mitchelson	Valentine
Fitchett	Monk	Ward
Fulton	Moss	Whyte
Goldie	Newman	Withy.
Graham	Pearson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Reeves, W. P.	Jackson
Hobbs	Richardson, G.	Rhodes.

NOES, 18.

Duncan	Kerr	Walker.
Feldwick	Lance	
Grimmond	Marchant	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Samuel	O'Callaghan
Joyce	Taylor	Seddon.

Majority for, 31.

Clause agreed to.

Dr. FITCHETT moved a new clause providing for the amalgamation of the city electorates.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 12.

Buxton	Joyce	Seddon.
Feldwick	Kerr	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grey	Moss	Fitchett
Grimmond	Reeves, R. H. J.	Stewart, W. D.
Guinness	Taylor	

## NOES, 44.

Allen	Izard	Russell
Anderson	Jackson	Seymour
Atkinson	Kelly	Taiwhanga
Barron	Lance	Tanner
Bruce	Larnach	Taylor
Buchanan	Lawry	Thompson, R.
Dodson	Macarthur	Thompson, T.
Duncan	Marchant	Valentine
Fergus	McGregor	Walker
Fisher	Mitchelson	Ward
Fulton	Monk	Wilson
Goldie	O'Callaghan	Withy.
Graham	Pearson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Rhodes	Mackenzie, T.
Hobbs	Ross	Mills.

Majority against, 32.

Clause rejected.

Bill reported.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, I beg to move, That you do leave the chair, in order that the House may go into Committee on clause 2 of the Bill, with the view of striking out the words of the clause in the second line after the word "determination"—namely, "not earlier than the eighth day of October, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine."

Mr. SEDDON.—I wish to rise to a point of order. Is it proper to move that the Bill be recommitted to consider the excision of certain words—for instance, the words just mentioned by the Premier—or to consider the clause as a whole?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have always held that a recommitment should be for the consideration of the whole of the clause, and not for merely a part of a clause.

Mr. WALKER.—Is it not new business to take this recommitment to-night? I should say distinctly it is new business to move that you do leave the chair to recommit a Bill at the hour of eight minutes to one o'clock a.m.

Mr. SEDDON.—Before you give your ruling on that point, Sir, I am aware, after looking up the matter, that the ruling, under ordinary circumstances, would be given against the contention of the honourable member for Ashburton; but when it is the intention of the Premier to reverse the conclusion arrived at yesterday it somewhat alters the circumstances. If the question had arisen while members were discussing the Bill there would not have been the same contention; but the conclusion was arrived at yesterday, and a large number of members were then present who may not know that it was the intention of the Government to recommit the Bill for the purpose of considering these specific words.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I would bring under your notice, Sir, that the Premier distinctly expressed his intention yesterday to move for the recommitment of the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER.—This is a motion on the report of the Bill, and merely extends the time for the consideration of the business that has been under consideration, and does not involve calling on an order after half-past twelve.

With regard to the question of the third reading, I would hold that that is new business, unless it were a Bill of an urgent nature, which might be passed through more than one of its stages at a sitting; but the recommitment of the Bill for the reconsideration of this clause, I hold, is not new business.

Mr. WALKER.—Will the Government listen to an appeal—

Major ATKINSON.—To reason.

Mr. WALKER.—In the early part of the sitting to-day this Bill was committed, and the Railway Boards Bill was also committed, and it was understood we were to go through both. I do not think it was understood that we were going to recommit the Representation Bill to-night, and I think many honourable members have gone away on the understanding that that would not take place. Therefore I appeal to the Premier to allow this matter to stand over till to-morrow. Let him sit all hours of the night to do the business of the House; but, in all fairness, let the Representation Bill stand over till to-morrow.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—This proposal of the Premier's is a vital question underlying the whole consideration of this Bill; and I think it is extremely desirable, if not strictly in accordance with the Standing Orders, that members of this House should have a full opportunity of considering the important question contained in the proposal of the honourable member. It is very well known that I have supported the reduction of members; and I have even voted in favour of a larger reduction than the Government have carries in this Bill. I was opposed to any increase over seventy, and voted against any such increase. The object of this amendment is this: A feeling was entertained that, if this amendment were not carried, the Bill, being passed this session for some reason which has not been explained, might be held *in terrorem* over this House during the next three years; and, with a view of obviating that feeling and, so to speak, of getting rid of it, it was proposed that this Bill should practically remain inoperative until Parliament expires by effluxion of time. I felt that might be open to some misconstruction and injustice, and that if this Parliament were dissolved a week or a day before the full three years for which we have been elected a wrong might be done, because this Bill would become nugatory. With a view of obviating these results, this amendment was proposed by me, that, at all events, this House should have something like a feeling of independence in regard to the forcing of a dissolution during the next two sessions. I thought that no elections would take place under the existing law, seeing that the House would have passed a Bill reducing the number of members to seventy-four, and that no Government would venture to advise a dissolution before, at all events, the 8th October, 1899; otherwise there would be a very serious wrong done, because the new elections would have to take place under the existing law. I am aware that in this House there are some members who feel that there should be no dis-

solution of this Parliament, but that Parliament should be allowed to run its full course, and that we should fight out our troubles in the best way we can, and that the Governor should not grant a dissolution unless some unforeseen circumstances arose. But what was felt was this: that this amendment, so important in its consequences, and so perfectly clear and intelligible, should be inserted in the Bill with a view of preventing what may be termed this arbitrary right of advising His Excellency to grant a dissolution. Yesterday, by a fair majority, this amendment was carried; and I understand that the opinions of honourable members of this House have in no way altered on this important question, and that there is still a majority in the House in favour of the amendment.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Put it to the vote.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—We know that the member for the Wairarapa only votes in one direction. The honourable gentleman knows what it means to say, "Put it to the vote;" but I appeal to those members who voted with me after full consideration and discussion of the proposal, who gave their votes in favour of the amendment—I appeal to those honourable members to vote against the recommitment of the Bill. It would be wrong to give a reversal of the decision which we came to yesterday, and it would be a weakness on the part of those members to recede from the position which they then took up. I know that, as a matter of fact, several honourable gentlemen came to me and urged me to propose this amendment, declaring that they would support me; and yet, because the Premier took up a certain position in regard to the matter, and told them that he would abandon the Bill, those persons then said that, owing to the opinions which the Premier had expressed, they would not vote with me. To those honourable gentlemen I have nothing to say; but to the other honourable members who did vote with me I say that I fail to see that any intimation from the Premier as to the consequences of their vote relieves them from the duty which they are in honour bound to perform. I say that, as a matter of honour and justice, they are bound to stand up for the amendment on the present occasion, let the consequences be what they may. I shall therefore submit that it would not be fair on the part of those honourable gentlemen to vote for this House reversing the decision it gave last night. I shall not detain the House, beyond saying this: that I feel that the House deliberately came to the conclusion that it was not wise that such a power as is contained in the clause should be given to the Government; and I submit that members who urged me to move that amendment, and who, after full debate, voted with me, should not on the present occasion desert me. I say that such conduct would be an injustice to me and a wrong to the country.

Major ATKINSON.—Hear, hear.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I do not know what the honourable gentleman means by "Hear, hear."

Major ATKINSON.—An injustice to the honourable gentleman!

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Yes. I say that those honourable members who came forward and urged me to propose the amendment are, in loyalty, honourably bound to support me on the present occasion. The honourable member knows that.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Who were they?

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I am not called upon to name any honourable members in this House, and I am not going to institute such distinctions; but I say that those honourable members who supported me when I proposed that amendment should support me on the present occasion. The matter was fully discussed, and the vote was deliberately given; and I do not think it is the duty of this House to reverse its decision in consequence of anything that may have been said by the Premier to honourable members—of any threat that he will take a certain course—although I do not know what it is.

An Hon. MEMBER.—He says he will resign.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I do not know anything about that. I have looked on this as not being a party question in any sense of the term, or as "hostile" in the ordinary sense of the term. There was no intention on my part of that kind. A number of honourable members who supported it are generally recognised as Government supporters, and I cannot conceive why those honourable gentlemen should be called upon to put their consciences into their pockets and vote contrary to what they think. A more improper power to put into the hands of the Government I cannot conceive. Honourable members deliberately decided the matter, and I do not see why they should be called upon to reverse their votes without any explanation; because no explanation has been given to justify such a course. As I say, the amendment was not moved in any hostile spirit to the Government. The Premier did not seem in very good health last evening, and took the vote in a wrong light; I will not say he lost his temper, but I must confess that he took it in a light which could not have been expected; and I say that it is improper and unfair to this House and the country that those honourable gentlemen who supported me last night should not support me now.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—The honourable gentleman who has spoken has attempted to read a lecture to certain honourable members who happened to vote in the direction which he indicated last evening owing to a misapprehension, and who may not be inclined to follow him this evening.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—They do not require you to defend them.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I believe the honourable gentleman is quite right in that; but I have got up to say this: that a lecture upon consistency comes with very bad grace from that honourable gentleman, especially after the course he has adopted with regard to this Bill. Last night when the Bill was before the House

he told us that he voted against the Bill last session, but that now he is in favour of a reduction of members, because his constituents have demanded it. In other words, he has just done what he accuses those honourable gentlemen of intending to do—he has put his opinions in his pockets because his constituents have ordered him to do so, although he now deprecates the same course being taken by other honourable members on the demand of the Premier. With regard to my vote upon this Bill, I can only say that it would be well for the honourable gentleman if he could give as consistent a vote as I have done.

Mr. STUART-MENTEATH.—I do not intend to detain the House at any length in connection with this subject, but I wish to explain my line of action in regard to the matter. Now, I feel that the question which has occupied our attention during the last few days is one of great importance, perhaps one of the greatest importance that could come before us, and I feel a very great sense of responsibility to my constituents in this matter. I feel that in passing such a measure as this without an amendment of the character of that which I proposed but which was rejected, or without an amendment such as that carried by the honourable member for Dunedin West, a great and unconstitutional power was being placed in the hands of the Government. I felt that when the Bill first came up for its second reading, and when it went into Committee, we were asked to place a dangerous power—none can be more dangerous—in the hands of the Government; and, though I approve of the main features of the policy of the Government, as announced to us during the present session, there are yet many matters which are to be left over for consideration during next session; and I feel very great doubt, until I am fully aware of the direction in which the honourable members on those benches are going, about the expediency of intrusting them with this enormous power for good or evil over the destinies of this House for the next three years which they will have if this amendment be not made. That is my feeling; and I spoke very much to the same effect when addressing the House on the second reading of the Bill; and I clearly indicated that when it went into Committee I should take some step of hostility in reference to that particular part of the Bill to which I am alluding. When the Bill was in Committee the honourable member in charge of it—the Premier—announced to several of his supporters that they were perfectly free to vote on this Bill as they liked. Up to the time the honourable member for Dunedin West moved his amendment, in fact, nobody knew that this question was to be treated as a Ministerial question.

Hon. MEMBERS.—“Yes.” “No.”

Mr. STUART-MENTEATH.—I will not say that nobody knew it; but I will say that I did not know it. Then, when the amendment was moved, I think the Premier said that he would, if it were carried, drop the Bill. Well, even then, accustomed as we are to see Bills

dropped in this House without it involving consequences to the Government so serious as this would appear to involve, I had no reason to suppose that the carrying of this, in my opinion, beneficial amendment could possibly involve the existence of the Government. The Bill was introduced in a very short speech, and we had no indication given to us of any such vital principle being contained in it as appears to lurk in it. When the amendment was moved we were told that the Bill was to be dropped if the amendment were carried; but that did not seem to me to involve much. I know that in previous sessions, during which the honourable gentleman who is now at the head of the Government led the House, more Bills were dropped than were carried through. In 1883 the constant accusation was that he brought down Bills, pushed them through some of their stages, and then threw them into the waste-paper basket. Those previous tactics of the honourable gentleman led one to suppose that if the honourable gentleman were met by an adverse vote with regard to a clause of the Bill at such a critical period as this an opportunity would be taken to throw the Bill into the waste-paper basket. Now let us look at the Bill and at this particular clause. The Bill is part of a scheme of retrenchment—a part which, I must confess, I do not regard as at all likely to effect retrenchment for some time to come. The Bill does not come into force for three years. It cannot come into force for three years if Parliament runs its normal course; and if Parliament does not run its normal course the Bill will be open to grave abuse. I say, then, that up to the time the division was taken on this amendment those who were supporting the Government were led into placing themselves in what has since appeared to be a false position. Immediately after the amendment was carried the adjournment of the House was moved, and we were told that the Government were going to consider their position, and that if leave to recommit the Bill was refused they would resign. Then I had to consider what course I would take. I felt that I was at liberty to accuse the Government of great mismanagement in the conduct of public business. And I felt also that I was called upon, if I submitted to the passing of the measure in its present form, to do that which I consider very dangerous to the future well-being not only of my constituents, but of the colony. On the other hand, we have assembled here, at a very critical period in the history of the colony, to push through certain reforms in a very limited period of time; and I have every reason to believe that those honourable gentlemen who occupy the Government benches are the best fitted to perform the duty which the country requires to be performed at the present time. I had to weigh in the balance the importance of these questions—the importance of the passing of the Representation Bill as against the importance of carrying out measures for which the country is crying. So far as they were disclosed by the Financial Statement, I believe those

Mr. Buchanan

measures have met with the approval of the country; and therefore I feel that I have to choose between two evils, and I think that I shall best consult the interests of the country if I choose what I deem to be, after careful consideration, the lesser of the two. I propose, therefore, to take the course of walking out of the House and not voting at all upon this question. Now, I should like to say this: I consider that, wittingly or unwittingly, the Government, in forcing this measure through in its present shape, have taken a step which must strain the allegiance of the thinking men of their party. I am prepared, for the reasons I have given and in the critical condition of the country which I have already spoken of, to support them; but, although I am prepared to do that at the present time, I must say that many more—one or two more such strains upon my allegiance will be more than I can stand. I think that, if a Government will force through the House this measure, an unconstitutional measure, a measure which is calculated to give them power which is unconstitutional, and which they have not yet shown their fitness to use, such a Government has, I say, gone far towards forfeiting the confidence of its followers by so doing. I say it is most unseemly to see a Government, during a critical time in the history of the country, when so little time is left before the close of the session, and we have so many more measures for which the country is calling, straining every nerve to pass a measure which does—what?—which practically assures them their seats upon those benches for three years. There can be no denying it, that the effect of this measure will go largely in that direction; and I repeat that it is a most unseemly thing to see a Government forcing on that which, whether rightly or wrongly, may be interpreted to be a measure passed to build up their position, at a time when the country is so much in need of more important measures. Now, I know that those who adopt an independent tone in this House are subjected to all sorts of criticism and all kinds of abuse. Motives are attributed to them, and the Ministerial Press starts out upon a mission to villify them. There are those in this House who will endeavour to discharge their duty, those who belong to no party in this House, who are independent of party, and who are prepared to do what is right in the interests of the colony. I say there are men in this House who will not be deterred by the abuse of the Ministerial organs, and who will not be drawn from the path of duty by the flattery of the Opposition, but will proceed to do only what they conceive to be in the interests of their constituents and of the country; and who, when they see party “moves” which they think to be unworthy of the party they are supporting, will openly and without fear or favour express their views, no matter what effect their so doing may have upon their position in the House.

Dr. FITCHETT.—The honourable member who has just sat down has pointed out with

such force and clearness both the unconstitutional nature and the pernicious influence of the power which the Government propose to confer upon themselves by this Bill that I marvel that he can find these lighter in the balance than the maintenance of a party in power. Surely it is not sufficient that a Minister shall stand up and say, “If you do not support me I will resign.” Surely a duty devolves upon even a Government supporter, when such a threat is held before him, to ask whether it is reasonable, or whether any great principle is involved. Is the Premier, in a mere fit of petulance—in a mere fit of temper—to command the adherence of every nominal supporter to any unconstitutional measure he may propose, by a threat such as that? I think the honourable member for Te Aro scarcely weighed this, and is scarcely wise now when he announces his intention of retracing the step he took after careful consideration yesterday—a step the reasons for which he has put so clearly again to-night. I really cannot understand it. It is, of course, a matter for himself; but I hope I shall never be long enough in Parliament to sacrifice my judgment on the altar of party politics in a way like that. But, leaving that branch of the subject, and coming to the motion now before the House, I would urge the Premier to lay to heart what the honourable gentleman who has last spoken has said as to the strain he puts upon the allegiance of his followers by the extraordinarily arrogant tone he assumes in forcing this recommitment of the Bill.

Mr. FISHER.—We shall not lay that to heart.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I am speaking to the Premier, and not to the Minister of Education now. Speaking to the motion, I ask, is it wise of the Premier, for his own sake, to put so grievous a strain upon the allegiance of his followers as he is doing in pressing for the recommitment of this Bill to-night? Last night the thing was discussed exhaustively, and a division was taken upon it in a full House; and now, at this hour of the morning and in a very thin House, an attempt is made to force the measure on again so that the deliberate judgment of the House and of many of his own supporters may be reversed. You already, I believe, Sir, have ruled that it is competent for the honourable member to move this now. I am sorry that I was not in the House when the question was raised, because I should have submitted for your consideration certain authorities in May to show, at all events, that this is not the usual practice in the English House of Commons. I ask, is it reasonable, seeing we have no assurance that the honourable members who voted last night are here now—is it reasonable that, with a thin House, at so absurdly late an hour, and without any prior notice, we should be called upon to reverse a previous decision? I will not take upon myself the responsibility of moving an amendment, but I trust that some honourable member who will follow me will do so. One word before I sit down. I merely wish to say this, because

what I say now will be reported: that I have always supported the reduction of the number of members, and I have supported a greater reduction than this which Ministers propose; but I have also supported the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West, for the reason so ably pointed out by the honourable member for Te Aro—that it does put in the hands of the Government an unconstitutional power, which will enable them to threaten the Opposition and their own supporters, and secure their retention of office.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—The honourable member for Te Aro appears to me to resemble a sign-post on a roadside: he points with perfect accuracy the way which one should follow, but does not travel in that direction himself. The honourable gentleman has made a very excellent speech, and has said what we have all felt; but, unfortunately, he has accepted the snub, he has taken the slap in the face, he has oringed under the whip: after which he tells us that, if these insults and indignities are put upon him often enough, the time may come when he will resent them. He says he has been knocked down this time, and if he is struck once or twice more he will get up at some future day. I was very sorry to hear a gentleman of the character and attainments of the honourable member for Te Aro adopt such an unworthy position. This is a specimen of the freedom of discussion we are so often promised. This is a specimen of our liberty and independence of judgment. How often have we been told that when the principle of a Bill has been affirmed the fullest liberty is allowed in Committee! The principle of this Bill was carried. It was not opposed by many of us who wished to affirm the principle that there should be a reasonable reduction in the number of members; but when we get into Committee an exceedingly sensible, proper, and constitutional amendment is proposed, and then suddenly the Premier turns round and tramples on the House in this way. I ask, is this a House of Representatives or a house of correction? Is it a Parliament or is it a penitentiary? Is this a ruling Legislature or a village school? Because it seems to me that the extraordinary rules and discipline that are maintained in this House are such as to lower it to the level of an establishment such as I have mentioned. I think it is most painful to see grown men frightened and reduced to the position of crouching children in the way the honourable members for Te Aro, Mount Ida, and Thorndon have been terrified and frightened. Sir, how will the Premier tyrannize over these men, how will he despise them, in the future! Is there any indignity that he will hesitate to heap upon them in the future, now that they have taken their punishment and sit under his yoke? I think a worse lot will be theirs in the future. I am sorry for the honourable member for Mount Ida,—a gentleman who occupied a very prominent position in the country a few months ago,—that he should descend to the servile position he now occupies. I am sorry

*Dr. Fitchett*

for the treatment he will get. We know the Premier. We know how the honourable gentleman treats men when he thoroughly gets their measure; and he has thoroughly got the measure of those honourable gentlemen over there now. Well, I pity the honourable gentlemen, and I congratulate the Premier. He has put the screw on very successfully, and I suppose that he laughs now; and he may well laugh. The honourable member for Port Chalmers amused the House, I am told, a little while ago by quoting a nursery rhyme at my expense with regard to my relations with Sir Julius Vogel. Sir, the honourable gentleman had better talk about something he knows a little of. If he knew what my relations with Sir Julius Vogel have been for the last four or five years he would have done anything rather than quote the peculiar rhyme he inflicted on the House. But, as nursery rhymes are in vogue to-night, I should like to close my brief remarks with one. I can conceive the Premier singing of the honourable member for Mount Ida, who knocked the honourable gentleman down yesterday, and picked him up to-day so obediently, somewhat like this:—

Who picked me up when'er I fell,  
And kissed the place and made it well?  
My Scobie.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Mr. Speaker, I have listened to-night to the speech of the honourable gentleman who has just sat down with some degree of amusement. It is perhaps an unfortunate thing that individuals can sometimes be most amused where there is the greatest lack of good taste, as was manifest in the few remarks which that honourable gentleman made to-night. Perhaps I ought to complain of the presence of an unseemly levity rather than of the lack of taste. However, he is quite young to this House, is now in a phase of political life we have all passed through, and after he has a little more experience he will learn that gravity is occasionally not unbecoming in a politician. So much for the honourable gentleman's tone. I have only to say one word with regard to the remarks that he made about certain of us. I think he likened myself and some others to crouching children who were frightened at something or other.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The Premier.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Quite so. Now, we are frightened; and, as some honourable members do not know what we are afraid of, I propose to tell them. There should not be any mystery about it after the last three years, but within the compass of a very few minutes I will tell them all about it. I was one of those who voted with the honourable member for Dunedin West last night, because I thought then, as I think now, that, taken *per se*, the amendment was a very proper one, and would do no harm. On precisely the same grounds I should vote for it again. But it so happened that the Government, most injudiciously and unnecessarily in my opinion, made the amendment a Government question. Their determination was not,



at the time, known to us, or, as I find, even to their own whips. But, having made it a Government question, and after discovering they had done so, and that they were determined, rightly or wrongly, resolutely to stand by it, we had to take a choice—namely, whether we should leave the Government in the possession of a weapon of considerable power over the House in the matter of a dissolution, or trust the control of public affairs in the hands of some honourable gentlemen who have so disastrously signalised themselves in the past. Regarding that power, I do not go so far as the honourable member for Te Aro, or think it contains the evil that he does; but the choice was whether we would leave the Government in possession of that power for good or for evil, or whether, looking to the attitude they had assumed, we were to break up a Government which is now carrying out a very difficult and, I hope, a very good policy for this country, and put in their place—whom, Sir? why, a set of men, a part of a set of politicians whose whole career, for the past three years, has been an infraction of every sound principle of politics, who have honeycombed the country with political corruption and demoralisation—that is what we are afraid of. I make no imputations against any honourable member; but, when honourable gentlemen get up and say that I am afraid of any man or set of men, they are saying things they can scarcely believe to be true. I am afraid of persons getting into power from that side of the House who would carry out a policy that would be disastrous to the country. Beyond that, I think the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West was a proper one. But, after all, it is a comparatively small matter. If I chose to vote for the amendment I should do so; but I do not choose to do so, and shall go out of the House, so as not to embarrass a Government that, having taken this stand, are otherwise doing the work which the country has demanded, and which is about to be, I hope, successfully and carefully performed.

Mr. MOSS.—I was not in the House when this vote took place last night. I waited until two o'clock in the morning, and then, finding myself voting with a small minority against the Government on a question connected with this Bill, I thought I might as well go into the library and finish some important correspondence. Therefore I was not here when the vote took place, and I had not the slightest idea of such a vote being contemplated. As soon as I found that the House had suddenly adjourned I mentioned to honourable members that had I been in the House I should certainly have voted for the Government on this occasion. When I repeated this to-day the honourable member for Dunedin South was kind enough to favour me with a little of that mighty-mouthed oratory which pours from him in such a full stream when he is in the humour to favour us with it. If he were now here I should ask him not to think me likely to be influenced by anything of that kind. I should have voted against the amendment last night for the simple reason

that I did not see the danger which struck some other honourable gentlemen. Supposing the threat of dissolution to be held over us, what would happen? We should practically reduce the House to seventy members, and bring the Act into immediate operation. In these days it must also be evident that Ministers' own seats are not so safe that they can look at a dissolution with more unconcern than other members. If the House is to be reduced to seventy members—and I am bound to say that, so far as I am concerned, I am only representing the opinion of my constituents and my own when I say I have a very strong desire to have the House reduced to seventy members—the sooner it is so reduced the better. Now, Sir, if a dissolution took place at our next meeting, seventy members would be returned to the following Parliament, and we should avoid the whole or the greater part of the reductions being taken from the towns. The Bill has many defects, to my mind; but certainly the reduction of members is not one. I should certainly have liked to see it accompanied with measures that would save this Parliament from the labour of local affairs, and it would also have saved it from the necessity of having so large a number as seventy. When the colony was younger and Parliament had no local affairs to look after the colony was represented by a much smaller number, who found no difficulty in managing the affairs of the day. Such a measure of local government ought to have accompanied this Bill. Then, as to the time of the Bill coming into operation, I moved an amendment that the Bill take effect on the 31st December of next year. I thought, if it were to take effect, it ought to take effect then. These were my objections; but to the objection that the Government would hold it *in terrorem* over us I did not attach much importance. I do not believe that honourable members would be influenced by such a threat, and if they did it would be only bringing the Act into immediate operation. As I should have voted last night against this amendment, I shall most assuredly vote for the recommittal of the Bill to-night. I do not regard it as a party question, and, in the peculiar state of parties in this House, I should not feel much embarrassed if it were, looking to the fact that I have been alone to a great extent throughout the misgovernment of the last eight or nine years, in which the Premier has had his share quite as much as the late Government. For all that time I have been found protesting year by year against the policy which I believed was bound to end in the trouble and disaster we are placed in now. That I had not many voting with me or protesting with me is surely not my fault; but that I have had no part in this political misgovernment, and that I have been carrying on one continual protest against it, I am proud to admit. I need not trouble the House with any further remarks, except that, as I should have voted most certainly—and I mentioned that as soon as I heard what occurred—I shall vote in the same direction as I should have done last night had I been here. We

hear of the leader of the Opposition—and I observe that the Premier takes some delight in speaking of the honourable member for Christchurch North as the leader of the Opposition. That may or may not be. I do not know it. I know I have not attended any caucus in which such an arrangement has been made; but I know the party to which I do belong consists of very earnest members, determined to encourage local industries by tariff protection. That party is almost entirely to be found on the Opposition side of the House. The Premier has not many Protectionists behind him. Therein is the great difference between the two sides of the House. It is a difference that ought not to be imported into this question, and I certainly shall not introduce it now. I have not regarded this as a party question, and as I should have voted last night so I shall vote this evening if the Premier pushes on the Bill to the late hour he feels inclined to do; but I hope that on better consideration he will not press it on to-night. I am sure a better feeling will be created if a little consideration be shown and this Bill be recommitted to-morrow.

Mr. LEVESTAM. — I must say that the honourable member for Dunedin West has every reason to complain of the conduct of some of those honourable gentlemen who voted for his amendment last night. They are now leaving him in the lurch. The honourable member for Wairarapa has lectured the honourable member for Dunedin West. He says these remarks come with a very bad grace from him, seeing he has changed his opinions at the instance of his constituents. The honourable gentleman surely overlooks the fact that, in a matter of this kind, there is no principle involved, but it is simply a matter of detail; and I think, there, representatives may properly give way to their constituents. If it were a matter of principle, then, I say, no representative has a right to pocket his principles either for the sake of pleasing his constituents on the one hand, or the Government on the other. And that is what is being done by those honourable gentlemen who are willing to vote differently from the way in which they voted last night. These honourable gentlemen have told us that they supported the amendment last night because they were afraid a great wrong might be done by the Ministry in power, whether this or any other; but, in order to keep them in power, they are willing to risk a great wrong upon the people of New Zealand—a wrong that may be done, because they may hold it as a threat over this House, and prevent this House from passing legislation that is thought highly necessary. The chief reason why I am speaking now—and I am and always shall be opposed to the recommitment of the Bill—is that upon the understanding that this was not to come on I paired with the honourable member for the Dunstan. Now, the honourable member for the Dunstan voted last night in the same direction as I voted myself. It is therefore unfair to me, and unfair to the honourable member for the Dunstan, to proceed with the recommitment of the Bill to-night. A "pair" has

been offered to me to relieve me from my responsibility—namely, the honourable member for Waitotara; but the answer made is that there is a petition hanging over his head and he cannot be accepted as a "pair;" but that gentleman has been allowed to vote and speak in this House all through the session, and no objection has been made to that: and the same is the case with the honourable member for the Eastern Maori District. However, I shall not break my pair; but I think the Government whips—who are, of course, acting at the instigation of the Government—are treating me very badly in withholding from me my power to vote. The honourable member for Mount Ida told us that all those who thought he was afraid of any man or any number of men were greatly mistaken; and yet the very next words he used were that he was afraid of the Opposition party. That shows that the honourable member for Mount Ida is afraid of men. I have no desire to detain the House, and simply wished to put myself right in regard to my not being able to vote, under a misapprehension that this motion would not come on to-night. It is very unfair of the Government to recommit the Bill now, and it is equally unfair for those honourable gentlemen who voted in one direction yesterday to stultify themselves to-night by voting in an opposite direction. One reason they give is that it would be a great pity to turn a Government out which is doing good work and passing excellent legislation. Now, I should like to know what this excellent legislation represents. They have reduced the Governor's salary: that is a great thing! They have reduced their own salaries so low that it will be difficult to get any one to take their places: that is another great thing! They have reduced the honorarium paid to members so much that it will be very difficult for the people to choose representatives; and by this Bill they are making it still more difficult to get proper representation in this House. They have brought down their estimates without any details, and ask us to vote them as a whole and then go home and leave them to do as they like. Then, they have brought forward a Land Bill in which they seek to deprive the people of that great boon, the Land Boards. I should like to know what real good they have done. They also brought forward a Financial Statement; but such strictures have been passed upon it, and it has been so clearly shown that they have made no savings, that they are afraid to allow that Statement to be discussed, and deliberately bring all sorts of business before it on the Order Paper.

Major ATKINSON. — I rise to a point of order. I would ask, Sir, what has the honourable member is saying to do with the recommitment of this Bill?

Mr. SPEAKER. — It has to do with it in this way: that some honourable members have alleged that the reason for altering their votes was to prevent a Government in which they had general confidence from being turned out of office on a particular point of their policy. That is the reason why I did not interrupt the

Mr. Moss

honourable member in his criticism of the conduct of those members in regard to the position they have taken up.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Does the Premier think that he has all the wisdom in the world? If he thinks so, I can tell him that I do not, that there are many persons in the colony who are of the same opinion as myself, and that his demeanour in this House always makes him appear most offensive. Only this afternoon, when I asked him a question, he sat silent, and would not answer; and then on one or two occasions he accused me of having obstructed the business. I appeal to you, Sir, whether I have on any single occasion obstructed the business this session. During the whole of the afternoon I sat in my place and said nothing except to move one amendment, which I pressed to a division; and I have yet to learn that an honourable member who proposes an amendment, or speaks on a measure before the House, is guilty of obstruction. What are we sent here for? Is it not to watch over the interests of our constituents? and, if anything is proposed which we think may hurt them, should we not be failing in our duty if we were to remain silent? The honourable gentleman told us, when moving the second reading of this Bill, that he thought it was for the good of the country, and that in Committee we should be at perfect liberty to discuss it; and then, because one honourable member offends him, he tells us that he will take away all power from the House and will accept of no amendment. If the few remarks which were made had not offended the honourable gentleman he would have allowed us to speak for the good of those who sent us here. Is that the duty of a Premier or a Government? The honourable gentleman is very much mistaken if he thinks that he can muzzle me and a great many more members of this House. I claim the right of speech, and I am proud to say the Standing Orders and laws of this country give us that privilege; and I shall use it. But to come back again to the question of which we were speaking: so far has the delay in allowing the financial proposals to be discussed gone, that one honourable member has put a question on the Order Paper asking the Premier whether he will give us an opportunity of discussing those proposals. The reason for the delay is, that the honourable gentleman's proposals have been so out to pieces that he cannot defend them. He has brought forward no real proposal for retrenchment or anything else. He has told us that every day which is wasted in debating in this House is so much money being spent, and yet he brings forward a Bill which is of no immediate use; and why? He says, To affirm the principle; but he knows quite well that, if the Bill is put on the Statute Book as it stands, he will have to bring down another measure next session to amend the law, and it will then be open to any honourable member to change the number of members again. What he ought to do is to bring down a carefully-prepared measure and put it on the Statute Book in such a form that it shall be

final. This is playing at legislation. Does the honourable gentleman show an example of retrenchment when he spends two days in discussing a Bill which it is merely his whim to place on the Statute Book? If he calls that retrenchment he stands alone in that opinion, and I can tell him that the country is getting quite weary of his proposals and policy, because they are a mere sham and nothing else.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I wish to enter my protest against the recommittal of the Bill, and for this reason: I happened, to-day, in going down town, to converse with two very strong supporters of the Government, and I put the question to them, "Why does the Premier make this such an important question?" Their reply was, "We do not quite understand why he makes it so; but we are prepared to trust him." "But," I said, "supposing another Government take their place next session, and they use the power, what do you think of that?" They said, "That is a different thing altogether." I am sure the Premier would not use it against the interests of the country; but, seeing this power is so strong, I ask him why he should take it. If he thinks it is necessary, I am prepared to go to a division and abide by the result. I cannot see that this has any object, except as a threat; but I do not think he would exercise that power in the direction some persons imagine he would. But, if it is not absolutely necessary, why kick up all this row about nothing? However, if the Premier thinks it necessary, we had better go to the vote and settle the matter at once.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, I do not intend to delay the House long in speaking on the recommittal of this Bill; but I am one of those who generally take upon themselves the responsibility for anything they do. I am not one of those who have had a good deal to say on the Bill in Committee, and now that it is being reported in *Hansard*, deny that they had anything to say there. I take the responsibility of saying to the Premier and to the electors of Kumara that I have obstructed this Bill. I have done it with an intention; the object I had in view has been gained, and I will tell the Premier what it was. Although I was left alone, the forms of the House were used against me so as to prevent my speaking; and the Chairman's authority was used against me, for, instead of taking the usual half-hour's adjournment, the Chairman, at the dictation of the Premier, remained in his seat. Sir, I object to the Chairman being dictated to by the Premier or anybody else; and I am sure that you would not submit to such a thing, but that you would always protect the weak against the strong. But, to-night, instead of my being protected by the Chair, the Chair was made a party to force this Bill through. Now, I was saying that I had taken upon myself the responsibility of delaying the Bill, and I will give the Premier my reasons for doing so. I knew from the course pursued by the Premier that it was his intention to get the Bill recommitted to-night in order to get the amendment carried by the honourable member for Dunedin West eliminated from it, and that

he would afterwards ask the House to agree to the amendment he would make. I knew that if that were agreed to to-night there could not be a full and fair discussion of the matter; that, if the proposal were made at an earlier period of our proceedings to-night, there could not be the same discussion as there would be if it were put off till to-morrow, when honourable members will have had time to consider over the position taken up by the Premier and the difficulty which it has placed them in. No doubt a good deal will be said by honourable members; and I wished that the light of day might be thrown upon it, and that the vital amendment proposed by the Premier, and which no doubt will be agreed to, should stand over till to-morrow. The amendment, when reported from Committee, cannot be put to the House to-night, and then we shall be able to discuss it to-morrow. The Premier knows what I have struggled for, and I take the responsibility; and what I have done is in the interests of the colonists of New Zealand. Now I come to the reasons given by some honourable gentlemen who have seen fit to change their minds to the extent of disfranchising their constituents by abstaining from voting on this question. Is that what honourable members are sent to this House for? Is it their duty to disfranchise their constituents when there are grave constitutional questions involved? Is it their duty to walk into the lobby when the issue concerns the welfare of those they represent? Is that a dignified position to assume? Those honourable gentlemen take a great responsibility in following that course, which I regret to see them take. And I regret it the more because they are gentlemen for whom I have always had the highest respect. Sir, I believe in fair-play, and I therefore regret that the Premier has been accused of not making it known to his party last night that this was a party question. An endeavour has been made to cast blame on him in that respect. I say the Premier is not to blame, because he told the leader of the Opposition, when that honourable gentleman agreed to the amendment that I proposed, that the circumstances of the case were altered, and that, as the Bill went into Committee in the altered state of affairs, it would be made a Government question. That was before we went into Committee; and when there, at the first amendment proposed, the honourable member for Hokonui asked the Premier direct if he was going to make this a Government question, saying that if he was not he should vote for my amendment, but if the Premier gave him a pledge that the question of local government would be considered during the recess, and also declared that this was a Government question, he should vote against my amendment. The Premier gave that honourable gentleman an assurance that the question of local government would be considered during the recess, and he spoke as plainly as a man could speak, saying straightforwardly that this would be a Government question. How could it be said in Committee time after time to-day, in

*Mr. Seddon*

face of that, that the Premier had not declared it was a Government question, when he declared distinctly that it was? I regret that it should have been made a party question; but that does not alter the fact that it was. It would be far more manly and straightforward, I think, if those who voted against the Government last night—seeing that a grave constitutional question is involved, a question of greater importance than one of party—were to say plainly now that they have seen fit to change their minds, and that, on reconsideration to-day, they are voting for party as against the unconstitutional power contained in the measure. If honourable members on reflection came to that conclusion it would be a fair defence for their change—a change contrary to the direction in which they went last night. I think it would be more fair and logical of those honourable members to vote directly opposite to the way they voted last night than to refrain from voting at all. I wish to say that I object to government by caucus, and there is no doubt that this course means government by caucus, and that, to my mind, is detrimental to the people. First we had what was no doubt an arrangement as to the four Native votes. It appeared strange to me last night that two Natives voted against the Government and one with them, while the fourth was absent. Now we find that the Maoris are left untouched by this Bill, and that clause 4 was struck out at the request of the Premier; and, of course, the whole of the Native members voted for the Bill when so amended. That was the result of arrangement and compact, and to that I object as being done unconstitutionally. I object as far as I can object in the passing of any measure to arrangements of that kind being made. Then, the Government have proposed and effected a most material alteration in the measure by increasing the number of members to seventy-four. I believe that at the caucus of Government supporters held to-day that increase was agreed to. That, no doubt, was a sticking-point to some honourable members supporting the Government, and the Government gave way to that extent and did it by a caucus arrangement. Thus by secret arrangements and caucuses two most important amendments are made in the Bill which the Government submit to this House. I hold that it is most unconstitutional and improper to change the whole face of a Bill by a caucus arrangement. Anything that is done to a Bill should be done in full House, and not by secret caucus arrangements. I cannot possibly understand the action of the honourable member for Te Aro, holding the views he does, and saying that the Government have been and are forcing this measure through the House by unconstitutional means, and yet being a party to those unconstitutional means. The honourable member for Te Aro asked the Government to deal with this matter in a proper and constitutional way, and I think that, holding those convictions, had he been the strong man I have always regarded him as, it is strange to find him taking the most undignified course that could possibly

be taken by an honourable member—namely, walking out of the House. The atmosphere of Wellington must have changed that honourable gentleman, for when I knew him on the West Coast he was a man of strong convictions: he was very careful in forming his convictions, but, when he had formed them, I always regarded him as being certain to adhere to them. But now I see him, in a question where a grave constitutional issue is involved, and while thinking the Government are doing wrong, because he does not wish to see a change of Government, leaving the House instead of voting, and so disfranchising a large and important constituency. I really cannot understand the honourable gentleman's action, and I can only say that I regret to see him adopting such a course. The Premier has plainly said to the honourable gentleman that if he really holds the views he has expressed it is his duty to vote against the Government: the Premier said that as plainly as language and demeanour could say it. He said, "If you hold that we are forcing the Bill through by unconstitutional means, and that it gives us an unconstitutional power, you ought not to support it;" and the only logical sequence to the honourable member's speech is that he should vote against the Government and justice as he did last night. He should do that in justice both to himself and his constituents. It is really no friendship to the Government for him to point out the wrong that has been done and in the same breath to say that the Government can do it, and that he will not stop them by his vote. However, I have always said that while we can hold different opinions from our fellow-members', and can discuss their action, members are only responsible to their constituents; and, of course, in this case the responsibility is with the honourable member for Te Aro, and I have no doubt the honourable member will give them the same explanation as he has given us, and they will be his judges upon it. As regards the honourable member for Mount Ida, he says his reason for supporting the Government in this is because of the sins of the late Government and the political corruption of the late Government. I can only say this: that it shows great inconsistency on the part of the honourable member, because he was returned first to this House as a most ardent supporter of the honourable member for Christchurch North. The honourable member for Mount Ida said more, wrote more, and did more to bring Sir Julius Vogel into power than any other member of this House. For two years he was a follower of that honourable gentleman and the party; and then, it is true, he left them; but I would like the honourable gentleman to be a little more careful in the remarks he makes, when he advances charges of political corruption without giving a tittle of evidence or stating a single fact to support his charges. That is a most unfair position for any honourable gentleman to take up, and I, for one, feel compelled to resent the honourable member's action in that respect. I say there was nothing in the administration of the late Government

to justify applying the term "political corruption" to it—that term cannot be truthfully applied to it. The Minister of Education laughs. He has not long been in office; yet what have the present Government done in the short time they have been in? I can prove that they have given employment to a gaol-bird against whom there are several convictions, discharging honest working-men to give him a place. They have only been a short time in office, but—

Major ATKINSON.—Will the honourable gentleman give me the name?—because I should like to make inquiry.

Mr. SEDDON.—I will give the honourable gentleman the name. I hope the Minister of Education will laugh again. He is not going to laugh at me. The honourable member for Mount Ida said that he was afraid that the Opposition were desirous of obtaining seats on the Government benches, and it was to prevent any such catastrophe occurring that he has withdrawn from the position he took up last night. It might be some information to the honourable member and the Government when I say there is no wish on the part of the Opposition to take office. I think it would be a very serious mistake if the Opposition were to attempt, under the circumstances, to test the question with the Government as to who shall occupy those benches. There is another view I take of the question, and it is this: I think the honourable member for Te Aro, the honourable member for Mount Ida, and those who voted with them—I will name them all: the honourable members for Thorndon, Mount Ida, Te Aro, Roslyn, Wallace, Taranaki, Rodney, Western Maori, and Hokonui. There are nine members who are found voting, as a rule, with the Government, and those nine members voted last night for the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West. And, Sir, I will say to them that I believe they have been simply frightened by the Government—I was going to use another term, and say they were bounced by the Government. There is no danger of the Opposition coming into office, even supposing they wished it. It is not on a simple question like that carried last night that the Premier and Government will resign. The threat of resignation was neither more nor less than an empty threat; and that experienced men like those I have just named should be frightened like schoolboys with a paltry threat of this kind is, to me, inexplicable. I wonder they had not a little more firmness. There is no doubt these honourable members have been haunted, what between whips and Ministers, and even the Premier himself. I had thought that the long interview he had with the honourable member for Te Aro would have induced the latter honourable gentleman to go the full length of voting. There is no doubt that every possible pressure has been brought to bear on these honourable gentlemen to get them to the condition they have been brought to. Some of them have taken a step further than others. Some have gone the whole length of reversing what they did

last night, and some have agreed to walk out. Let it be a matter of history. We have the names of honourable members who said that it was not right to give this unconstitutional power to the Government. I will read the names of those who voted against the amendment: Mr. Allen, Mr. Anderson, Major Atkinson, Mr. Barron, Mr. Beetham, Mr. Bruce, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Carroll, Mr. Dodson, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Goldie, Mr. Graham, Mr. Hislop, Mr. Hobbs, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Lawry, Mr. Macarthur, Mr. T. Mackenzie, Mr. McGregor, Mr. Mitchelson, Mr. Monk, Mr. Peacock, Mr. Pearson, Mr. Rhodes, Mr. G. F. Richardson, Mr. Seymour, Mr. Tanner, Mr. R. Thompson, Mr. Whyte, Mr. Withy. Those who voted for the amendment were: Mr. Blake, Mr. Duncan, Mr. Feldwick, Mr. Fish, Dr. Fitchett, Mr. Fitzherbert, Colonel Fraser, Sir G. Grey, Mr. Grimmond, Mr. Guinness, Dr. Hodgkinson, Mr. Jones, Mr. Joyce, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Kerr, Mr. Levestam, Mr. Loughrey, Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie, Mr. Marchant, Mr. J. McKenzie, Mr. Moat, Dr. Newman, Mr. O'Callaghan, Mr. Parata, Mr. W. P. Reeves, Mr. R. H. J. Reeves, Mr. Ross, Mr. Seddon, Mr. Smith, Major Steward, Mr. W. D. Stewart, Mr. Stuart-Menteath, Mr. Taipua, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Valentine, Mr. Ward. The numbers, including the "pairs," taken on the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West were 42 to 46. Messrs. Larnach, Moss, Taiwhanga, and Hutchison did not vote. It will be somewhat amusing, no doubt, when we take a division on the motion for recommitment. Those who read history and who read *Hansard* will see the changes which have taken place in this very short space of time. When *Hansard* is printed it may perhaps be found that the two division-lists appear in different numbers of that publication; but, in the way I give the names now, the whole matter will be under review; and those who sent honourable members to this House will, no doubt, when the proper time comes, want to know why this change has taken place. I think that many honourable members will have a difficulty in explaining to their constituents why on one day, after fair and free discussion, they came to the conclusion that the amendment was necessary, and that the great unconstitutional power asked for by the Government in this Bill should not be given to them, and next day, without any reason being given—because it will be a pure blank, so far as *Hansard* is concerned—they changed their votes, or did not vote at all. It is with the feeling that a time for explaining their attitude in this matter will come that I have just given the names. When the motion is moved to-morrow that we agree to the amendments, I shall have something further to say upon the principles contained in the Bill. I shall also oppose the third reading. I think it is only fair to the Premier to say that I shall again test the opinion of the House as to the number of members. If the Bill is recommitted to-night, there are a number of honourable members who are prepared to vote in the direction I wish and

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have contended for. There are a number of honourable members who consider that the number of seventy-four is too large. I intend to take a vote on the question whether or not the number mentioned in the Bill shall be retained. I state this now to the Premier so that he will not be able to say, after we get into Committee, that I have taken any unfair advantage. Whatever I say or do in this House, honourable members will agree that I fight fairly, and am not offensive to honourable members; and I never wish to be so. In the heat of debate one may, perhaps, use language a little stronger than he would in his calmer moments; but it is not my wish to be offensive, and I may add that I never, outside this Chamber, carry any feeling, whatever honourable members may think or say. With these remarks, I shall oppose the recommitment of the Bill.

Mr. JOYCE. — Mr. Speaker, it has been suggested that, as we have entered upon another day, and as honourable members are wearied by this lengthy sitting, I should detain you for but a brief period. I may say, Sir, I have been here nine weeks to-day, and this is the first opportunity I have taken to address you. Patience has a limit. So it is with me on this occasion. I intend to offer a few remarks as to why I record my protest against the recommitment of the Bill. It was not until yesterday that I really saw the reason of the Premier's movements and tactics subsequent to the delivery of the Financial Statement, and the proposals which we have had submitted to us. I think—if I may be pardoned the expression—that the whole scheme of the Government, up to the present time, is a sham. There is really no desire to benefit the country; none whatever. The object is simply to waste time—to weary us, that we may, when we draw near to Christmas, go away and leave all legislation and administration to the Government. I have a duty to perform to the colonists of New Zealand, and especially to those who sent me here; and I believe that if this Representation Bill were passed in the form indicated by the Premier a great injustice would be done to the colonists of New Zealand, especially the working-classes. I believe it is the intention of the Premier, if this Bill is passed, to have a dissolution next year; and with that dissolution twenty-five members will be swept away, and the hope we have been cherishing to get support to local industries will be destroyed, and the prospect of that support being given removed further away than it has ever been in the whole history of the colony. I believe that it is my duty to do all that I can to resist the passing of this measure, since the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West, which was carried yesterday, is intended to be thrown out to-night; and, if ten members of this House will just be as determined as I am, I will read the Premier of New Zealand such a lesson as he will never forget. I will endeavour to use no personalities, none whatever, and I trust the Premier will not re-

ceive the words I am now speaking in that light; but I have now been here for nine weeks—and I have never missed a day from this House, excepting Sundays. I have never forced my speeches on the House, but I have endeavoured to do my Committee work. There were two occasions on which I spoke: one was when I was requested to do so by the honourable member for Auckland West in relation to the Shop-hours Bill, and on another occasion by the honourable member for Auckland Central, when moving the second reading of the Elective Governors Bill. With the exception of those occasions, I have abstained from taking up the time of the House; for I knew that, as a new member, I should listen to the older ones, and endeavour to receive instruction from them. Certainly the instruction I have received during the last nine weeks has not been very great. But the time has come when I think I ought to record my protest against the present proceedings of the Government. Is there any necessity for passing such a Bill as this? Certainly not. At the present time, in the town that I represent there lives a man with some five or six children, who, through no fault of his own, some two years ago met with a railway accident which rendered him incapable of doing any work; and the man is practically starving, and asks for work, and two days a week at 5s. a day are offered to him. He is now getting charitable aid; but, if he accepts that two days a week work, the assistance will probably be stopped: while the present Government will waste weeks in bringing down useless measures. If practical legislation was entered upon, possibly that man would be able to go upon the land like others, or be employed in some industry which would enable him or his family to earn sufficient bread by this employment, without applying for charitable aid. We also find there are hundreds in New Zealand to-day who are borne down by great oppression. This is the language I find in one of the Dunedin papers:—

“Having been absent from town for some time, I did not notice your note on this question which appeared in your issue of Nov. 28. You draw attention to the cruel, inhuman manner in which growing lads, known as parcel-carriers, are laden with heavy parcels, such as linoleum and calico, every night till near midnight, and, you truly say, at starvation-wages. Sir, as an ex-parcel-carrier, and on behalf of the large number of white slaves of Dunedin, I render you my own warm, heartfelt thanks. I have written over a hundred letters on this very form of white man's murder, and have told the drapers that they should be ashamed of themselves for their treatment of these lads. I will at once draw Parliament's attention to this matter.—CITIZEN.”

That appeared in a Dunedin paper on Monday last, and a Bill to give relief to those has been introduced into this House, and no time afforded for its consideration; and yet we waste days and weeks over useless legislation. Sir, when the history of this Parliament will be considered a few years hence, I think there

will be many who will say that the Hon. the Premier has made a great mistake. He will admit that I have not in any way opposed him or interfered with him in any way; but last week I learned that the Government will, in all probability, remain in power during the session; and, until permission was given by those whom I look upon as the leaders on this side of the House, I would not approach the Ministers for any favours. Then I went and asked that the Shop-hours Bill should receive some consideration at their hands. So that the Government will see that any remarks I am now making cannot be construed as in any way in opposition to their measures. So far as the reduction of members is concerned, I care very little about it. I believe the increase in the number of members which was made in the year 1881 should not have been made, and there may be some reason for the Government, or a majority of the House, reducing the number of members in the next session. I should not say so much about that; but that this session should be thus engaged, and time wasted at this season of the year in a measure of this kind, is, I think, very foolish indeed; and I think the time will come when no one will regret this waste more than the members of the present Government. There are honourable gentlemen on the Government benches whom I personally esteem, and, so far as I am concerned, they might remain there so long as I am a member of this House. But I say this: that they are using the power which they possess against the best interests of the Colony of New Zealand; and I would urge the Premier at this stage to consider whether it would not be advisable to adjourn this debate till to-morrow or some convenient time, and whether it would not be better to allow the amendment passed last night to remain in the Bill and appear on the Statute Book. I think that would be a wise thing to do. The principle of the Bill would be carried—that is, the reduction of the number of members. We have settled that, and to go any further than that would be giving the Premier such a power that in a moment of weakness he might use it and regret it afterwards. I do not for one moment imagine that it is the intention of the Government to use the power in the manner mentioned; but when they are driven to extremes, as, unfortunately, the honourable member at the head of the Government has been driven on more than one occasion, this would be a dangerous power to possess. And I would again urge the Government to accept the position in which matters are now found, and let the Bill go as it stands at present, and let us finish up some other matters of business that may be necessary, so that the House may adjourn before the Christmas holidays. If the Government drive the Opposition to extremes, I say it is the duty of the Opposition to use every moral power which they have to resist any encroachment on the rights of the people. And I say this: that I believe the Government may be charged with obstructing the rights and privileges of the people quite as much as the

Government may consider the Opposition are obstructing the passage of this Bill. At any rate, our last sitting was a long one, and we returned here again in the morning. It is now close on three o'clock a.m., and I ask the Premier whether he considers it his duty to detain us until he forces this Bill through the necessary stages in order that it may appear on the Statute Book of the colony.

Mr. KELLY.—I trust the Premier will accept the advice offered by the last speaker to adjourn this question till to-morrow. Perhaps honourable members will then come to the House in a better frame of mind, and the matter might be settled without further debate. It appears to me that honourable members representing country districts are placing themselves in a false position by supporting the honourable gentleman in this Bill. Sir, I voted against the Bill consistently on clauses that are of no importance, with the exception of the last few divisions; and it is my intention to vote against the Bill on every possible occasion, because it is an injury to the district I represent. It sends us back to the position we were in in 1875. It is a great retrograde step, and I consider it is the duty of the honourable gentleman who has brought forward this Bill to send the country districts ahead instead of backward. I remember that, in the early days in this House, in 1875, there were petitions sent from the district I have the honour to represent, which was annexed to that portion of the East Coast called Gisborne. Both Tauranga and Gisborne were unanimous in asking for separation. There were battles in this House over that, and separation was eventually granted. It appears to me this Bill will practically place my district in the position in which it was in those days; and whatever percentage is allowed should be settled by this House—that is, as between the cities and country districts—before the Bill is passed. I consider that 18 per cent. is not sufficient for the country districts; it should be at least a third—33 per cent., or perhaps 50 per cent.; but the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill thinks that should be left over till next year. I have no intention to take up the time of the House in speaking on the question at present, because I think, if the honourable gentleman accepts the advice of the last speaker to adjourn the debate till to-morrow, perhaps little time would be lost, and the Bill would be carried without much opposition.

Mr. GRIMMOND.—I desire to enter my protest against the recommitment of this Bill. The measure was introduced to us in a manner that would seem to show that the Premier did not attach much importance to it. When I read it, however, I attached great importance to it; and I know that a great number of the members of the House attach great importance to it. When the measure came to be considered in Committee some honourable gentlemen who are not sycophant supporters of the Premier made an amendment in one line of it, calculated to secure necessary safeguards to the representation of the people of the country; and

because of that small amendment the Premier says he will resign if it is not reversed, and the whole colony is to be handed over to the tender mercies of the honourable member for Christchurch North! But, while there is so much objection to this particular amendment, we find that other amendments were being made by other honourable gentlemen to which there is no objection whatever. For instance, we find that the provision about the Maori representation has been entirely altered, and the result of that alteration is that the honourable gentlemen who represent the Natives in this House have altogether changed their position in reference to the Bill. I think that the House ought to have a little more time to consider the provisions of the Bill; and, as it is now three o'clock in the morning, I think that the best thing that we can do is to adjourn the further consideration of this measure until to-morrow. I therefore move, as an amendment, That the Bill be ordered to be recommitted to-morrow.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—I wish to second the amendment, and I wish to take this opportunity of saying that I regret very much that this House has been dragged through the mire. I regret to hear that circumstances have occurred this morning which have altered the tone of the honourable gentlemen who last night voted for the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West. It is true that I hardly expected anything else from some of them. We have heard to-night one of those honourable gentlemen give a lame and paltry excuse for the action he took. If I might be allowed to say it, if it would be in order, I should say that their action was most contemptible. I may say, in the first place, that I was one of the strongest, and am one of the strongest, supporters of the Government in the reduction of the number of members. I pledged myself to it not only at this election, but in years gone by; for I believe and have believed that seventy members are more than sufficient. But the position which it is desired to place us in is this: that the Premier may hold in *terrorem* over our heads this matter of dissolution. At any time during the next three years he might have a dissolution, under circumstances which would make it necessary that twenty-one of the members of this House should lose their seats. Such a state of things I consider to be most dangerous, and the people of a free country should not consent to such a thing. It is a great pity to see these men driven into the lobby like a lot of dumb animals. I have seen some strange things enacted in this House—some melancholy cases of abnegation of principle;—but I did not think it would come to what we have seen to-night. I thought a number of gentlemen who call themselves honourable men would have scorned to do such a thing as we are told they intend to do—that they should get up and repudiate their action within twenty-four hours! It is only twenty-four hours since the honourable member for Dunedin West carried his amendment, and yet here we have gentlemen willing to repudiate the action

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they took in connection with that amendment. I am astonished that honourable gentlemen should repudiate and swallow their convictions. I remember that once in this House a certain honourable gentleman said that he had had to swallow his convictions, but that it was one of the most nauseous doses that he had ever had offered to him. That was the honourable member for Rangitikei, Sir William Fox. These honourable gentlemen whose conduct we are now discussing have done the same thing to-night; and I say that it reflects very little credit on them, and very little credit on the constituencies which returned them to this House. I hope that the time will come when the Premier will put these gentlemen upon their mettle; and these gentlemen shall see what their constituencies think of and say to them. I hope that they will treat them in the manner in which men who have no political principles should be treated, and that is, reject them.

Amendment negatived.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be recommitted for the reconsideration of clause 2."

AYES, 29.

Allen	Goldie	Monk
Anderson	Graham	Pearson
Atkinson	Hamlin	Rhodes
Barron	Hobbs	Seymour
Bruce	Jackson	Taiwhanga
Buchanan	Lawry	Thompson, T.
Dodson	Macarthur	Wilson.
Fergus	McGregor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fisher	Mills	Tanner
Fulton	Mitchelson	Thompson, R.

NOES, 17.

Blake	Lance	Taylor
Feldwick	Larnach	Walker
Fraser	Loughrey	Ward.
Guinness	O'Callaghan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Jones	Seddon	Grimmond
Joyce	Stewart, W. D.	Reeves, R. H. J.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Beetham	Fish
Cadman	Fitzherbert
Carroll	Vogel
Cowan	Buxton
Hall	Ballance
Izard	Fitchett
Mackenzie, T.	Reeves, W. P.
Moat	Perceval
Moss	Kelly
O'Connor	Steward, W. J.
Ormond	Smith
Peacock	Richardson, E.
Pyke	Levestam
Richardson, G. F.	Samuel
Ross	Kerr
Russell	Duncan
Taipua	McKenzie, J.
Whyte	Turnbull
Withy.	Grey.

Majority for, 12.

Recommittal carried.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

##### Clause 2.

Major ATKINSON moved to strike out the words, "not earlier than the eighth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

AYES, 16.

Blake	Joyce	Walker
Feldwick	Lance	Ward.
Fraser	Larnach	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Loughrey	Seddon
Guinness	O'Callaghan	Stewart, W. D.
Jones	Taylor	

NOES, 29.

Allen	Graham	Rhodes
Anderson	Hislop	Seymour
Atkinson	Hobbs	Taiwhanga
Barron	Jackson	Tanner
Buchanan	Lawry	Thompson, R.
Dodson	Macarthur	Thompson, T.
Fergus	McGregor	Wilson.
Fisher	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fulton	Monk	Bruce
Goldie	Pearson	Mills.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Ballance	Hall
Buxton	Cowan
Duncan	Russell
Fish	Beetham
Fitchett	Izard
Fitzherbert	Cadman
Grey	Withy
Kelly	Moss
Kerr	Ross
Levestam	Pyke
McKenzie, J.	Taipua
Perceval	Moat
Reeves, W. P.	Mackenzie, T.
Richardson, E.	Peacock
Samuel	Richardson, G.
Smith	Ormond
Steward, W. J.	O'Connor
Turnbull	Whyte
Vogel.	Carroll.

Majority against, 13.

Words omitted.

Bill reported as further amended.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past three o'clock a.m.

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 8th December, 1887.

First Reading—Third Reading—Owhaoko Case—Government Business—Parliamentary Honorary and Privileges Bill—Ministers' Salaries and Allowances Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

## FIRST READING.

Governor's Salary and Allowances Bill.

## THIRD READING.

Pharmacy Bill.

## OWHAOKO CASE.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL moved, That there be laid upon the table copies of all memoranda and telegrams in connection with the Legislative Council paper No. 1, already printed, relative to the application for a rehearing of claims to the Owhaoko Blocks. He was under the impression that the Government had no objection to allow the papers called for to be laid upon the table. By the kind permission of the Attorney-General he had gone through all the papers connected with this matter, with a view to select the smallest possible number which would place the matter more clearly before the Council than had been the case before in the paper, No. 1, already printed. He thought it would be premature now to have any discussion upon the merits of the question; but if this resolution were agreed to an opportunity would be afforded for discussion. He would also feel it his duty to move that a table should be printed. There were only some ten memoranda and telegrams, and also a portion of the evidence which was omitted when the first paper was printed. He would therefore strictly confine himself at present to moving the motion standing in his name.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER would simply say, in reference to what his honourable friend had said, that he had no objection at all to the production of the papers; but he did not know that he would pledge himself to the printing of them till they had been laid on the table. If they were not too bulky he would be quite willing, however, that they should be printed. But he wished to guard himself against committing himself now to the printing of them.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL wished to say that the discussion of that question should be taken when the papers had been laid on the table.

Motion agreed to.

## GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Sir, before you call upon the first order of the day, I should like to say a few words. It is well known, of course, that the Government have the right to fix the order of business as they think proper; but, still, I consider that the Council are in a position to say which is the best order in which to take the discussion on the Orders No. 2 and No. 8—the Parliamentary Honorarium and Privileges Bill and the adjourned debate on the motion, "That this Council will concur willingly with the House of Representatives in any reduction of allowances to members which shall maintain the equality of treatment between the two Chambers established by 'The Parliamentary Honorarium and Privileges Act, 1884.'" I do not think it would be advisable to take the discussion on the Parliamentary Honorarium and Privileges Bill before we

finish the discussion on the adjourned debate we had yesterday. I trust, therefore, that the Government will give way, and will agree to No. 8 taking precedence of all other orders. It is absolutely necessary that Order No. 8 should be disposed of before we take up the second reading of the Parliamentary Honorarium Bill. I therefore move, *That those orders of the day take precedence of all other orders of the day.*

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—Speaking to the question of order, I would call attention to the fact that, if the Council adopt the suggestion of my honourable friend, it will be necessary to move the suspension of the Standing Orders.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—How is it that this question came before us in the form of a notice of motion, and it is now set down among the orders of the day? It ought to be among the notices of motion.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—This was an adjourned debate, and therefore it comes on as an order of the day.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I may say this is the first time I recollect, during the time I have been in the Legislature, that the right of the Government to place business in the order they wished it on Tuesdays has been challenged, and I apprehend that the motion could not be put to the Council without altering Standing Order No. 2, which provides,—

"Unless otherwise ordered at a previous meeting, the sitting-days of the Council shall be Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays; the right being reserved to the Government of placing Government orders in the rotation in which they are to be taken on Tuesdays and Thursdays."

This is the practice which has prevailed in the Council and the House of Representatives, and I never heard the right challenged before. The Government always exercises its right as to the order of Government business on these days.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—The right to regulate the procession of business on the Order Paper is a very efficient weapon of party warfare, and is used in that sense justly in another place, and properly—fairly—used there. But here, where there is no party, I think it would be a departure from the usual course in this Council if such a power were used to block the expression of an opinion by the Council on a question which concerns not politics at all, but its own personal and legal status. I therefore hope my honourable friend will not give way in this matter, and that the Council will not be deprived of its right to say that this order of the day shall be postponed or that order of the day shall not be postponed. If this question is not now decided it could not be decided hereafter. Suppose the question were now discussed and settled permanently, it would not to a great extent practically affect the business now pressed. Supposing the Council were to declare that they were prepared, in the terms of the resolution, to concur willingly with the House of Representatives in the reduction of the allowances, it does not follow that that

means that the Bill shall not be passed. There are many members of the Council who will willingly vote for the second reading of the Bill when it is brought up. There are many other members of the Council who, in view of the expediency of not committing the Council—

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The honourable member will excuse me. The honourable member must not take advantage to make a speech on the merits of the question.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I was explaining—

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I hope the honourable gentleman will confine himself to the point of order.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I wish to explain that there are members in this Council who, from motives of expediency, will unwillingly consent to the second reading of this Bill, and I have no doubt whatever that both these parties will make a majority in regard to that question. Therefore this motion will not affect it.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—Respecting the point of order, I can see nothing at all irreconcilable between the Standing Order and the proposal of the Hon. Mr. Reynolds. The Government has the right to arrange the Order Paper on Tuesdays and Thursdays; but it is quite competent for the Council, when the Order Paper is before us, to say whether we will submit to such an arrangement. We may say Yea or Nay, as may please, without at all infringing the prerogative of the Government.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—Referring to Standing Order No. 2, my opinion is that this question cannot now be put, unless the Standing Order be suspended. The words of the Standing Order have been read. It commences, "Unless otherwise ordered at a previous meeting" the sitting-days of the Council shall be on certain days, "the right being reserved to the Government of placing Government orders in the rotation in which they are to be taken on Tuesdays and Thursdays." The honourable member, therefore, if he desires, may put the motion, which it is quite competent to put; but that will have to be done by the suspension of the Standing Orders.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I should like to ask you, Sir, whether it would not be competent for me, when the first order of the day is proposed, to move that the consideration of all the orders of the day should be postponed, in order that Order of the Day No. 8 might be considered. I maintain that a member of the Council can move that, when the first order of the day is called on; and these other Bills can be considered at a later period of the day.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—No doubt; but that is not the question. The question that the honourable gentleman put is a different question from that now under discussion. When the first order is called on it may be disposed of in any way the Council thinks fit, in keeping with the proposal which I understood the honourable member to make to the Council.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I would point out to the Government that if they assented to this course it would save time; but if the Government object to it I shall move the suspension of Standing Order No. 2, so as to enable me to make the motion. I make that motion.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—With what object is that made?

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I move, *That Standing Order No. 2 be suspended, in order that Order of the Day No. 8 may be taken before the other orders of the day.*

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK.—I understand, as you read out the Standing Order, that notice must be given at a previous sitting.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—That is the proceeding, if the Council thinks it proper to suspend its own Standing Orders.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I would suggest to the honourable gentleman that when the Bill comes on for discussion he should move the adjournment of the debate, so that this Order of the Day No. 8 may come on. I am going to vote for the Bill, and I feel that there will be no inconsistency in my doing so and voting for the motion as well. The motion does not prevent any one from doing that.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The Council will be good enough to observe that there is a question before the Council—the suspension of Standing Order No. 2. If it is desired to provide otherwise, the question raised will have to be withdrawn.

The Council divided.

#### AYES, 22.

Barnicoat	Kenny	Reynolds
Brett	Lahmann	Scotland
Buckley	Martin	Shepherd
Chamberlin	Menzies	Shrimski
Dignan	Morris	Taiaroa
Fraser	Peter	Walker
Hart	Pollen	Wahawaha.
Holmes		

#### NOES, 15.

Acland	Miller	Stevens
Baillie	Oliver	Swanson
Bonar	Peacock	Waterhouse
Grace	Pharazyn	Whitaker
McLean	Richmond	Williams.

Majority for, 7.

Motion agreed to.

#### PARLIAMENTARY HONORARIUM AND PRIVILEGES BILL.

##### ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I was in possession of the Chair when the adjournment of the debate on this question was moved yesterday; and I think I then stated that there was another inconsistency in the Bill—namely, that the Act of 1884 provided for reimbursing members of the General Assembly their expenses in relation to their attendance on Parliament, and that the present Bill did not do so. The present session, I suppose, will not close before the 20th of this month, which will give seventy-six days, sitting. I have calculated

that it takes members three days, upon an average, to come to Parliament, and three days to return. That gives six days, which would, altogether, make it come up to eighty-two days. By the Bill it is proposed that the honorarium this session for the members of the Council shall only amount to £50—a sum, I say, altogether disproportionate to the expenses of members attending the session. I know that it will not pay expenses, and I am by no means extravagant either. I do not think that it will pay the expenses of any member of Parliament who is attending this session. While I do not look for any payment for my services to the public, yet I do not expect—and I know that the public do not expect—that I am to give my time and, in addition to that, to be out of pocket in paying my own travelling-expenses. I think that if honourable members give up their time to the public it is as much as can be expected of them, and that at any rate they should be paid, and that liberally, for their travelling-expenses while away from their homes. I do not see why members of Parliament should be treated at all differently from members of the Ministry. Ministers, if away from their homes, have ample allowance to pay for all their expenses; and why members of Parliament should be put in a different position I cannot for my life understand. If members of Parliament are not to be paid sufficient to recoup them for their expenses when they are absent from their homes, the result will be that all members of the Council will have to be chosen from among gentlemen who reside in Wellington, or from others who may have axes to grind, and whose purpose it would answer to come here not only without any honorarium, but to pay something in addition. This is not what the colony requires. The colony requires to have its best men in the Council, and, in getting them, the colony would never refuse to pay them a liberal allowance—I do not say an extravagant allowance, but a liberal allowance—to pay their expenses while they are absent from their homes. I think that this Bill should have provided that when there are two sessions in one year, supposing the first session did not exceed seventy days, the payment to members should be at so much per day, and then that for the second session they should have the full honorarium. This Bill is retrospective. I came up here fully expecting that I should receive £105 to recoup me for my travelling-expenses; and it is just possible I may not have made provision otherwise for meeting these expenses, or I may not be in a position to pay the balance between what my expenses have been and what I shall get. I hold we have no right to have any retrospective legislation, unless it is done on a fair basis. I hold that members of this Council should receive, for this session at any rate, enough to pay their travelling-expenses while here. If this Bill is allowed quietly to be assented to by the Council, the result will be that we shall be lowering ourselves in the esteem of the public. In fact, the making a difference between

*Hon. Mr. Reynolds*

this branch of the Legislature and the other without protest on our part would be tantamount to our admitting that we are of less value than what the other branch is. I deny this. I have had many years' experience in the House of Representatives, and also have been a good number of years in the Council; and I have always maintained, and I do now maintain, that but for the Council the legislation of the colony would be most unsatisfactory. I say that it is a safeguard for the colony to have a body such as ours to watch over the measures brought before Parliament. I consider the benefits are incalculable which have resulted from the Council in the past in watching over and checking hasty legislation, and stopping the passing of many doubtful measures which have been introduced into Parliament. I should despair of any satisfactory legislation taking place in the colony if the Council were to cease to exist. I admit that when I was a member of the other branch of the Legislature I often, along with others, used to grumble most terribly when some of my little Bills were rejected by the Council; but, on mature consideration, I have always come to the conclusion that the Council did right in the public interest. Of course, at the time it is very irritating, if a member of the other branch of the Legislature has succeeded in passing his Bill, possibly by log-rolling, or possibly through party, to find it thrown out when it comes to the Council; but, in nine cases out of ten, I believe the members of the other branch of the Legislature will admit that the Council has done right in rejecting the Bills. I am going to throw out a suggestion to the Attorney-General, and I hope he will accept that suggestion. It is, that he withdraw the Bill now before Parliament, and introduce another Bill, making an equitable provision for this Council: a Bill placing the Council and the House of Representatives upon the same footing as regards the amount for payment of travelling-expenses. I think the honourable gentleman will do well to take my advice on this occasion, if he never took it before. He would do well to accept my advice rather than feel that the members of the Government in the Council are acting contrary to the feelings of the members of the Council. It is not advisable that any sort of irritating feeling should exist in the Council as between the members representing the Government and the other members of the Council; and I do trust the Attorney-General will take the matter into consideration, and that he will withdraw this Bill, and bring down another Bill, which there will be no difficulty, I am convinced, in passing. I know perfectly well that the members of the other branch of the Legislature consider, as I do, that this Bill is a most unsatisfactory one. I trust the honourable gentleman will seriously consider the propriety of adopting the suggestion which I have made.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—I confess I think the motion of the Hon. Dr. Pollen is a very proper one to bring forward, and I am equally certain this is the proper position for it

to occupy on the Order Paper. With reference to the Bill the second reading of which the Attorney-General is to move to-day, I think that both Houses have an equal claim, if there is a claim to be put forward, upon the country. Members of both Houses equally give up their time to the business of the country. Time, according to the adage, is money. Therefore, on that ground I think no difference should be made between the honoraria paid to the members of both Houses. I am sorry I cannot vote for the motion, having already committed myself in something I have said during the present session on this subject. I said that, in my opinion, the members of the other House should receive a slightly larger honorarium than ours. I still adhere to that opinion: not on the ground of their being at any expense in carrying through their elections, as I do not think the country has anything to do with that at all. Candidature is not compulsory upon them. They are asked, certainly, by their fellow-citizens, in some instances, to come forward; but I presume they are not obliged to come if they do not like to come. The call is not imperative; this is a free country, and they are free agents. But what I say is this: They are undoubtedly subject to greater wear and tear than we are, their health is put in greater jeopardy than our health is, and they are exposed to later sittings. I dare say I shall be told that they are not obliged to sit late, that they can go home and go to bed, and leave those who are fonder of talking to do the talking. That is not the proper way to do the work of the country. Here is a system, and so long as there is constitutional government there must be government by party. If there is any benefit to be derived from the government by party, members of this Council enjoy their share of that benefit. We are saved by the gentlemen in another branch undergoing this fatigue, not only for themselves but for us. On that ground I certainly would always advocate a larger honorarium being paid to the members of the other branch of the Legislature. In regard to the number of telegrams which they were said to receive and send off daily, I may say I think that could be stopped in a great measure if they pleased. I have heard it insinuated that members sometimes put their constituents up to sending telegrams. I do not know whether this is the case; but, if so, no doubt that adds considerably to their expenses. The country has got nothing to do with that; let them settle that between themselves and their constituents, and not ask the country to meet that expense. They might just as well send in their tailors', bootmakers', and hatters' bills to the country. I cannot help thinking that there is something very like a Tory reaction going on in this country. Toryism is very infectious. There is a Tory Government in power at the present time in England, and it seems to me that we have got a very Tory Government in power here now. This proposal to reduce the honorarium perhaps is only a prelude to abolishing it alto-

gether. Would the people like that, if they calculated the cost? Perhaps some of them have only looked at the saving of cost; but they do not know what the result would be. It is considered right in the United States, with their practical good sense, that members of both Houses should be paid an equal honorarium; and I have no doubt that if the Americans thought it was wise and prudent that the members of their Legislature should receive no honorarium they would very soon strike it off. But they see that in a democratic country there must be an honorarium, or a much worse thing would follow. I do not know what members of this Council will approve of the Bill which is to be brought forward. I hope there are not any plutocrats who wish to see the Council composed only of large landholders and very wealthy capitalists, that this Council may be turned into a club of rich men. If there are any such—and I hope there are not—let me tell these gentlemen that the country would soon get sick of them—would soon call out for their abolition. If there are any such gentlemen in this Council, I have no doubt they hail with great satisfaction the advent of this Government to power. Perhaps the newspapers in the pay of the Government may abuse us and ascribe the worst possible motives. Well, let them do so. Who cares for their strictures? It can do no harm except to the papers themselves and to the cause of journalism. The Hon. Dr. Pollen has just as much right to bring forward this motion as the honourable gentleman who is going to move the second reading of the Bill has to do so. In fact, that honourable gentleman did bring forward a motion, but he withdrew it for some reason of his own. He ought not to be angry. The Hon. Dr. Pollen has thought proper to bring forward a motion on the same subject. I do not know what right the honourable gentleman has to hold out something like a threat to us, and to talk to us with such a voice of authority on the subject of *vox populi*. I have heard it stated that, if the honourable gentleman were to offer himself as a candidate for a seat in the House of Representatives, there is not a constituency in the colony that would have him. Whether that is true or not I do not know. Their reason for not accepting him would not be his want of knowledge, but that he knew a great deal too much. There are people in the world who are too clever by half. If payment to members is necessary I say it should be a sufficient payment; and the Bill does not provide a sufficient payment for the Council, at any rate. I regret that I cannot vote for the motion of the Hon. Dr. Pollen, although I agree with it to a certain extent. I must console myself with the pleasure of voting against the second reading of the Bill brought forward by the honourable gentleman.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I do not know whether we are to have two discussions—one upon the resolution and one upon the Bill—or not, but I think that perhaps it would be just as well to make the remarks we have to make upon the subject of the honorarium at

the present time. At any rate, so far as I am concerned individually, I propose to adopt that course, and the few observations I have to make will be made at the present time. I listened with some degree of interest to the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Scotland. I was anxious to know in what way they were to conclude. He told us that he was quite in favour of members of the other House of the Legislature having a higher honorarium than ours—

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—Slightly higher.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—And the honourable gentleman wound up his remarks by saying he would vote against this Bill, the tendency of which is to give to the members of that branch of the Legislature a higher honorarium than we are to have. The honourable gentleman spoke of plutocrats who would vote for the Bill. If this matter is to be decided by the votes of those who have a keen love for money, and who turn it to the best account, I have no doubt the vote of the Hon. Mr. Scotland will be recorded in its favour. The Hon. Mr. Reynolds made one or two remarks that were interesting to me. I was pleased to see that he had arrived at the conclusion at which I had arrived myself long ago, that he was not in all cases infallible—that in one or two cases he had made a mistake; and I believe the honourable gentleman will, in the course of a few years, probably arrive at the conclusion that, if he perseveres in the course he is now about to adopt, he will give another proof of his fallibility. My honourable friend's remarks were not altogether to the point. He said we were here for this session for eighty-two days, and that he should only receive £50. But my honourable friend overlooked the fact that he had received £210 last session, so that the total would be £260 for the period he has attended Parliament during the existing year.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Perhaps the honourable gentleman will allow me to explain. I received no £210 for the year. That was all I received for my Ministerial services.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—If the honourable gentleman received £210 for his Ministerial services, the Ministry with which he was connected acted altogether outside the law, and ought not to have authorised the payment of one penny outside what is provided by the Civil Service Act; but, as a matter of fact, the honourable gentleman did make application for his honorarium, as he was entitled to do, and he received it. I do not see that the amount he received was in connection with his Ministerial services. As a matter of fact, it was in connection with his attendance at Parliament. The Bill that has been introduced by my honourable friend the Attorney-General contains two important provisions. The first and most important one is that contained in the 2nd clause, which is to the effect that members of the House of Representatives shall receive an amount—additional to that received by the members of the Council—of £50 in consideration of the addi-

tional expenses necessarily incurred by them. Objection has been taken to that provision. I must say I heartily agree with that provision. I think the members of the other branch of the Legislature are well deserving—and I agree with the Hon. Mr. Scotland in that respect—of a larger amount of remuneration than that paid to the members of this branch of the Legislature, for the simple reason that their expenses necessarily must be larger. As pointed out by the Attorney-General, there are electioneering expenses to which they are exposed that they cannot possibly avoid, and which will always be found very considerable. As pointed out by the Hon. Mr. McLean, there are considerable expenses in connection with telegraphing throughout the session—expenses to which, to a very great extent, members of this branch of the Legislature are not exposed. I do not know how much that amount may be, but I am informed that in many cases it is as much as one or two pounds a day. There are, likewise, incidental expenses attached to the position of members of the other House to which we are not so much liable, in the contributions to local charities. A member of the other branch of the Legislature is necessarily called upon to contribute to charities to a greater extent than a member of the Council is, and I have no hesitation in saying that if he altogether ignores these applications, as has been suggested by one or two members, it will be impossible for him to retain his seat. We do not go so far in this matter as they do in England. In England I know there are instances where a candidate has been asked the straightforward question, how much he will be prepared to contribute to local charities in the case of his appointment. We do not go so far as that here, and I hope we shall not come to that. At the same time, there are charities to which a person in the position of a member of the other branch of the Legislature must necessarily contribute. The other important provision in reference to this Bill is that relating to the non-payment of members residing in Wellington. Now, I agree with other honourable gentlemen that in that respect there is an inequality which is, to my mind, not justifiable, and for the reason that the same law does not apply to the members of both branches of the Legislature. I should not have objected to this were members of the other branch treated the same as members of the Council. But one likes to be treated with fairness, and the old saying that "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander" is applicable in this case. The same reasoning which points out that members in this branch should not receive payment if they resided in Wellington applies with equal force to members of the other branch of the Legislature living in Wellington. However, I cannot regard this as an unmitigated evil; for this reason: It has evoked for members of this Council residing in Wellington expressions of sympathy from my honourable friend Mr. Reynolds, for which I was myself little prepared. As a rule, he has shown so little sympathy with Well-

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ton members that the change in his opinions is almost an equivalent for the monetary loss inflicted by this distinction. There is another respect in which the alteration does not altogether displease me. It is this: It opens up the way for further economies in the future. If we want to economize still further, in the case of vacancies arising all the Government has to do is to appoint members living in Wellington, and in that way they can reduce the expenses still further. It will be the duty of the Government, with new appointments, to consider whether they cannot get a man of equal ability in Wellington as a member, instead of going elsewhere, in which case they would have to pay £100 a year. This consideration will, I am sure, be appreciated by the Hon. Mr. Reynolds. But, Sir, while I recognise that there is a degree of unfairness in this Bill, it is my intention to vote for it in its entirety; and the more I think of it the more I am impressed with a sense of the responsibility resting on this Council in connection with the matter. I support the Bill, first of all, because it is a part of a large and comprehensive measure in connection with the system of retrenchment introduced by the Government in order to place the finances of the colony on a more satisfactory footing. If we attack that system in detail, by throwing out one measure after another, and more especially a measure of this character, we shall be inflicting a strong blow at the cause of retrenchment, which is now being so strenuously taken up not only in the Legislature, but throughout the colony at large. And, then, another reason which will lead me to vote for it is the feeling that we cannot expect that the large portion of the public that will be subjected to a more or less deep degree of suffering in consequence of the measure of retrenchment now being introduced will submit to their lot quietly if certain classes are to be exempted from these reductions. It will add poignancy to their sufferings if they see that members of the Legislature exempt themselves from participating in measures of retrenchment. Sir, I cannot imagine a more inexpedient act than it would be to throw out this Bill. It would lead to invidious comparisons that would be injurious to the character of this House. Is it not apparent that in one branch of the Legislature they are prepared to subject themselves to reductions, not only as regards honorarium, but also in the number of members from ninety-five to seventy-four? and do they not, in that respect, show the public a spirit of self-sacrifice? What would be the feeling with reference to this Council if we not only refused to reduce our number, but if at the same time we refused own to ourselves submit to any financial loss? It would, in the public mind, have a very bad effect indeed, and I think the result would be very destructive of the prestige of this branch of the Legislature. Sir, I must vote for the Bill on another ground, though, perhaps, I shall find honourable members not agreeing with me—on the strong constitutional ground that the other branch of the Legislature are

the controllers of the public expenditure, and that it is not for this branch of the Legislature to impose limits upon their reduction of expenditure. They, as the guardians of the public purse, have the undoubted right of imposing limits upon expenditure. I would point out, moreover, that this is not a single measure; it is part of a financial scheme introduced by the Treasurer, on the passing of which the finances of the colony depend; and we must pass it in its entirety or reject it in its entirety. It is not constitutional to take it in detail, and say we take it in one part and refuse to take it in another. Sir, there is no principle more clearly laid down in the constitutional government of Great Britain than that the House of Lords cannot interfere with the financial measures of the Government. The last interference on the part of the House of Lords was, as honourable members are aware, in the case of the paper duties, and that is many years ago; and then, Sir, the House of Commons answered their claim for interference by maintaining their right, as guardians of the public purse, to deal with financial measures in such a manner as they determined upon, stating,—

“That this House has in its own hands the power so to impose and remit taxes and to frame Bills of supply that the right of the Commons as to the matter, manner, measure, and time may be maintained inviolate.”

Sir, whatever we may do we cannot prevent the other branch of the Legislature from claiming that which is in its own hands. This brings me to the last consideration; and I shall refer to this point a little more fully—that is, as regards the consequence of our action should we throw out this Bill. I have stated, Sir, and I regard it as increasingly important the more I look into it, that I feel that the consequence of our action will be so great that we may well pause before proceeding to throw out the Bill. We may depend upon it that if we throw out this Bill there will not be an expression of sympathy throughout the length and breadth of the land in our favour. Our wives, children, sisters, cousins, and aunts will perhaps sympathize with us; but we shall be universally condemned from one end of the colony to the other.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN.—No.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—The honourable member may say “No;” but that shows how utterly he fails to realise public opinion.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN.—That is a matter of opinion.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—If we throw out this Bill, what will be the position of the Government and Parliament? This is one of the measures on which the financial proposals are based; and neither Government nor House of Representatives can allow this matter to remain in a quiescent state if this Bill is thrown out. They are bound to take action; and were I in the place of my honourable friend I would say unhesitatingly to the Council, “If you throw out a measure so intimately connected with the finances of the

colony as this is, you must get some other persons as representatives of the Government in this Council. I, as representative of the Government, call upon you to support the Government by passing their financial measures;" and if their financial measures were not passed I should undoubtedly feel it my duty to leave upon the Council the responsibility of their proceedings. I feel that, under such circumstances, I could not conduct the business of the country. That is a matter for their own consideration—but probably another course would be adopted, and this in accordance with that line of policy laid down by the House of Commons in the case to which I have referred. They then maintained that they had the power in their own hands—the inherent power. The Government will recognise that they cannot allow their financial measures to be defeated in this branch of the Legislature, and they will adopt the course that is undoubtedly open to them of introducing into the Appropriation Act a clause providing that the present year's amount to be paid under that Act shall not exceed the amount stated in this Bill. I should be sorry to see such a course adopted. It is only under extreme circumstances that it would be justifiable. I do not hesitate to say at once that, if this Bill is thrown out of the Council, the financial proposals of the Government, which depend so much on the passing of this measure, would suffer: and they would be quite justified in adopting that extreme course. I ask, then, the Council to fully and deliberately weigh this matter, recognising the responsibility attaching to their votes, and not to be influenced by any feelings of regard to themselves, but to regard, on the contrary, what is the best for the interests of the country.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I shall have a very few words to say upon this matter, and chiefly in reply to the speech which was made yesterday by my honourable and learned friend the Attorney-General. Now, I have had so long and intimate acquaintance with my honourable friend that I am able to tell, by the tones of his voice, whether he is uttering his personal conviction or is speaking from his brief. It is not, therefore, necessary for him to assure me—as I am sure he is ready to do—that, when he stated yesterday that I was setting myself to oppose the policy of the Government—traversing their policy—and that I was actuated by sordid motives—the sordid motive of endeavouring to obtain more money for my services in this Council than the colony was disposed to give me—he knew the motive of my conduct in this business—

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I beg my honourable friend's pardon. I said just the opposite to what he has represented. I said I did not think any person in his position would do so: on the contrary, he was acting from conviction, and not from any sordid motives.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—But he was good enough to say that other people might not be so charitable. Sir, I am not an opponent of the Government. I am, by constitution and temper, a supporter of authority on all occa-

sions. If I were disposed to be an opponent of the policy of the Government I should be in this difficulty: that I do not know what the policy of the Government is. Sir, I venture to say more—that my honourable friend does not know what the policy of the Government is. He is the brain of the Government; he is the Ulysses of the Government camp; and yet I venture to say that he does not know, nor does the Premier or any member of the Government of this colony know, at this moment what is the complete policy of his Government. The process is going on; it is being developed, but it is not yet crystallized. What we do know is that they propose—and we all concur—to endeavour to make ends meet by retrenchment, by additional taxation, and by borrowing to cover existing deficiencies. That is all we know. That is not a statesmanlike policy in the largest sense of the word, or the policy which I expect to see developed by my honourable friend and his colleagues. And I could not, therefore, oppose what I do not understand. But there is a part of the policy which I do understand, and I support it most cordially, and, instead of endeavouring to thwart the policy of retrenchment, I am endeavouring to assist my honourable friend in taking it to a further extent than he or his colleagues seem willing to take it. I desire to save the expenditure by the colony of £5,000 a year during the whole currency of the Parliament for purposes which I believe to be unnecessary. Looking at the question of the policy, I ventured to point out to my honourable friends of the Council the rocks upon which our policy has hitherto split and been wrecked. I pointed to the extravagant and useless expenditure on railways; I pointed to the extravagant and useless expenditure on harbours, for the purpose, apparently, of taking traffic from the railways that the colony had gone to the expense of constructing; I pointed to the enormous waste in constructing works on gold-fields for the purpose of procuring parliamentary support; and I pointed to the wasteful expenditure which is going on in opening lands for settlement when we have no settlers. But there were two leaks in the Exchequer—the extravagant expenditure upon national education and the extravagant expenditure amongst local bodies—which I failed to notice. Sir, the expenditure among local bodies grows in an inverse ratio to the progress of settlement. Settlement, for years, I am sorry indeed to say, has been at a standstill; but the expenditure by local bodies has not ceased to progress. Now, these local bodies are debauched by the subsidies which are offered to them—by the facilities which have recently been afforded to them of obtaining cheap money. There is no one, who has himself had the misfortune to be a ratepayer under these fortunate local bodies, who does not consider that the rates are altogether in excess of the needs of the local districts, and that they are imposed for no other purpose than grabbing a share of the Government subsidy. We had a return upon the table here last year showing that, under the

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Government Loans to Local Bodies Act, more than a quarter of a million of liabilities and expenses had been incurred within the first three or four months of the Act coming into operation. I have asked for a return to be furnished to the Council of the expenses, in continuation of the previous return, up till the 30th September last; and I shall not be surprised myself, and the members of the Council need not be surprised, if, when this return is laid on the table, it shows that our liabilities under the Act amount to half a million of money. These are all points which, I am sure, will not escape the attention of the Government, but which certainly have not yet been declared as entering into their programme. So far from opposing the Government, I have the most earnest and honest hope that, in regard to the questions to which I have made reference, their policy will be such as I can cordially support. One gentleman told us that public opinion would condemn us if we adopted this resolution. Sir, there is no one in this Council who has more respect for a well-informed and intelligent public opinion than I myself have. But I have no respect for a public opinion that is what I call "shoddy" in character—a public opinion which is manufactured *de die in diem*, a public opinion which is manufactured and promulgated by self-constituted high priests of the temple of knowledge, whose origin is certainly not divine. I have been engaged, myself, in the manufacture of public opinion. I have had my hand upon the machine, and I know exactly how to appreciate the value of the product. I am not afraid that the people of the colony will condemn me for having used my humble endeavours to save them £18,000 in gratuities to representatives—an expenditure which, in my opinion, is absolutely unnecessary. Sir, I need not detain the Council longer, and I do not suppose anything I could say would alter the decision of the Council upon the subject; but I think that there ought to be a permanent protest recorded on the minutes of the Council against the departure from the system, in respect to the payment of members, which has been established by law in this colony. Sir, I have heard no sufficient reason whatever to justify that departure. It is an invidious distinction, which I resent with all my force. I do not want more pay than is proposed to be given by the Bill which is now before the Council; but I do want that encouragement shall not be given for illegal practices at elections; I do want that subsidies shall not be provided by the State to reimburse expenses incurred in the evasion or violation of the law, or for expenses incurred for personal purposes, which can in no sense be called general, and which, if incurred, should be defrayed by those persons by whom and for whose interests they are incurred. I am quite clear upon that. These expenses are not constant; they do not occur in every case. One-third of the members of the House of Representatives represent city or suburban constituencies. They can travel from one end

to the other of their district for 8d. Many honourable members declare their unwillingness to accept this *douceur*. One-half of the communications which members receive during Parliament are applications from friends anxious for billets, and most probably the other half come from gentlemen who have axes to grind, or from local bodies which have little jobs to be accomplished. Sir, I say that the colony is no more, as a whole, bound to supply funds to reimburse members for these expenses than the keeper of a dairy is bound to allow rats which surround his cheese to get into it for their supper. I have no doubt my honourable friend will be able to carry these Bills; but I am very sorry that he thought it necessary to warn us that if they were not carried they would be forced down the throats of the Council by that process which is known as "tacking."

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—My honourable friend is mistaken. I said nothing of the kind.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I am not in accord with some members of the Council upon this question of the privilege of the Council—as to its power and authority of dealing with money Bills. But I have very clear and distinct faith on that subject, founded not upon parliamentary custom, but upon written law. I look to the Constitution Act, and I find that there is one exception stated there to the power of the Council in dealing with money Bills, and that is, that those Bills shall not originate in the Council. That being the exception stated, I think my honourable friend himself will admit that, as a matter of legal construction, the general powers are held by us. However, I shall not discuss that question now; but I hope that, if the Council should refuse to read the Honorarium Bills a second time, honourable gentlemen in another place will not be rash enough to provoke a conflict with this House upon the question that the Council has refused to allow them to take more money from the public purse than the members of this Council think they are justly entitled to. I have no fear of a conflict of that kind. But, if it did occur, I should, in my place in this Council, not hesitate to defend the right of the Council to deal with measures of that kind; I should be prepared to move that the Appropriation Bill itself should be read that day six months, and leave to the other side the responsibility of the mischief they provoked. I have talked upon this subject very much more than is usual with me; and I have said my last say upon the question. I hope this motion will be recorded in the minutes of the Council; and I am quite satisfied that the Council shall deal with the Bills as it deems best without further interference on my part.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—The suggestion made by the Hon. Mr. Reynolds, that the Government should withdraw this Bill and reintroduce it in a form exactly in conformity with his views, is one which, I think, can only have been dictated by the natural benevolence of my honourable friend's disposition; but, much

as we may admire this disposition, I venture to take the opportunity of informing my honourable friend that, although I have no doubt that the Government will take this suggestion, or any other suggestion that he may make to us, at its true value, we are not in a position to accept his recommendation. The Hon. Dr. Pollen, in the course of his earlier remarks, informed us that the payment of honorarium to the members of both Chambers for a number of years past has had nothing to do with our financial difficulties. I am not aware that any one ever suggested that it had. Then, Sir, the honourable gentleman proceeded—

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I said, “did not cause them.”

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—Precisely; which is practically the same thing. Then, my honourable friend informed us, in his rather lengthy remarks, that the real cause of the misfortunes of the country was the expenditure which has taken place on public works, and our extravagance in other such ways, and that small economies were of no use in a case of financial difficulty such as ours. I have heard exactly that argument used over and over again for many years past when any attempt whatever has been made to promote a spirit of economy in the country. It is because the Government held that vigorous measures were necessary that they came to the determination to give effect, as far as they could, to the very distinct expression of opinion in the colony in favour of retrenchment on a large scale, and have brought forward the proposals to Parliament which they have done. And, in point of fact, that is the main ground on which this Government took office. In saying this I may say that it has become our duty, from the position we have taken up in regard to it, not to swerve in the smallest degree from the lines we have laid down, in obedience, we believe, to the voice of the constituencies at large; and that, without making such threats as have been alluded to by my honourable friend who has just spoken, we, without making threats at all, feel it necessary to say, once again, we consider it our duty to adhere to that position. There are few persons who have had any experience of the financial affairs of this country who will be found to disagree with the Hon. Dr. Pollen in his remarks as to the frightful extravagance and the unexampled expenditure which have taken place during the last fifteen years on public works and other objects. But it is also, at the same time, true that economy has to be practised in the direction of the annual expenditure—far more practised than we desire to see it—owing to the great rate at which the interest on the public debt has progressed; and that, if there should be any hesitation in taking vigorous and consistent steps in the direction of economizing in our ordinary expenditure, we shall find that we shall only go from bad to worse, until measures similar to those the Government propose will have perforce to be adopted. We have deter-

mined, in pursuance of the plan, we have adopted, to bring, if by any possibility we can, our ordinary expenditure within revenue; and that is the tendency of the proposals which have been laid by the Colonial Treasurer before Parliament. This is part—possibly not a large part—of these very proposals; and I say it is one of those parts that are essential to the whole—it goes hand in hand with the general reduction in ordinary expenditure. We trust we shall be supported in reducing the expenditure of public money on public works within reasonable limits; and I submit that this has been the character of all the proposals which have hitherto been laid before Parliament this session; and we have given no evidence whatever of any desire to continue the rate of expenditure such as has been condemned by the Hon. Dr. Pollen. Under these circumstances, I fail entirely to understand how my honourable friend can say that he has no idea of what the final policy of the Government is, and that it is going to be developed piece by piece. Has my honourable friend ever read the Financial Statement? Has he ever examined the principles of the Government in regard to the very measures which he has now said that he has frequently urged should be adopted? Has he considered the principles in reference to the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act? I may say that the Statement bristles with the very kind of economies that my honourable friend says ought to be made. I submit that he has neglected to study the proposals of the Government, and he has rashly condemned them without having made himself ordinarily familiar with them. He has accused us, or, at all events, suggested that we have failed to recognise the importance of a reduction in the educational expenditure; whereas this is a leading part of our economies. It is one on which, no doubt, a great difference of opinion exists, and one on which the Government has received, and is likely to receive, and has expected, a large amount of criticism. But how my honourable friend can find it possible to say that we have neglected this important branch of the subject of economy, or that we have failed to recognise the importance of a less wide distribution of subsidies to local bodies, I am entirely at a loss to understand. Without desiring to occupy more time than I can possibly avoid, I may add my testimony, having been a member of the House of Representatives for a number of years, to that of the Hon. Mr. McLean and other members of the Council in regard to the item of additional expense of members of the House of Representatives. There are a large number of districts in the colony where, putting altogether aside the question of election expenses, there are very heavy expenses during the recess which it is absolutely impossible for a member to escape. Not only are there the telegrams which have been spoken of, and the additional subscriptions, and so forth; but in the larger country districts the necessary cost of travelling in order to discharge the recognised duty of members—that of meeting their constituents

*Hon. Mr. Stevens*

in the different centres of population in the districts—entails expenditure which is absolutely unavoidable, and which is very large; and I submit that this alone is quite sufficient ground for making the distinction of £50 for the additional expenses proposed in this Bill. I will, further, say that, as regards meeting the expenses of elections, an amount of £50 would be absolutely inadequate to meet contested elections in a general way. But there are the other expenses, which, I venture to think, should be quite a sufficient warrant for passing this clause in the Bill. I am not going now into any question of the dignity of the Council. I do not recognise that this is involved in the question at all, either in the Bill or in the motion. But I do make this appeal to honourable members. It is unnecessary to say much after the appeal of the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse; but what I do say is that, as a member of this Chamber, I do most sincerely trust that it will itself support the Government, whatever that Government may be, in endeavouring to rescue this colony from its financial difficulties. A responsibility of the gravest character rests on this Chamber. There are few who have studied the financial condition of the country as some of us have done, myself amongst the number, but know the urgency of setting our finances in order. I once more beg honourable members—whether at the cost of a certain pecuniary sacrifice, whether at the cost of a little dignity—to aid any one in entering upon a course which has become absolutely necessary for the well-being of the colony.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT.—I had hoped, and had been led to believe, that the question of honorarium would very briefly engage the attention of the Council, and that a decision would probably be arrived at after very little discussion. But, as many honourable members have spoken on the subject, I must be indulged for a few minutes while I give my reasons for the vote I am about to give. It is understood by members of the Council that the motion which is avowedly under discussion—for the Bill seems to be under discussion also—is in opposition to the Bill; that it conflicts with the Bill which is immediately to be brought before the Council. I must therefore vote against this motion, but I do not see how it can be done directly. It can be done, but only by means of carrying “the previous question.” Those who vote in the negative would say that this Council will not “concur willingly with the House of Representatives in any reduction of allowances to members which shall maintain the equality of treatment between the two Chambers established by ‘The Parliamentary Honorarium and Privileges Act, 1884.’” Those who wish to set aside the motion should resort to the expedient of “the previous question.” Although much may be said for an equality of payment to the members of both Houses—and I admit it is reasonable in one point of view, for the duties of members of both Houses are of equal importance, and they are engaged on the same legislative duties, and are the same time away

from home and its occupations—still, it must be apparent that the duties of members of the two branches of the Legislature are unequally onerous and troublesome. The labours of the members of the other House are very much greater than ours; they begin before the session begins, and close long after its termination; and during the session their labours are much more exhaustive and wearisome. I think, therefore, they may fairly command a higher honorarium. But this difference may be overestimated, and I think it is too liberally allowed for in the Bill before the Council. As to the compensation which is supposed to be given for the expenses in connection with elections, and so on, I may say that, if there are four sessions in this Parliament—that of 1887, 1888, 1889, and 1890—the members of the other House will be too liberally recompensed for their additional expenditure on that account. But it is unbecoming to set aside any measure coming from the other House having for its main object the reduction of parliamentary expenses. One member says that this Council will be lowering itself in the estimation of the general public if we agree to the proposed reduction; but I think we should be lowering ourselves very much more in the estimation of the general public did we not willingly accept the Bill. I am chiefly influenced, I may say, by the consideration of the unwisdom of any action which might be interpreted into a want of sympathy with those doomed to the merciless process of retrenchment.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—I had proposed to make a few observations on this matter, but I deferred my address to the Council in the hope that those who favoured the views of the Hon. Dr. Pollen would come to his assistance, and would argue the case further from their point of view. But it seems that the whole duty of upholding this view is to be devolved upon him alone. The Hon. Dr. Pollen told us, in effect, that in certain circumstances he would enter with a light heart into a conflict with the other branch of the Legislature. He claimed for the Council the power to meddle with money Bills except in the initiation of them. I hope that this view does not commend itself to members of this Council, for most certainly, if the Council should be so ill-advised as to enter into such a conflict, not only would the prestige and dignity of the Council be very much lowered in the result, but its influence for good also. There is no constitutional principle more firmly established than that it is not possible for any but the representatives elected by the people to initiate or govern taxation. I hope, therefore, that this view, at any rate, will not have countenance from the Council. A great deal has been said as to the loss of dignity of this Council which would follow the acceptance by its members of a lower money-allowance for the performance of their duties than is given to the members of the more popular branch of the Legislature. I by no means see that the fact of receiving payment necessarily lowers the dignity of the recipient

of that payment; but I do say this: that when very high functions are performed—I know of none higher than the function of legislating for a people—in that case those who perform those high functions increase their dignity not by the amount of their pay being increased, but by performing them for little pay or none at all. And I hope that this view will be acknowledged by honourable members before they give a most momentous vote. I look with great alarm on the way in which this question may be treated by the Council. I feel quite sure that the Council has now arrived at a critical point of its existence, and on the course which may be taken by honourable members in regard to the settlement of the question now before us will depend to a very great extent the future usefulness of this branch of the Legislature. I hope, therefore, that it will not adopt this motion, which is in opposition to the Bill which will shortly be before us, and which, in fact, we are now considering and debating as fully as the resolution of my honourable friend opposite. There is no doubt, theoretically, if the principle of payment of members is adopted, the members of both branches of the Legislature are entitled to equal payment. I do not think a word can be said against that position. But, without going into the details of the items of expenditure of members of the other branch, which we are not called upon to inquire into, I would say that it is within the knowledge of every member of this Council—that it is a matter of common knowledge and of notoriety—that the members of the other branch of the Legislature are put to much greater expense in the performance of their duties than the members of the Council are. I would therefore pass this part of the argument by altogether, only appealing to the general knowledge of the subject which we all possess. If this is conceded, then I say this Bill which the Government have introduced is not open to the objection which seems to be raised against it in the terms of the resolution of the Hon. Dr. Pollen. It says,—

“That this Council will concur willingly with the House of Representatives in any reduction of allowances to members which shall maintain the equality of treatment between the two Chambers established by ‘The Parliamentary Honorarium and Privileges Act, 1884.’”

I say that, if it is conceded that members of the other branch of the Legislature must necessarily be put to greater expense in the performance of their duty than the members of this branch are put to, it follows that, if the same sum of money were paid to both, there would be then no equality of treatment—there would be an inequality of treatment. Therefore, it seems to me, the Bill is not open to the objection which my honourable friend opposite urges against it. Recently we had before us a question of limiting by law the number of the members of this Council. The views I expressed were adverse to the adoption of a limit, and I think the way this question may possibly be settled affords a strong argument for the posi-

*Hon. Mr. Oliver*

tion I then took up. There is no doubt that if the Council rejects this Bill there are several ways in which the views of the Council may be overborne. We have not been threatened by the Government at all. It has been stated that the Government threatened the Council with what would be the result if they rejected the measure. We have had no such threat. We were warned that the result might not be desirable from the point of view of this Council; but there were no threats used. But, still, it is within the knowledge of us all that there are some ways in which the opposition of the Council can be overborne. A tack has been mentioned by the Hon. Dr. Pollen, and there may be a number of appointments made in the Council sufficient to overbear resistance. I hope, Sir, none of these alternatives will become necessary. I sincerely hope that the Council will on this occasion adopt the course which prudence and wisdom dictate. From my point of view, having already made the Council aware that I was not a believer in the payment of Councillors at all, I shall not be misunderstood if I say that the Bill is deficient in one small particular. It is in its failure to make some larger provision for the expenses of members in attending the second session of Parliament during the same year. If the principle is adopted that a sufficient amount should be paid members to reimburse them their expenses, then £50 for the second session will not be sufficient; and on that ground I think the Bill is defective. But that does not apply to the current year, because every member of the Council who has attended the first session this year has already received £210; and, therefore, for this session that objection would not apply. But we have not only to consider this year, but the future, and I think the Bill is in that particular defective from the point of view of the Government, that a sufficient sum must be paid to reimburse expenses. But that is only a small defect, and can be easily corrected at a future time. I urge the Council not to place itself in a false position by the rejection of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN.—As I think the reduction affects every member of the Council personally, I think they should all have an opportunity of expressing their opinions in Parliament. The remarks I am about to make on the subject are not uttered in any party spirit at all. I belong neither to one party nor to the other. As far as the present Government are concerned, I have every respect for them; but, with regard to some of their measures, I am sorry to say I cannot quite approve of them, and the present is among that number. In reference to a remark which fell from the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, that members of another place were quite prepared to sacrifice their principles, and that members of the Council are not so prepared, now, Sir, it is quite easy to conceive that the members of the House are so prepared, because every one of them, without doubt, has the greatest confidence in himself, and thinks that he, at all events, will be returned. There is no doubt, in

my opinion, that that is the feeling of members in another place. And, what is more, of course they have been elected to carry out a retrenchment policy, and they knew very well that if they rejected the reduction of members in their own Chamber they would be flying in the face of the instructions they have received from their constituents. With regard to members' expenses, I have heard it stated by several members of the other House that it is necessary that they should have a larger honorarium to meet their expenses. I totally disagree with that. I think it is a wrong principle that the representatives of the people should be put in by their self-seeking; my opinion is, that the candidate should be sought out by the constituency, and should be picked from the few men who are best capable of looking after the interests and welfare of the colony. It is well known that wherever representative government is in existence the candidates who come forward have objects of their own to serve, rather than the objects of the people whom they profess to serve. It is true that in Great Britain there are many gentlemen of great wealth and leisure who desire to be in the House for the sake of the position; but in a colony like this, where there are comparatively few men of wealth and leisure, they cannot afford the time and expense connected with attending this Assembly without considerable loss to themselves, unless it is recouped by a considerable honorarium. It is not merely the expenses of attending a session that have to be considered, but it is what a man may lose by being away from his home, business, or profession. We have a gentleman who lives not a hundred miles from the post-office in Auckland, who says that every day he is absent from that neighbourhood he undergoes a loss of £25. There are many others in a very similar position, either professional men or business men. I consider that when gentlemen come forward and sacrifice their time at a very large expense some consideration should be given to them. It was true that, in the case I mentioned, the existing honorarium is a very small consideration for such loss. I would prohibit every candidate for the House of Representatives in any way soliciting a vote, or going to any expense in contesting a seat in the House of Representatives; and I maintain that it should be made criminal to do anything of that kind at all. Let him, as a representative, be sent here by the will and wisdom of the people; and let members not be men who are seeking their own personal objects, or who desire to grind their axes. If no honorarium were given, what would be the result? The House would consist to a very large extent of wealthy men. That I should, personally, be delighted to see, because, at heart, I am a thorough conservative. But we are a democratic country, and to go back to that is out of the question. Therefore I maintain there should be sufficient honorarium to pay members their reasonable expenses. It should not be sufficient to create a class of politicians who would make it a profession. I should not be in favour of that, as

it would probably have the effect of raising up a number of carpetbag men, who would make their living out of the country at the rate of £300 a year. We have had a comparison of the work done in this House with that done in the House of Representatives. It has been stated that the members of the other House have to undergo much longer sittings than we have to undergo. But the reason of that is that they waste so much time in mere simple talk; and to what purpose?—not talking upon the merits or demerits of the Bills brought before them, but merely to turn out the existing Government and get into office themselves. As to the value of the work, I consider that, if that were taken into consideration, we ought to have in this Chamber double the pay they get in the other Chamber, because I look upon it that the work done in this Chamber is far more valuable. Here we go into the Bills thoroughly, and do efficiently the work that is placed before us; whereas Bills are sent from another place in order to be thoroughly criticized and mastered and improved in this Chamber. I cannot help thinking that the real object of this Bill is simply to further the interest of a certain class in the colony who desire to take advantage of the benefits arising from measures of this kind, and to obtain a power against the interests of the people and the democracy of the colony. I shall certainly vote in favour of the resolution of the Hon. Dr. Pollen.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK.—In reference to the question now before the Council I wish to state my opinion. Upon a former occasion I had the honour of bringing before the Council a resolution endeavouring to effect retrenchment by a reduction in the honorarium. But it will be remembered that on that celebrated occasion I got rather "sat" upon. I did not get that hearty support of honourable members which I am glad to see the Bill before us now is getting. I am much pleased to see the Bill is now introduced, and I hope it will be agreed to. I thoroughly agree with every word that the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse has uttered on this subject. He exactly represented my views in a manner better, perhaps, than I should have expressed them myself, and therefore I need not detain the House any longer. I think there is a difference between this body and the other Chamber which has not been alluded to, for, while we retain our seats, no matter what happens, for life, those gentlemen are liable to lose theirs by dissolution even before they have had an opportunity of reimbursing themselves. I shall give my hearty support to the Bill, and shall be very glad indeed if the Council will support it.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I desire to say that, although I did not give my vote for the suspension of the Standing Orders, still I am very glad that this resolution proposed by the Hon. Dr. Pollen has come on for discussion before we come to the consideration of the Bill; because I think, no matter what has been stated and what reasons may have been assigned, it is right that this Council should have an

opportunity of expressing its opinion on this subject before expressing its decision on the Bill; and I was a little surprised that an opportunity was not afforded by the Government earlier, seeing that it was announced in the Financial Statement that resolutions on this subject were to be brought down for the consideration of the Council before any measure was submitted. The statement there is as follows: "The Government will invite the Legislative Council to express, by resolution, its opinion that the honorarium paid to its members should not exceed £100." It was contemplated to do this when the Hon. the Attorney-General brought down his resolution, which, for reasons best known to himself, was withdrawn; and I was glad to see this resolution brought before us, because it enables the Council to give expression to its feelings without embarrassment to any honourable member. I hope the Council will pass the resolution. It expresses what has been, practically, the law of the land hitherto. It was the practice of Parliament that both Houses should be placed exactly on the same footing one with the other; and, without wishing to claim any undue praise for ourselves, I say this branch of the Legislature has taken its full share of responsibility in connection with all matters coming before Parliament for its consideration, and that we do our business in a more business-like manner. We do not devote so much time to mere talking, and we are not to have it thrown in our faces afterwards that we do not sit such long hours as the House of Representatives. I say we do our work deliberately, and free from all the embarrassments which prevail in another place. I do not wish to follow all the remarks which have been made in respect of this proposal; perhaps I do not agree with all that has been said; but I think we shall be doing right to give our assent to the proposal now made. Any other considerations can be dealt with afterwards on their own basis. I may say that it has been found more convenient to consider the Bill along with this motion, so that the same discussion will do for both. While having intimated my intention to support the resolution, I do so in no spirit of hostility to any of the measures of the Government, and I do not consider I am acting inconsistently when I say that I intend to give the second reading of the Bill my most hearty support. I do not consider that that is inconsistent; but—while I am prepared to give this Bill my hearty support, as a portion of those important and necessary measures now being introduced by the Government as a whole in the shape of retrenchment, to which I shall give my hearty co-operation—we are not to be deterred from expressing our opinions upon the way in which these measures are brought down, and I do regret the mode in which this Honorarium Bill has been brought down for our consideration, for it creates inequality which ought never to have been created, and which has never been observed since Parliament came into

being. And, while talking about honorarium, I may refer to what has been made a great deal of—namely, the extra £50 as allowance for expenses to members of the House of Representatives. The expenses of members are not more than they were ten or fifteen years ago, and I cannot see why this extra allowance should be given at the very moment when the severest retrenchment is required; it might have been left over. With regard to the members' expenses for telegrams and so forth, that does not come to anything like the same amount now as it used to do when we had large sums of borrowed money available for expenditure. The telegrams received are not one tithe of what they had been before. As has been said, a very large proportion of these telegrams were applications for assistance in some form or other from individuals or local bodies; and, in reference to the remarks made about the representatives having to bear the expense of sending the telegrams, the course which the members ought to pursue, and which some do pursue, is to send back their communications in reply marked "Collect," so that the burden may fall on the proper shoulders. Although the members of this Council are not so much deluged with communications from persons resident in their districts, still there are those who have occupied the position of representatives in the district, who are therefore largely applied to and who have large expenses to bear, quite equal, in fact, to those which the members of the House of Representatives are put to. I would not concede this allowance, and I should like to have seen that clause struck out; then there would have been a saving in this session of the Assembly in that respect. A great deal has been said about what has been done in the House of Representatives; but the position of the members of the House this session is precisely what it would have been had this Act not been passed. They will receive £50 honorarium and £50 for allowances, and therefore, instead of receiving £105, to which they would have been entitled, they will receive only £5 less. That is the whole difference. My own opinion is that we shall find this item of allowances will be materially increased from time to time, and the expenses will begin to go on again. As regards the Councillors, we are not obliged to attend for the whole session; but, if we do not attend every day of the session, neither do we draw the whole of our honorarium, and this would save the country something. Sometimes we are waiting for weeks, while other parties are settling their differences. We have been told by the Government that this is a part of the great policy of retrenchment which they intend to carry out; and I think that there is no single member of the Council who will not assist in that direction, and join in the hope that this policy of retrenchment will be carried out. I am sure it is the desire of every member of the Council to assist in getting the finances of the colony once more restored to a sound and substantial footing, and that we shall not allow any personal sacrifice of our pockets or feelings to interfere with that.

*Hon. Mr. Bonar*

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—My honourable friend Dr. Pollen has been charged with trying to frustrate the object of the Government in endeavouring to carry out retrenchment; but, Sir, although the charge has been made by a number of honourable members, it appears to me that the charge is a most unfair one—inconsistent with the sentiments which the honourable gentleman expressed. His desire evidently is, and the resolution if carried out would be, to extend retrenchment still further than the Government desire to carry it. I was surprised, on looking first at the Bill, and reading only the first two sections, to see that the effect of those sections would be very largely to increase the expenditure for this session; and, looking at those sections, and looking no further than those sections, I began to cypher out the possible result, and a feeling of astonishment crept across my mind when I seemed to see that the older members in another place were jockeying the younger members, and, in point of fact, the effect of the two first sections would be to give a very large honorarium to the elder members and a smaller one to the new members; in fact, that the elder members would have a large addition to the honorarium that was supposed to be offered by the Bill, and at the expense of the others. But, fortunately, before I proceeded to take the Council into confidence in this matter, I looked at the 3rd clause, and there I found that the other clauses were governed by the final one; so that, in point of fact, the effect, even in this session, will be a very slight reduction. The object of this resolution, and the object, I trust, of the majority of the members of this Council, will be to carry retrenchment still further in this direction, and to maintain that equality of the honorarium given to members of both Houses which has uniformly prevailed from the earliest meetings of the Assembly, and to continue it still further. The supporters of this resolution are charged with endeavouring to introduce inequality. Why, it is the equality which has hitherto prevailed that they seek to continue, and which this Bill seeks to destroy. Some honourable members have rather taunted those who go with the motion with the fact, or what they assert to be the fact, that the only reason in support of the motion rests on the very able speech of the honourable member who moved it. But the speeches of those who express different views have deduced no arguments which invalidate the arguments used by the Hon. Dr. Pollen. The chief arguments in antagonism to his were in regard to the propriety of making additional allowances to the members of the House of Representatives in consequence of election expenses which they undergo; and I think that argument was fairly shattered by more than one honourable member who referred to the subject, by pointing out that the action taken by any candidate for a seat in the House of Representatives was spontaneous. A candidate was perfectly without compulsion in the conditions in which he came forward, and neither he nor his friends had any right to claim for

him any consideration for the expense which he thereby incurred. The result of a candidature at a general election, or at any election, is very much a matter of chance. It may be that A.B. will be elected; but it is quite on the cards that C.D. will be elected; and, if it should so happen that A.B. is elected by a majority of a few votes over C.D., it seems to me extremely partial justice that A.B. should be rewarded for his success, when in the course of the election he has incurred no more expense than, possibly not even so much as, C.D., whereas he gains all the privileges acquired by being successful. He gains the privilege of political power, which every honourable member possesses more or less; he gains the entrée to the best club in the colony; he has access to the library, and has various other privileges which I need not state. And, in order to place the copestone on all these privileges, £50 more is to be given to the honourable member who has won all these things—whilst the other, who might be equally eligible, perhaps more so, simply because he has not been able to poll quite so many votes, gets nothing. That, however, was not the only reason. It is said that members of the House of Representatives have much more work than the members of the Council. To honourable members who have sat in this Council for a number of years the idea that more work is really done by individual members of the other House is very amusing. They certainly keep up longer hours; but I think that the amount of work done, absolute, clear work, is generally confined to a very small number, and that the majority take their work very easily; and I might add a great deal to illustrate what I have said, but the facts are undeniable, and are known very well to all of us. These are the two great claims—namely, election expenses and the amount of work. I do not think that, if the particular amount of work and the character of the work done by the two Houses are contrasted, it will be found that the value of the work done in the other House is very superior. In connection with this question of election expenses, I hope my honourable friend will explain to us how it is that elections can be conducted in Wellington for half the cost of those at any other place. I have been very much puzzled over that problem ever since I was here; and I think it is a problem which the Attorney-General ought to endeavour to solve, for the instruction of the Council. It seems ridiculous, but no doubt there must be some substratum of fact in the matter. What those who support this resolution seek is to maintain that equality which has always prevailed in respect to the matter of the honorarium; and I trust they will be successful. One honourable member strongly deprecated the idea of this Council thwarting the policy of the Government. Other honourable members went a little further, and deprecated the idea of the Council interfering in any way with the financial policy of the Government. The financial policy of the Government was whole and entire, no part of it ought to be meddled with, and

any infraction of any part of it might involve the sacrifice of the whole. The doctrine is not altogether a new one, but it has always appeared to me that the chief value of this Council lay in the direction of the independent action which it was ready to take upon every question. The members of this Council are not appointed here as tools for the Government, merely to register what they decree. If the Council is to continue of any value, if it is to continue to be respected, it must continue to express this independent opinion as to what is brought before it, and to do what it thinks is right, whatever the consequences. I do not at all admit that we are necessarily tied down to what have been called constitutional precedents, if we could only look to precedents in the House of Lords—and I am very well aware it has been the practice to look for precedents there, and to be, to a great extent, guided by what we find has been the course in that very illustrious body. The position in this Council is a totally different one and rests on a very different basis from that of the House of Lords. We hold our position simply upon a paper Constitution. Our powers are statutory, and those we have were derived originally, and perhaps principally, from the Constitution Act; and subsequently these powers have been extended and confirmed in some directions by Acts of the Assembly—the Privileges Act, for example. I deny altogether that this Council is debarred from dealing with questions of finance. I think the position was laid down very clearly by the Hon. Dr. Pollen, that under the Constitution Act all questions of finance in any shape must be initiated in the other branch of the Legislature—by a message from the Governor, usually—but none are to be initiated here. But, beyond this restriction, that of debarring the Council from the initiation of financial questions, there is no statutory prohibition from dealing with any financial question that is brought before us. I am quite aware that the custom has been, and perhaps it is a constitutional custom to follow, for this Council not to meddle with financial questions; but that it does not hesitate to reject any financial proposal if it sees it is wrong to entertain it. An honourable member who sometimes complains of the pliancy of the Council deprecated the idea of the Council interfering with this question, seeing it was a financial question, and attacked what he considered a constitutional privilege which the other branch of the Legislature claimed, to control all financial questions. The Council is not always guided by such timid counsels as these. It will be in the recollection of some honourable members that on one occasion they thwarted and reversed the financial policy of the late Colonial Treasurer at a time when he was in the zenith of his power; and its action no doubt completely subverted the policy that the Government of which he was the Colonial Treasurer laid down. I should be very sorry indeed to think that the Council would fail to show this perfect spirit of independence on any occasion on which it was necessary to exhibit it; and in this particular instance I think we

*Hon. Mr. Mensies*

should be allowing inequality by agreeing to what is proposed in a Bill which is not under consideration now, but which will be brought before us shortly. We should simply invite further trespasses upon our functions, and encourage the other branch of the Legislature to trample still further upon these functions.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—I shall support the motion of the Hon. Mr. Mantell in regard to the Bill under consideration. I had hoped that there would be no discussion at all upon this honorarium question. It seems to me that it would have been very much more dignified on the part of the Council if it had simply accepted the measure without any debate whatever. However, Sir, when the honourable gentleman whom we all regard as one of the most useful and able members of this Council took up the position which he took up and proposed to show us that we were bound to object to the proposals of the Government, I was quite prepared to put aside my own views for the time being, in order that I might hear what fell from the honourable gentleman, accustomed as I am to listen to what he says with great attention; but I am bound to say that, though I can always follow the honourable gentleman with the greatest ease, on this occasion I utterly failed to understand the arguments he was bringing forward. It seems to me that it would be very much more dignified on our part to pass over this extra honorarium which the members of the other House are to have by this Bill, and accept what is voted, without another word. What is to be the upshot of any opposition which we may offer to this Bill? It is all very well to say that we must defend our privileges and must insist upon the necessity of the two Houses being treated in the same way. It really seems to me that that is all simple moonshine. What on earth can it matter to this Council if the members of the House of Representatives have a small addition to their honorarium beyond what we have? I say that nobody who knows anything at all about the matter can say that the members of the other branch of the Legislature are not put to greater expense than we are put to. They have much larger expenses than we have; and, if it were merely a question of this wretched honorarium, surely the argument that we are here for life ought to settle the question. A member of the House said to me yesterday, "My election cost me all the amount which I shall receive during the three sessions I shall be in this Parliament."

An Hon. MEMBER.—He broke the law.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—Not at all. Any honourable member who has fought an election must know that he cannot conduct an election without great expense, especially in a large district. I say there has been no argument whatever in defence of our not passing this measure, and I say, further, that, even if I could feel that I could go with the Hon. Dr. Pollen, I would pocket my dignity for the sake of supporting the Government in the systematic economy which I believe they are anxious to introduce. Even if the position taken up by the Hon. Dr. Pollen were much stronger, I



would still vote for the Government, because I say, if there is one body more than another in this colony whose bounden duty it is to assist the Government in every possible way in retrenchment, it is the Legislative Council; and, whatever you may say about ignoring the *vox populi*, and not caring for public opinion—and I quite admit we ought not to be swayed by any fear of public opinion—I do not think we ought to ignore and put aside altogether from us the light in which we shall appear to the people, as obstructing the measures of the Government. I say it is a matter of very great importance to this Council what view the people will take; and I am perfectly certain of this: that, whatever may be the motive—and I am not imputing any motives whatever; I know that the Hon. Dr. Pollen is quite incapable of harbouring any sordid motives—he and those who are backing him up now ought not to forget that they will be exposed, inevitably exposed, to a charge of having been actuated by sordid motives.

An Hon. MEMBER.—By whom?

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—By the people. I say, from one end of New Zealand to the other, it will be said that a portion, at any rate, of the Legislative Council were anxious to keep the honorarium at a higher rate.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—The honourable gentleman has entirely misstated the whole of what I said. We wish to have no increase of the honorarium on the part of the Council. We wish to save the Treasury of the colony from being called upon to pay, in the next four years, £18,000 or £20,000 for expenses which, as we think, it is not necessary to allow.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—I never for a moment denied that that was the object of the honourable gentleman. I do not say that he does not wish to reduce and retrench to the utmost in his power; but I say the action being taken now by him and some other honourable gentlemen will be regarded in another light altogether; and honourable members must not forget that they are exposing themselves to a charge of the nature which I have described. I do not think the honourable gentleman, with all his influence, will be able to insist upon such a change as is apparently contemplated. The thing will come again in some other shape. I say, again, I think it will be very much more dignified of us to pocket this little difference between the two Houses, and simply pass the measure without any further debate. It has been stated that the difference in the treatment of the two Houses puts an indignity upon us. The honourable gentleman said it was invidious and unjustifiable. I think it would be better if the two Houses were treated alike; but I say that, this having been done, I think it would be much more dignified for us to accept the position without any further argument. It will not hurt our dignity, and we shall be in a much stronger position in the future if we accept this now—we shall be in a position to insist upon further retrenchment, as much as we deem desirable. I am not going to take up

the time of the Council further. The matter has been thoroughly well threshed out, and every phase of the question has been put before the Council. But I do most sincerely trust that this Council will not place itself in the position of obstructing a Government measure which, I believe, is entirely in the interest of very necessary retrenchment.

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—I cannot but regret that the Government cannot see its way to do away with the honorarium altogether. If that had been done all this wrangling would not have been heard. I myself do not like to be put at a lower level than the members of the other House, particularly when I think that the ink is hardly dry upon the guarantee which—in face of the power of the Attorney-General and the majority of the other House—we have fixed in the Midland Railway Bill, which will in future save the colony several millions of money. I do not intend to say any more, except that I intend to support the resolution of the Hon. Dr. Pollen.

The Hon. Mr. ACLAND.—I wish to say how thoroughly I agree with every word that has fallen from the Hon. Mr. Miller. I think it would be, as he said, the greatest mistake we could make to throw any opposition in the way of this Bill. The Bill is not complete; I think it is in some things rather awkward. The main thing which I think is unfair is that, while it proposes that members of the Legislative Council who reside in Wellington shall receive nothing, members of the House of Representatives who reside in Wellington are to receive the whole. Then, the Hon. Dr. Pollen is very anxious to save money, and pointed out several ways in which that might be done. I hope this Bill will be carried, but I do not know what would be the effect of throwing out this measure. The present Ministry are evidently determined to adopt a system of retrenchment. They began by reducing the salary of the next Governor, and also reducing their own salaries; and they call upon the members of both Houses to submit to a reduction of their remuneration. I hope, therefore, that we shall not throw any obstacle in the way of this measure, although we could not stop it altogether. Almost every paper in the colony would be saying, if we rejected the measure, "Here are the gentlemen who are put in for life, and the only thing they care for is the honorarium." I do not say that that would be the case with us, but that is what the papers would say. I dare say we shall see this debate commented upon in the newspapers as it is. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN.—Sir, I beg to say a few words in explanation of the way in which I am going to vote. It must be apparent to every member in this House that each member is determined to assist the Government in carrying out their retrenchment proposals. Therefore the questions are simply these: What are the means to arrive at this retrenchment? and are these means justifiable or not? I fully agree with the motion brought forward by the Hon. Dr. Pollen, and I have stated over

and over again that, if we Councillors were getting nothing, and the members of the other House nothing, I should not have anything to say against it. I do not care whether or not I can afford it—if I cannot afford it I can stay at home; but I am certainly of the opinion that it is an injustice that members of the other House should be rewarded—for what? It is almost in the shape of a bribe to make the gentlemen of the other House willing to pass the Bill. I have been moving in politics very many years, and I have always found that at the elections the people themselves have never the slightest complaint against the Legislative Council. It has happened that candidates have forgotten the services rendered by this Council, and have adopted the rôle of the mountebank, in order to say something to arouse the independent electors against the Council. But, notwithstanding that, the people of the colony are well aware of the reason for having a Council, and know that the savings which have been effected by the Council have been very great. I am positive there is not a member of this Council who would not willingly sacrifice even the little he is going to receive this year, provided this retrenchment scheme was carried out in the general policy of the Government. But what we cannot understand is, why one branch of the Assembly should get pay to which they are not entitled. I agree with the sentiment expressed by the Hon. Dr. Pollen, that the expenses of members are not such that the colony is responsible for them. Either they are responsible for that themselves, or their constituents are responsible. It often happens that in many instances unsuccessful candidates have spent more than the successful one; therefore I cannot understand for my life why it should be that members of the other branch of the Legislature should be rewarded—I call it rewarded, and nothing else. It is not due to them in the least. It has been stated, and rightly so, that this retrenchment will reduce the honorarium of the old members of the House by only £5, while the members of the Council are asked to contribute more than 52 per cent. We, however, do not object. We say, "As retrenchment is the order of the day, let it be carried out generally, and not partially only." With reference to the Acts which come before us, we should try to see how far they can be made effective. But I say this cannot be altered in any way, except for expediency, and I am most willing to assist the Government in that. I shall vote for the motion of the Hon. Dr. Pollen with all my heart; but, if the Government could see their way clearly to alter the Bill and reduce the honorarium in an even manner, I would vote for the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—As I see there is a desire on the part of the Government that I should withdraw the amendment I have moved on this question, I think it will simplify matters very much if I do so.

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND.—The straw has been well threshed out; yet I must say a few words on this subject. The previous question, which has been withdrawn, meets my view com-

pletely. I feel very much surprised at finding so much feeling shown by honourable gentlemen. I recognise the force of the arguments used against the expenses of members in connection with elections being paid by the State. I think there is a great deal to be said against it; and had that motion had reference to that proposal I should have supported it. I do not care what the newspapers or any uninformed person may say; but I do care for my self-respect, and I should lose that if I were to weigh personal considerations on such an occasion as this, when the battle of economy is the battle of the colony. The right of the Council to interfere with a financial Bill is not unmistakably denied by the Constitution; but, on the other hand, I think that the thirty-five years or more of precedent during which we have not, on any important occasion, interfered with the finances of the country ought to have established a custom stronger almost than statute. I hope this Bill will be adopted.

The Hon. Mr. SHIRMSKI.—I wish to say a few words before you put the question. It is my intention to support the Hon. Dr. Pollen in the motion that he has made, and I have no fear of any accusation that may be brought against me for the vote that I intend to give. I have only one object in view, and that is to come here and do my duty, and be independent. The Hon. Mr. Oliver remarked that it was a pity that no one among those who intend to support the honourable gentleman got up to speak. The Hon. Mr. Miller has told us that the light in which we should appear would be very bad if we threw out the Bill. I have no object in view in appearing here but solely to do my duty. There may be honourable gentlemen who have other objects in view, and, in the end, may yet receive a very large share of the public money. But I have no other object in view, and, from the commencement of the session till the end of it, I have never been absent from my place in the Council for a single day; but I find there are other honourable gentlemen who have been absent for two months, and then come in at the fag-end of the session and tell us we are getting too much honorarium. Neither was I absent from my duties when a member of the other Chamber, and, as far as this question is concerned, I know my duty to the public. I am willing to forego every shilling of my honorarium if it is in the interests of the colony, and will assist the Government in carrying out their plan of retrenchment. I do not ask for a single penny. I have been twenty-six years in the colony, and have endeavoured to give my assistance and services in various local bodies without pay wherever they were wanted; and it is not from any sordid motive of receiving payment that I am here. As a rule, we find a second session of Parliament in the same year usually occupies a longer period than the first, because, in the first session, usually, a dissolution takes place at the beginning, and the second session occupies a longer time; and no doubt this session would have occupied a much longer time had it not been for the fact that we were approaching

*Hon. Mr. Lahmann*

Christmas time. The Hon. Mr. Waterhouse has stated that honourable gentlemen would receive £260 for the year. That is true for the present year; but what will it be in the future? I have been in the other Chamber when I sat for five months and five months and a half, and I ask the honourable gentleman whether he considers the amount in question sufficient to pay an honourable member's expenses under such circumstances. But I can say this: that I contested four hardly-fought elections, and never have my expenses been more than £20 on any one occasion. I have said to the electors, "If you want my services, and you think they are of any good to you, I will give them you; but to spend money I refuse." In reference to telegrams, a good deal of what has been said is absurd. You must remember that we have been here in Wellington since last April, off and on: that is nine months; and if members are to be charged with sordid motives under these circumstances it is rather unfair. In regard to local charities and subscriptions, many of the honourable gentlemen in the Council are as often called upon to put their hands in their pockets as members of the other House, and, indeed, more so, because they are in what is supposed to be a better position, and they have to put down pounds where others would put down shillings. I know that, for I have had experience of it; therefore I fail to see where the argument comes in about expense. I object to the distinction made between the two Chambers, and shall give my vote for the motion.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—Before the question is put I should like to say a few words in reference to what has fallen from some of my honourable friends around. In reference to what my honourable friend Mr. Scotland has said—that I "could not get elected by any constituency in the colony; and why?—because I know too much;" well, all I can reply is that I do not think the honourable gentleman could get elected by any constituency in the colony; and why?—because he knows too little. I come now to what the Hon. Dr. Pollen has said. He said he was sorry I had charged him with having sordid motives. Now, I have known the honourable gentleman a long way towards fifty years, and I know perfectly well that he knows it did not enter into my mind; and I am sorry that he should have accused me unjustly. I did not charge any single member here with voting on the Bill from any motives of anything but the very best description. But I said I was perfectly certain that the public at large, and the papers as well, would not take the same view of it. Whether honourable members are really voting from conscientious motives or not I really do not know, and did not express any single opinion on it. The Hon. Dr. Pollen has also stated that he did not know the policy of the Government, and that he does not think that we know what our policy is. The Government have been considering their policy for two months, and their policy is before the country. Therefore it is absurd to say that we do not

understand what our policy is, seeing that we have it before the Legislature. There was, at all events, a clear plan placed before the country, and this plan has, I am sure, met with the general assent of the country. I agree, however, with the honourable gentleman's remark that a great deal of our difficulties arose not from the small matters, such as the honorarium, but from extravagance on a large scale. No doubt there has been extravagance on a very large scale; I do not deny that. I am satisfied there has been: but this comes from my honourable friend with not the best grace, seeing that he was a Minister at the time when the greatest possible extravagance came before the country, in the shape of the tremendous scheme for borrowing ten millions.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I was not in the Government in 1873. I went in and took office not for the purpose of assisting borrowing, but as a drag on expenditure.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I will just see how the matter really stands during the time after the honourable gentleman was in the Government. I was not in the Government for several years after the great borrowing policy was initiated; and, if I do not mistake very much, my honourable friend proposed some of the principal measures for borrowing money in this very Council.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—Hear, hear.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—Yet the honourable gentleman speaks of this great extravagance, making it appear as if it were all attributable to members of the present Government. To one member of the present Government, no doubt, it was attributable, because Major Atkinson was then in the Government. The honourable gentleman says we have no policy, except that we do a little retrenchment here and there. I ask the honourable gentleman to look through the Financial Statement. I am afraid he has not read it. At all events, if he has read it, it appears to me he must have forgotten what he has read. Since the Council broke up I have looked through the Financial Statement, and I find it proposes to reduce the Governor's salary, to reduce the Ministers' salaries, and to reduce their travelling-allowances; it proposes dealing with the Ministerial residences; it proposes to deal with Legislative expenditure; it proposes a reduction in the number of members of both Houses; and it proposes to reduce all the departmental expenditure. Then we come to what my honourable friend stated as to another matter. He said that we have been granting too large subsidies to local bodies. I say we have been doing so; but the Financial Statement tells us that this is to end. With regard to the railways, does it not tell him the same thing? Is it not that certain expenditure is to be continued only so far as is absolutely necessary to bring the railways to points at which they can be used, and that then the expenditure is to cease? It provides that no new railways are to commence, and that borrowing is, within a limited time, to cease; and that expenditure on railways and

public works is to cease absolutely. Could anything more have been done? The honourable gentleman tells us that he could show us where we could save £20,000. The great chief he served under in 1878 tells us that he has a scheme which will get the colony out of its trouble. My honourable friend was here with him then. He says that £20,000 could be saved in some way, but he does not tell us how. Possibly he might be induced to sell the secret; perhaps it would be worth something to buy. If he would sell us the secret, and allow me to appraise the price as soon as we got the benefit from it, I would enter into a contract with him in regard to it. The honourable gentleman said—but I am quite sure that it was a mistake on his part—that I stated to the Council that I would compel them to accept the Bill. Could I be so imprudent? It is contrary to my view of conducting matters of this kind—the holding-out of anything in the shape of threats. I held out no threat of any description. I said nothing, except as a matter of argument, to promote the conclusion I desired. Certainly, so far from threatening, I carefully avoided anything of the kind. Why? Because I was quite sure it would rather destroy my object than assist me to carry it out; and therefore my honourable friend was mistaken; and I am quite sure the Council will bear me out that I never made any such threat as has been attributed to me. What I did say, and what I repeat, is that the Government have spent the last two months in endeavouring to sketch out a policy whereby our revenue and expenditure may be made equal—at all events, whereby our expenditure shall not be larger than our income. That is our object. The question under consideration now may not be a very large matter. I regard as of more importance than the saving of the money the example which we shall set. We have set an example with the Governor's salary, with the Ministers' salaries, and with the House of Representatives, with the view of saving expenses as far as possible; and I ask, is the Council going to stand out against the saving of expenditure? My honourable friend says that what they desire is that we should be put on the same footing as the members of the House of Representatives. I have discussed this point before, and shall not go into the matter again. But I am quite sure, if honourable gentlemen will look around, they will see that they will have attributed to them a desire not to decrease expenditure. I do not say that that is what they want, but I know that is what the public will say. That is what they do say now, and that is what they will say. I am quite sure that the Council will bear me out in this: that so long as I have sat in this Council I have been as careful of the privileges and position of the Council as any other member of it; and it is because I desire that the Council should stand well with the public and the world at large that I think they should take a course which would place them above suspicion. This is my wish and my desire.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—The Hon. the

*Hon. Sir F. Whitaker*

Attorney-General stated that I wished him to take back the Bill and make provision in a new Bill to pay my own personal expenses.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—No; I did not say so. I said that the honourable gentleman wished me to take back the Bill and bring in another, the effect of which would be to give the honourable gentleman a larger honorarium.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—There was nothing in my remarks which would lead honourable gentlemen to come to that conclusion. What I want is that the members of both Houses should be put in the same position, and that the Bill should not be retrospective for this session; and I said that honourable members could not recoup expenses out of £50 for this session.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I may explain that I did not say that the Government had no policy. I said they had not a complete policy. My honourable friend must admit that there is a portion of the policy of the Government as yet undetermined, and a very important portion of it—that which relates to the Customs tariff of the colony. The Prime Minister has declared that it was impossible, in the time which was given him, to consider the question of the revision of the tariff. That is a very material portion of the policy of the Government, the most important portion remaining to be disposed of; and it was in this sense that I said the policy had not yet crystallized, that it was in course of development, that it was not complete. I am sure it is not yet complete.

The Council divided.

#### AYES, 16.

Brett	Lahmann	Reynolds
Buckley	Martin	Shephard
Chamberlin	Menzies	Shrimaki
Dignan	Peter	Taiaroa
Fraser	Pollen	Wahawaha.
Holmes		

#### NOES, 12.

Acland	Miller	Swanson
Baillie	Oliver	Waterhouse
Grace	Richmond	Whitaker
McLean	Stevens	Williams.

#### PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Bonar	Barnicoat
Campbell	Pharazyn
Morris.	Kenny.

Majority for, 4.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER, in moving the second reading of the Parliamentary Honorary and Privileges Bill, said,—I think the question that is before us on this Bill has been so fully discussed during the last two days in the Council that I should only be wasting the time of the Council if I went over the ground again. I believe that it has been looked at from every point of view in which it can be looked at, and, under the circumstances, anything further that I can say would not change the views of any honourable member as to the

way in which he is going to vote on this occasion. I hope the Council will feel that this is an important occasion, and an occasion on which honourable members should, setting aside all minor feelings, and in the special circumstances of the case, support the Government in the policy they have endeavoured to lay before us. It is an essential part of that policy that the several reductions should be carried out as provided in the several Bills which follow on the Order Paper. The first Bill, at all events, has been fully discussed. With regard to the others very little, I think, need be said. I apprehend that honourable members will accept these without difficulty, and probably without question. I ask the Council to vote for the second reading of this Bill, and thus enable the Government to complete the policy of retrenchment which they desire to carry out.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—The Hon. Mr. Stevens said that the Government could not take my advice. Had he studied this question he would have seen that it was not only my advice but the feeling of the members of this Council that the Government should put both Houses on the same footing. The principal fault I have to find with this Bill is that it makes a distinction between the two Houses. Of course this has been pretty well discussed; but I think it is right, before I move the adjournment of the debate, to explain my reasons for doing so. No one would sooner advocate retrenchment and support the Government in any scheme that they introduced than myself; but I hope to see the Government schemes put on such a footing that they may include justice along with retrenchment. If the Government had proposed even a much larger reduction in the parliamentary expenditure than what they have, if this reduction had been equal in both Houses I should have supported them in the Bill. There is a very objectionable retrospective clause. The Act provides for "reimbursing members of the Assembly their expenses in relation to their attendance on Parliament, and further to define their privileges." This Bill is simply an amendment of the Act, and I hold that the Government should not entertain retrospective legislation in a case like this, whereby the honorarium of members of the Council will be reduced to a sum that will not reimburse members their expenses for the session. By the present Act it is provided that an honorarium shall be granted to members of both Houses of Parliament of £105. By the Bill it is proposed to grant to members of the House of Representatives who were members during last session a sum of £100, being exactly £5 less than what they are entitled to receive under the present Act. But in the case of the members of this Council the reduction is to £50, being £55 less than what they are entitled to receive under the Act. A great deal has been said about local expenses, and expenses of sending telegrams, which members of the other branch of the Legislature are put to. I have gone through more elections, I believe, than any man in the

colony—that is to say, elections to the Provincial Council and the House of Representatives—and I can say this much: that all the time I was a member for Dunedin, both in the Provincial Council and the General Assembly, my expenses never came to £10—that is to say, not one single election cost me a £10 note. Then, with regard to the expense of telegrams, I know quite well that, up to very lately at any rate, honourable members, if they had to send telegrams on public business, always got them franked, and very seldom paid for the telegrams themselves. Now, I am going to move, *That the present debate be adjourned*, in order to give the Government the opportunity of giving effect to the resolution just passed. By moving the adjournment of the debate we do not throw out the Bill at all. I trust the Government will give the matter their fullest consideration, so that they will be enabled to bring down a Bill in such a shape that it will not cause resistance on the part of the Council.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—Owing to the position I took up with regard to the resolution which has just passed, I have not had any opportunity of expressing my opinion on the Bill. But other honourable gentlemen have availed themselves extensively of speaking on the resolution. I may therefore ask the Council, already wearied with the subject, to allow me grace for five minutes in which I may give expression to my reasons for the position I take in regard to this Bill. I have made it no secret at all that I believe that the honorarium to members of this Council was valuable chiefly inasmuch as it contained a safeguard against the Council being swamped by a Government in a fit of temper or disappointment; and I have repeatedly said that I should always vote for the honorarium until there was some limit placed to the number of members of the Council. It is with great reluctance that I now feel under the necessity of surrendering this safeguard; and I do trust, if this protection is removed from the Council, honourable members will pursue the even tenor of their way without listening to any intimidation or anything of the kind. If any swamping comes, let it come, but let us take it calmly, at any rate. Of course it is easy to understand that, if members may be added to this Council without any additional cost to the Consolidated Fund, the Government might, in its haste, summon a sufficient number of members residing within three miles of Wellington to overwhelm votes adverse to their policy at a particular time. Such a thing may happen; but I only hope that, if we put it in the power of this or succeeding Governments to take such a course, the apprehension of its happening may not in the least degree affect the free and independent exercise of our judgment on any questions brought before us. The time has now come when retrenchment is cried for all over the country, and very wisely so. It appeared to me twenty years ago that it might be commenced then. However, it was not done then, and there is the more necessity for

doing it now. It is proposed in this Bill that honourable members residing in Wellington, or within a certain distance of it, should receive no honorarium. The Government will probably try how the experiment acts. If it succeeds, the Government may, in some future session, propose to carry it further. I shall have great pleasure, Sir, with this limitation, in supporting this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—I think we ought to be obliged to the Hon. Mr. Reynolds for the suggestion he has thrown out. The motion of the Hon. Dr. Pollen which has just been carried has shown what the feeling of the Council is on the subject. The Council declared its desire to be placed on the same footing as the other branch of the Legislature. Now, if this is carried it will afford an opportunity to those who have sent us this Bill to review what they have done and make another arrangement which will do justice and meet our views, and will show that they are not like those persons, referred to by an American writer, who are ready to shed the last drop of their brother's blood for the good of their country.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—I shall feel bound to support the Bill. I think the Ministers have given a sufficient pledge of their desire to effect economy by so severely retrenching their own salaries. I think that the House of Representatives have shown a sincere desire to advance retrenchment by their acceptance of this measure. The country is deeply indebted to them. I could not, however I might be otherwise disposed, Sir, refrain from supporting this measure when I realise the fact that there are a great number of members of the Civil Service who will leave without any commensurate remuneration, and others who will suffer serious reductions in their salary, which mean a great hardship to those who have wives and families to keep. Many of them will be sent on the road to insolvency, and have to remodel their old mode of living at a time when they are least able to do so. In the face of this fact I cannot but support this Bill. I look upon the measure all the same as an incompatibility. It is called an Honorarium Bill, and yet it is to pay expenses. It really ceases to be an Honorarium Bill under these circumstances, and becomes a Payment of Members Bill for the House of Representatives. The absurdity of the Bill is to be seen in the fact of the difference it makes between resident members of the House of Representatives and members of the Council. The contention of the Bill is that any possible City-of-Wellington member of the House is necessarily more valuable than a resident member of the Legislative Council. This is an absurdity. I cannot believe that my services, after seventeen years' experience, are less valuable than those of any possible member for the City of Wellington. To show, further, how the Bill is irreconcilable with itself, I find the principle of the Bill to be that members of the House of Representatives shall have an allowance for expenses of £50 a year, and yet resident members of the House

of Representatives are to receive £25 only, in conflict with that principle. In addition to that, they receive honorarium, whilst resident members of the Council, in one part of the Bill, receive nothing as such, but as members of the General Assembly receive £25 a year for expenses, and this in contradiction to the spirit of the Bill. Therefore I occupy the position of a member of the General Assembly, and am entitled to £25; but as a member of the Council I receive nothing. I therefore occupy the position of a Councillor without honorarium, but am to be degraded to the position of receiving £25 for expenses which I am not supposed to incur.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I think that must be a mistake in the Bill.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—There are more mistakes than that, I can assure my honourable friend. It is, as drafted, an offensive measure. The Bill is unworthy of the Government. When you empty a man's pocket you ought to do it with decent politeness. However, for the sake of the country the Government shall have my support.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—As a point of order, I would ask you, Sir, to decide whether this is one of the Bills having the character in regard to which you have ruled that it is not competent for this Council to alter them in any way.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I can reply to that question, because I have already considered it, as one that might probably be asked. I have no doubt that this is strictly a money Bill. It is a Bill to assist the general financial arrangements of the Government. If it stood alone there might be a question about it; but, as it is a part of the financial policy of the Government, the Council, in my opinion, has no power whatever to amend this Bill. It is before them to reject or to accept it as they think fit to do.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—In that case, then, the Council will be unable, on your ruling, to correct any mistakes in the Bill, such as that which has been pointed out by the Hon. Dr. Grace. Under these circumstances I intend to support the amendment of my honourable friend Mr. Reynolds, and I will do so provided the adjournment he asks for shall be for a short time. I do not myself frequent the lobby, nor hear much of what is going on there; but I have heard, Sir, that a very considerable number of honourable gentlemen who represent constituencies in another place are most anxious that this Bill should not pass in its present shape, seeing the objection which has been taken to it in this Chamber; and it is for that purpose—to enable the Government to ascertain the new views of the House on this subject, and to arrive at some *modus vivendi* between the two Chambers which shall allay the irritation which the present proceedings have undeniably caused—that I venture to recommend my honourable friend the Attorney-General to accept the amendment, and allow a day or two for the adjournment.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The Council will permit me to say that, should there be any

*Hon. Mr. Mantell*

amendment required on the question referred to, about the General Assembly, or anything of that sort, it will be competent to have the correction made by message from the Governor.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—Sir, you having ruled that it is a money Bill, I venture to assert that, when I called your attention to the position of the Bill on its initiation in the Council the other day, your ruling that it could be discussed by the Council was not strictly correct. I called your attention to the fact that the provisions of a certain Act had not been complied with. You said on that occasion that because it did not propose additional taxation my point of order was not in order; and therefore the Government were quite right in introducing the Bill without the order of the Governor, as required by the Constitution Act, or accompanied with the usual certificate which should have accompanied it, coming up from the other Chamber. It seems to me that the two rulings are, with all respect to you, Sir, inconsistent.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I think the rulings are perfectly consistent. The accuracy of the rulings I gave when the question was put to me the other day will be borne out by May's Parliamentary Practice. The rule is this: Where there is a reduction of taxation, it is competent to introduce such Bills. But, where it is the intention to impose taxation, Bills are introduced by message from the Governor or with a verbal recommendation from His Excellency by the mouth of a Minister; and there is no inconsistency in treating this as a money Bill.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—I would ask an explanation, Sir. Are we being asked to pass this Bill with a provision which is confessedly not intended? There is no doubt a clerical error in it, and if a correction could be inserted it would save time.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—Generally speaking, clerical errors can be amended; but I should avoid giving an opinion, and ask for time to consider how far it could be corrected. I should think a verbal alteration could be made. I will proceed to put the question.

The Council divided on the question, "That the debate be adjourned."

#### AYES, 14.

Brett	Lahmann	Shephard
Buckley	Martin	Shrimski
Chamberlin	Menzies	Taiaroa
Dignan	Pollen	Wahawaha.
Fraser	Reynolds	

#### NOES, 14.

Acland	McLean	Swanson
Baillie	Miller	Waterhouse
Barnicoat	Oliver	Whitaker
Grace	Richmond	Williams.
Mantell	Stevens	

#### PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Bonar	Scotland
Kenny	Morris
Peacock.	Reeves.

The Hon. the SPEAKER gave his vote in favour of the "Noes."

Motion negatived.

On the question, That the Bill be read a second time,

The Hon. Captain FRASER said,—I have to say that I intend on this occasion to vote with the Government.

The Council divided on the question, "That the Bill be read a second time."

#### AYES, 18.

Acland	Lahmann	Richmond
Baillie	Mantell	Stevens
Barnicoat	McLean	Swanson
Dignan	Miller	Waterhouse
Fraser	Oliver	Whitaker
Grace	Peter	Williams.

#### NOES, 9.

Brett	Martin	Shephard
Buckley	Menzies	Taiaroa
Chamberlin	Pollen	Wahawaha.

#### PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Bonar	Scotland
Kenny	Morris
Peacock.	Reeves.

Majority for, 9.

Bill read a second time.

#### MINISTERS' SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES BILL.

On the question, That this Bill be read a second time,

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said,—Before you put this question, Sir, I venture to say I have all respect for the Ministry, but I think they have gone rather too far in retrenchment as far as their own salaries are concerned. I think Ministers of the Crown ought to receive a sum which would enable them to keep up their position with a certain amount of dignity, and I do not think £800 a year would enable them to do that. I merely wish to express my opinion that the amount they have consented to accept is insufficient for the position they occupy.

Bill read a second time.

The Council adjourned at twenty-five minutes past nine o'clock p.m.

#### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 8th December, 1887.

First Reading—Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3)—Oamaru Harbour Board Loan Bill—Representation Bill—Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3)—Representation Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

#### FIRST READING.

Pharmacy Bill.

# IMPREST SUPPLY BILL (No. 3).

This Bill was sent by message from the Governor.

Major ATKINSON.—I move, That the message be referred to the Committee of Supply. This is a matter which has escaped my notice owing to the press of business during the past day or two, and it is necessary that it should be considered at once. I hope, therefore, that the House will consent to the Bill being passed through all its stages. Of course, if the honourable gentleman opposite would prefer it being postponed until half-past seven, I shall offer no objection to that course being taken.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I should certainly prefer its being left over until half-past seven, and I think that at half-past seven the honourable gentleman should give us an explanation as to the course of business for the rest of the session. We have asked for this day after day, and the honourable gentleman has simply said that he would not make a statement. When going into Committee of Supply we have a right, even a small minority of the House has a right, to ask for information. We have felt during the present week that the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government has a power in his hands, and is disposed to use it in a very arbitrary manner. I asked whether the honourable gentleman could give us the information on Monday. On Monday he said he would give it to us on Tuesday; but Tuesday has come and gone; so has Wednesday; and here is Thursday, and we have no such explanation: and I think that we ought to have the views of the Government as to the course that business is to take. An important question is as to how the honourable gentleman proposes that we should vote the year's appropriations. How many days does he propose to give us to decide questions relating to expenditure? And especially does it interest a large number of members to know what opportunity we are to have of discussing the proposed alterations in the education system of the colony. I will say no more, but will express the hope that the honourable gentleman will, to the best of his ability, this evening, when the proposal is made that you leave the chair, give the House the information for which I think the House has a right to ask.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, the request of the honourable gentleman would, under ordinary circumstances, be a perfectly proper one, and the Government would be to blame if they were not prepared to give the information asked for. But my difficulty is this: I cannot tell when the honourable gentleman's party will permit the ordinary business to go on. If the honourable gentleman can tell me when this Bill will be finished, which ought to have been finished two days ago, then I will tell him when I can make this statement. If what we hear is correct, it seems impossible for me to make any statement during the day.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Will the honourable gentleman excuse my asking him plainly this: Does he consider two days a long time to consider

and discuss such an important measure as the Representation Bill?

Major ATKINSON.—No, I do not think it was anything too long to discuss it; but yesterday we were not discussing it at all. Last night we were informed by one honourable gentleman that he had been deliberately delaying the Bill all the evening, because he was determined that we should not take the third reading yesterday. We were told that, and we know what took place during the afternoon. I say this: I should have told the honourable gentleman on Monday, as I was prepared to do, until I found the attitude that he and his party were taking up with regard to the business of the House, which is, apparently, a determination to delay—until I found that, I hoped that the Public Works Statement would be delivered on Wednesday, and that we should be able to resume the financial debate on Friday. That is what I should have told the honourable gentleman, and I should have told him what Bills we were prepared to go on with. But it is impossible now for the Government to make any statement to the House in consequence of the extraordinary delays which are, as it seems to me, wantonly provoked by certain honourable gentlemen; and it is possible that we shall have to ask the House to sit after Christmas. That is a possibility, for the Government intend that the House shall not break up until the measures which they consider necessary for the good government of the country are passed. We are not going to leave our work undone in this respect. That is really my difficulty, and I hope the House will understand distinctly that it is from no desire to keep back information, but simply because I cannot tell when the Government business will be permitted to go on. That is, as I have said, the whole difficulty; and as soon as I am assured that only reasonable discussion will take place, and not obstruction, upon the Government measures, then I shall be able immediately to tell the House, and shall be delighted to tell them, what business we propose to take.

Motion agreed to.

On the question, That Order of the Day No. 18 be fixed for half-past seven this evening,

Mr. SEDDON said,—Sir, I cannot allow the remarks of the Premier to go unchallenged. He has said that, if they were ordinary difficulties that the House was under, the statement which he has promised a week ago, and which I say the House should have had in its possession a fortnight ago, would have been made on Monday last. Sir, I say the Premier is treating honourable gentlemen as though they were so many schoolboys; and I, for one, will not submit to this treatment. If the honourable gentleman wishes to conduct the business of the colony in this way, let him take it to himself that, though he may be doing what he thinks will please those who support him, he is not doing justice to the colony. I say there are grave doubts in the colony on very important matters connected with several measures and principles that the Government have submitted; and the longer these delays



take place, the longer matters are indefinite, the greater the loss to the colony. Then, the honourable gentleman, I suppose, referred particularly to myself, when he said that a boast had been made of wilful obstruction. I say this to the Premier: that, so long as the forms of the House are conformed with, it is the bounden duty of every honourable member here to use those forms to prevent measures of the pernicious nature of the one he refers to from becoming law. I say that he has no excuse whatever for saying that he will refuse to tell the House what business he intends to bring forward. I say that it is the Premier who has caused the delay. Why has he forced upon the House and the country a measure which is not to have effect for three years? He was the cause of the obstruction yesterday. Did he not, as Premier, the night before say that if a certain amendment were carried he would resign? He cannot deny that; and he did not resign, but he called a caucus of his party, who obstructed the business of the House yesterday when it met at eleven o'clock for the purpose of asking questions. The Premier then moved the adjournment of the House, and said he intended to make an important statement that day at half-past two. He called together his followers, and arrangements were entered into that, I say, are objectionable, and are detrimental to the welfare of the colony. Then, at half-past two he came here and told us that he was going to recommit the Bill. Was not that obstruction? Had not the House by a very large majority decided that an important amendment should be made? And because the honourable member could not get his way, he obstructed the business by forcing the House to recommit the measure. Then, if he uses force, how can he complain when force is used against him? I, for one, resent his interference with the liberty of full and fair discussion. I object to the gag being applied in any way that the Premier likes or thinks fit to use it. Then, the honourable gentleman, not satisfied with that, threatens honourable members again. He says, "If you persist in the way you are going on, it means that the Government will ask the House to sit after Christmas." Another threat from the honourable gentleman! That is the way he carries his measures; that is the way he always conducts business in this House. It is by constantly holding the whip over those who choose to follow him that he carries the measures that he has carried, and that he himself has so often had to be a party to repealing. I do not care if we do sit up to Christmas, nor does this side of the House: we are prepared to sit here until the public business is done in such a manner as to be satisfactory and profitable to the people of the colony. The leader of the Opposition told the Premier long ago that we were prepared to sit until such time as the business was done with satisfaction to all concerned. If the honourable gentleman wishes to hold this threat over those who support him—to say, "You must be dumb, you must not move; if you carry an amend-

ment again, I shall keep you here until after Christmas"—if he wishes to do that, and if it affects his supporters, it may, but the threat will have no effect on this side of the House. We care not for a threat of that kind. Then, the honourable gentleman speaks of reasonable discussion. Does he mean to say that, when you alter the Representation Bill to the extent of taking away a third of the number of members, we should pass it in less than three days? Then, when an amendment was proposed, the Government made it a Ministerial question and promised the House they would resign, and then backed out of it and made their supporters eat the leak. Is that the way we are to have fair discussion, reasonable discussion? By a majority of five the House has said that they have no confidence in the Government, as plainly as ever language put it. This amendment said distinctly, "We will not trust you with power to dissolve Parliament and send twenty-five members about their business at any time you like. We do not consider you are the gentlemen who should have that power." The Premier said, "We must have that power, and if you do not give us that power we will resign;" and, in the face of that, by a majority of five, the House said, "Resign." Sir, where is the resignation? A caucus was held as usual, and then the day after the Premier got over his difficulty he tries to eliminate altogether from the minds and memory of honourable members what has occurred. And he says that so long as there is fair discussion he does not object. I say that yesterday was wasted by the action of the Government, because they did not accept the will of the majority of this House. The House, by a large majority, decided that it was too great and unconstitutional a power that they wished to hold over members. Sir, we are not at all responsible for the position; and I say this now: that the measure I have been alluding to—the Representation Bill, the alteration in the numbers of this House, the power which the Government wish to have to dictate as to when the electoral boundaries shall be altered—I say that is of such importance that I do not think the House has come to a fair conclusion, and that I believe a further discussion will be of benefit to the country. It may not be of immediate benefit; but when honourable members go back to their constituents, and the people of the colony understand the importance of the Bill, they will say that the Premier has endeavoured to use every means at his disposal in order to burke a fair discussion. I say, Sir, the Premier ought to have taken the House and the country into his confidence as to the business that he intended to propose. He told us up to to-day that he intended to conclude the business before Christmas. I say we should have known a week ago what the Government intend to do. We are told, "We intend to carry through that which we desire; and it means this: that if there is further obstruction—unless you are good boys and do as we tell you, we will make you—we will keep you here till after Christmas." Sir, I say, with regard to

that statement, that I am prepared to stay here after Christmas. I am prepared to take my Christmas dinner in Wellington, and not go home until the business of the country has been disposed of. Let those honourable gentlemen who are not prepared to back the Government go home, and we here shall be able to carry on the business without them. The Minister of Education shakes his head. Sometimes that means something,—sometimes nothing, because there is nothing in it to shake. I say the responsibility of what has occurred rests upon the Premier and not upon this side of the House. The House and the country, I say, have a right to know what business the Government intend to proceed with; and, if the Premier wishes to pursue this course, and say, day after day, on some paltry excuse, that he refuses to take the House into his confidence, the responsibility must rest with him and not on this House. I do not care whether the Government do not tell the House distinctly between this and Christmas what they intend to do. As to my own action, I shall assist in passing what I consider ought to be passed, and I shall use all reasonable means in my power to prevent the transaction of any business that I think ought not to be done. I have told the Premier, so far as the Opposition is concerned, that I belong to a party of one, and that is myself; and anything I say or do I hope he will take in that light. The leader proper of the Opposition has asked a fair question; he has received an answer that is not at all satisfactory. He may be satisfied with that answer, but I am not. Day after day the Premier has promised to make a statement as to what he intends to do, but that statement has been put off on some frivolous excuse. If it would not be too strong or unparliamentary language to use, I must say that I would not give that credence to the statement of the Premier that should be given to the words of one in his position. He told us that he intended that the Public Works Statement should be delivered last Tuesday: but his action with regard to that matter corresponds with his calling the House on Friday in order to make the Government proposals known. The House met on Friday, and it was immediately adjourned to the Tuesday following. The honourable member seizes any imaginable excuse in order to procrastinate. I am prepared to stay here and do my duty. If the honourable member never makes any definite statement, I shall be as much satisfied as if he told the House at once what he intended to do. He is dribbling the business out purposely, so as to deal with only one or two questions. I am told that the Government have decided that the whole of the estimates should be put through at one sitting; that the Government intend to go into Committee of Supply, and Ways and Means, and to force the estimates through holus-bolus. We are to be asked to swallow the whole of these estimates at one meeting, and allow it to rest entirely with the Government as to the way in which these estimates should be passed. Well, Sir, all I can say is that

*Mr. Seddon*

when those troubles come I shall meet them. If they attempt to force the estimates, the responsibility will rest with them if they are obstructed in that proceeding. I am not prepared to sit here calmly and allow the business to be run through in any way the Government please, more especially as the Government have treated honourable members in the way they have done during the last three or four days. I shall therefore resent the action they now propose to take.

Mr. FISH.—I should just like to take the opportunity of saying this with regard to the Representation Bill before the House last night: We are aware that the Bill has practically been rejected, in the form it now is in, by a majority of this House, and we know that that majority was turned into a minority by a threat on the part of the Premier of resigning his position, thereby inducing those of his own party who were not satisfied with the Bill, and who voted with the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West, to recant and do just the opposite. It is not in my province, nor is it my intention, to criticize the conduct of the honourable gentlemen who did that. I am free to admit that they were placed in a difficult position: and at all times honourable gentlemen must pay great deference and consideration to party ties. Therefore I am not one of those who are prepared to say that those honourable gentlemen, in recanting, or in going from the opposition they had previously assumed, have done anything unparliamentary or anything wrong. If the Government have strained the relations between themselves and those of their supporters who have acted in this manner, that is their business. But I say it was and is the duty of the Opposition, seeing that the Bill is now in the position it is in, to obstruct the passage of that Bill as much as it is in their power to do. They were entitled to and ought to use every form of the House to prevent the Bill, of which the majority of the House are not in favour, from being forced on the country until a clear majority of the House were in favour of it. But the position I have taken is this: I said at a meeting of the Opposition yesterday that the Bill ought to be obstructed: that the Opposition as a body ought to obstruct that Bill, and prevent its being made law. A number of the members of the Opposition were not in favour of that course. Had they been in favour of it I should have been prepared to debate the Bill for a considerable time in order to prevent its passing; but I am not prepared to take the onus and responsibility on myself of an individual obstruction. I do not think I should be justified in doing that, and I do not intend doing it, nor have I done it. I do regret that the Opposition did not unanimously, or nearly unanimously, consent to obstruct this Bill to the utmost of their power. I have no hesitation in saying that the position in regard to this Bill is unparalleled; and, if it is not unparliamentary to use such a term, I say it is a most atrocious proceeding on the part of the head of the Government to force a Bill of this kind through

the House, under the circumstances. He has taken a responsibility upon himself which is wrong, and which he ought not to take, and which is unfair to the country. And in saying this I wish again to state that I was pledged to, and am in favour of, a reduction of members; but I hold that we now know so much more of the ultimate results that will accrue from the passing of this measure, and the measure that is going to be brought in next session in order to give it so much more force and effect, so much additional light has been thrown on the whole subject, that we are right in demanding that we should be allowed to go to our constituents, and, after explaining the new position of affairs, to come back either to assent to the passing of the Bill or to throw it out altogether. The honourable gentleman is not doing his duty in taking the high, extreme, and tyrannical course he has done on this occasion, and I feel sure that a number of his own party feel the same way; and the position he has placed some of his party in is a most cruel one. I do not blame them, however, for doing what they feel compelled to do, because I recognise that the ties of party are strong, and must not be lightly broken.

Mr. SAMUEL.—As one of the representatives of a provincial district which will suffer very severely by this Bill, I wish to place upon record that, in Committee, I have done my very best to prevent it from passing. I consider it a very bad Bill; that it will render a very large number of the people voiceless, and unable to complain effectively of the grievances under which they suffer, and that it will create dissatisfaction from one end of the colony to the other. At the same time, I desire to express my great satisfaction that several honourable members have endeavoured to give the House time to consider the ill effects of this Bill, and, notably, the honourable members for Christchurch North and Auckland Central. Both those honourable members have done their best to give sufficient time for its consideration, and have recognised in this what I presume they will admit to be their error in the past—the error of the honourable member for Christchurch North in saying that “the resort of talking out measures is an odious practice, and one which the members of the House should join in discouraging;” and also the error of the honourable member for Auckland Central in stigmatising the discussion on a measure the other night as “a solemn farce.” I am glad the honourable gentlemen have recognised the use of such tactics, and that they have found that if it is in the interests of the colony it is right and proper that they should use such an “odious practice” and play a part in such a “solemn farce.” I think, however, that we have now done enough. There is no use in wasting time struggling further. The majority of the House for some reason—and I believe it is because of the fear of the present Government going out of power and another Government coming in—have determined to carry this Bill, and it seems to me useless waste of time to oppose it. I

hope the House will accept the inevitable, and go on with the business and try to get it finished as soon as we can.

Sir J. VOGEL.—As to the point of order, we should understand what the position is, and I think I may ask it equally on behalf of both sides of the House. At any rate, I may ask for an expression of opinion about passing a measure through all its stages. I want to know, Sir, what position we are in when you leave the chair and we go into Committee of Supply. As matters now stand the Premier cannot move a resolution. The Minister of Education cannot move that you do leave the chair, nor can the honourable member for Wakatipu. I believe they have all spoken. I cannot speak, and a dozen others cannot speak, because they have already spoken on the motion for going into Committee of Supply, if it is considered to be a resumption of that adjourned debate. There are a number of honourable gentlemen who wish to speak, and it is not likely that they will be willing that the debate should be cut short. I cannot see how we can now go into Committee of Supply. I felt it was a mistake the honourable gentleman asking that the Financial Statement discussion should be taken on a motion for leaving the chair. It should have been taken on the second reading of a finance Bill. Practically Supply is shut out until the discussion is at an end. If the discussion had gone on day after day it would have been a different matter. The position is, that there is an adjourned debate on the motion to go into Committee of Supply. The question, That you do leave the chair in order that the House may go into Committee of Supply, has been put, and the debate adjourned on it from day to day. I do not know that there is any rule making it necessary, but the propriety of things requires that the possibility of going into Committee of Supply should be kept open. When the motion that you do leave the chair for the House to go into Committee of Supply is put, we are confronted with an unfinished debate on the financial proposals of the Government, and that surely is not a fitting time to propose to suspend the Standing Orders to put an Imprest Supply Bill through all stages. At any rate, Sir, I should like you to tell us if, when the order, “Committee of Supply,” is called on and the motion is put that you do leave the chair so that the House may go into Committee of Supply, it will be competent for those honourable members who have not yet taken part in the financial debate to then make speeches if they wish to do so, or whether those who have already spoken in that debate will be able to speak again.

Mr. SEDDON.—The order for Committee of Supply stands on the Order Paper in this form: “The Committee of Supply—adjourned debate. (18th November.)” And then there is this footnote: “Financial Statement.—Question proposed, That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair. (*Hon. Major Atkinson.*) Debate. Ordered, That the debate be adjourned until Tuesday next. (*Mr. Walker.*)” Therefore, Sir, when the order is called on at half-past seven o'clock, will you

call on the honourable member for Ashburton, who moved the adjournment of the debate, to resume it? If that is so, we shall be debating the proposals of the Government. In that debate I have not yet spoken, nor have a number of other members. I should like to reserve my right to speak on the Government's financial proposals; and I should like also to speak on the specific motion raised to-day. The position is one of difficulty, and I should like to see a clear course pointed out.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The course of business is not fixed by the Speaker, but by the leader of the House, and what course he will propose to adopt I cannot tell. I suggest, as a convenient course for both parties, that the financial debate should by consent be placed temporarily aside, and that the Premier should be allowed to move that the House should notwithstanding immediately resolve itself into Committee of Supply, which, if agreed to, the next question would be that Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair in order to go into Committee of Supply; which members might discuss or not, as they thought proper.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, if you will excuse my remarking it, I would observe that any irregularity in going into Committee of Supply affects most seriously the privileges the House possesses. Either it is wrong or right that this debate should be concluded. Surely we have made a mistake in not observing the order of the House that the debate should be resumed at a certain time, instead of allowing the Government to put that order down on the Paper, when it could not be resumed at that time, Sir. You have not answered the question I put to you; but have simply expressed your opinion as to a way in which we might get out of the difficulty. Surely we have a right to know what are the exact rights and wrongs of the case. Sir, if you have any doubt as to the course which we should pursue, it would not be unreasonable if you were to take time to consider it, although it would be more convenient to know now, because it might guide us in deciding what should be done this evening. I want to know specifically if, when it is ordered that a debate shall be resumed on a certain day, the Government can have the power of placing the order for resuming the debate lower down on the Paper; and also if, when the order for Committee of Supply is called on, it would be open for us to resume the financial debate. I want information on those two points. Then, I want to know if, when it is moved this evening that you do leave the chair to go into Committee of Supply, it will be considered that any debate which takes place is the adjourned debate, and that only those members who have not spoken in that debate have the right to speak. I should be glad, Sir, if you could enlighten us on those points; but, if you cannot do so now, we would wait till half-past seven, for I am sure honourable members would suffer temporary inconvenience in order to keep all the safeguards that now hedge around the spending of public money by order of the House.

*Mr. Seddon*

Mr. SPEAKER.—I cannot give any fuller information than I have given.

Sir J. VOGEL.—May I ask you, is it possible to go into Committee of Supply without resuming this adjourned debate?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think so. It will be quite competent to further adjourn the present financial debate, and, for convenience' sake, take a formal sitting of Supply to facilitate the introduction and passing of an Imprest Supply Bill.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Then there might be two Committees of Supply on the Order Paper. The debate on the order to go into Committee of Supply to-night might be adjourned, and we should be in the position of having "Committee of Supply—adjourned debate," twice on the Order Paper at the same time. How would it be possible to distinguish between the two? We might go on having half a dozen adjourned debates on Committee of Supply if we could have two. I really cannot help thinking that the debate should have been resumed on the day ordered. Will you satisfy me on that point, Sir—should not the debate have been resumed on the day ordered?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think, not necessarily. It became an order of the day, and the Government have the right to arrange their orders of the day as they choose.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Then, Sir, will it require the general concurrence of the House that we should actually go into Committee of Supply to-night without resuming the adjourned debate, or what course would you suggest?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have given all the information I can give, and cannot answer further questions on the point.

Mr. SEDDON.—May I ask, Sir, if, when the order "The Committee of Supply—adjourned debate," is called on to-night, you will call on the honourable member for Ashburton to resume the debate, as it was adjourned on his motion.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If no other arrangement is made to facilitate business, I shall call on the member for Ashburton to take up the debate; but I understand that a special proposition will be made to go into Committee of Supply, in order that the Imprest Supply Bill may be passed.

Sir G. GREY.—I confess I cannot understand the position we are in—whether we are now to go into Committee of Supply at once to deal with the Governor's message asking for supply, and then resume the adjourned debate, or whether the whole debate is to go on before we can deal with the Governor's message. I think it is desirable that there should be some means by which we could at once deal with the request of the Governor, and I think we should know whether we can do that at once, without going into the whole of the debate on the finances.

Mr. TURNBULL.—It does seem a most extraordinary position, certainly. It appears to me, Sir, looking at the Standing Orders, that we cannot go into Committee of Supply without resuming the adjourned debate in the regu-

lar form. It is a matter for the very serious consideration of the House whether we should go into Committee of Supply without finishing the adjourned debate, because possibly we might be depriving ourselves of the right to resume that debate at all.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, I need only say in reply that it is always customary in the House to assist the Government to get the necessary supply, and I have no doubt the House will on this occasion do as it has always done. I take it that there is no difficulty in the case at all. If my memory serves me there is a precedent in an exactly similar case either in 1879 or 1884, when we had an adjourned debate on the motion to go into Committee of Supply just as we have now, and yet passed an Imprest Supply Bill without resuming that debate. It frequently happens that there is a long debate on the Financial Statement beginning just before supply is wanted, and supply must necessarily be granted before the debate is finished. There is nothing at all irregular in the course that is proposed, nor need there be any inconvenience, because, I take it, it is always the desire of the House to grant the Government the necessary supply. That being so, I assume that when the order for Committee of Supply is called on this evening the general debate will be adjourned until a future day, and, the House having gone into Committee, the whole position, as to the adjourned debate and everything else, will be in exactly the same position to-morrow that it is in now. I do not think honourable gentlemen will find any difficulty in doing that. Of course, when the order for the Committee of Supply is called on to-night, it will be competent for honourable members to speak as much as they like; but it is not the custom of the House to do so when an imprest is wanted, the House being always willing to grant supply without debate. I should have preferred to go on with it now, but the Government have agreed to postpone it till this evening at the request of the leader of the Opposition; and I do not think we shall find any difficulty in proceeding then. When the Governor's message was referred to the Committee of Supply I explained that I had had a message for several days, but in the press of business had forgotten it, and so had omitted to ask leave to pass the Bill through all its stages at once.

Mr. TURNBULL.—If the honourable gentleman moved that the House go into Committee of Supply, I understand that there is nothing to prevent any honourable member getting up and continuing the debate on the financial proposals of the Government.

Sir G. GREY.—I understand, on the other hand, that a motion may be made that the adjourned debate be further adjourned.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes.

Motion agreed to.

#### OAMARU HARBOUR BOARD LOAN BILL.

Mr. HISLOP moved, That the House agrees with the amendments made by the Legislative

Council in this Bill, with the following exceptions: The striking-out of clause 8 of the Bill, as passed by the House of Representatives; the insertion of new clause 5; and the insertion of the word "annually" in clause 6 of the Bill, as amended. The alterations made in the Bill took away the power which was sought, of having the whole of the loans consolidated; and he thought it was a disadvantage that that power should be taken away. He had agreed with the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill that that amendment should be agreed to, so that the works might be proceeded with as soon as possible. There was, however, one clause which dealt with a power of rating. It was doubtful whether that power was not taken away by the Act of last session, and the clause provided that the power should continue to exist; and therefore it should be retained in this Bill. Then, with regard to the provision that the Board should go to the ratepayers before borrowing, he might point out that, as the Board had already gone to the ratepayers, it was unnecessary that they should repeat that operation, and be put to all the trouble and expense which it would entail. As to clause 6, the Upper House, under a misapprehension as to the existing law, had inserted the word "annually." The effect would be that, instead of levying the rates at the time the loan was raised, which was necessary in order to give the proper security, the Board would have to levy a rate from year to year, and that was inconsistent with the provisions of the Rating Act of 1882.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON asked whether it would not be necessary to have some words put in in place of those which were struck out.

Mr. HISLOP thought that would not be necessary, as it was covered by the Act of 1882.

Mr. MILLS said he found some difficulty with reference to this matter. He had not been able to gather the full purport of the explanation offered, as the honourable gentleman's remarks were scarcely audible. He should like to know clearly what exception the honourable gentleman took to the amendments made by the Upper House.

Sir J. VOGEL asked whether the consent of the ratepayers had already been given to the £40,000.

Mr. HISLOP said to £30,000. The authority of the ratepayers was taken for necessary works, which were estimated to cost about £30,000.

Sir J. VOGEL said it seemed to him that the House was asked to break through all precedent.

Mr. HISLOP said the honourable gentleman was fully informed by him last session of the existing nature of the authority given by the ratepayers, and the honourable gentleman at that time went very carefully through the Bill.

Sir J. VOGEL said he remembered having a long conversation with the honourable gentleman as to the apparent evasion of the clauses of the Rating Act, and the honourable gentle-

man then undertook to make the necessary amendment. He understood now that the Board was asking for a larger loan.

Mr. HISLOP said it was at the instance of the honourable gentleman's own Government that the assent was taken from the ratepayers, and afterwards the matter was further discussed between the honourable gentleman and himself, and they substituted £38,000 for £30,000.

Sir J. VOGEL said his Government insisted that the assent of the ratepayers should be taken, and he understood that the honourable gentleman was now asking for greater borrowing-power than the ratepayers had assented to. He was not raising the question as to whether it was necessary to consult the ratepayers so far as the £30,000 went; but, if an additional amount was to be asked for, it was necessary that such additional amount should have the assent of the ratepayers. If the honourable gentleman would make an alteration so that the ratepayers should assent to the additional £10,000, that would be sufficient. He was sure the honourable gentleman must see the fairness of that course.

Mr. TURNBULL had understood the Colonial Secretary to say that there was no necessity for taking a fresh poll of the ratepayers, for the poll for ratification of one of the loans had already been taken. He must, however, have misunderstood the honourable gentleman, as it did not appear whether it had been taken upon the consolidated loan or on the single loan as now altered; also whether there were two distinct rates or only one.

Mr. HISLOP might explain, with reference to the remarks of the honourable member for Port Chalmers, that one alteration which he wanted to make was in the restoration of clause 8, which dealt with the power of reviving the balance of the rate authorised by the Act of 1882. It was doubted whether there was power to authorise the raising of the balance of the rate; and this clause would give that power. As to clause 5, what took place between the honourable member for Christchurch North and himself was this: They did not confine themselves to any particular sum; but they agreed that an estimate should be made by a Government engineer as to the probable cost of the works. The estimate was £30,000; but every one must recognise the fact that the works might possibly cost more than originally estimated. A circular was then sent round by the Board to all the ratepayers, asking them whether the works should be proceeded with on the estimate supplied, upon which it was intended to levy the rate authorised by section 6. That was assented to by a great majority of the ratepayers. As the honourable member for Christchurch North was no doubt aware, the amount of £38,000 was placed in the Bill of last session. That was advertised in the papers circulating in the district, and not only that, but it was also referred to in locals and in discussions in the newspapers, and there was not a single objection made to it. Then, with regard to taking a poll, he submitted that it would be exceedingly inconvenient that a poll should

be taken again for the £10,000 required to complete the work. The £38,000 was inserted in the Bill of last session; but at the suggestion of the honourable member for Dunedin South it had been altered to £40,000 in the House. He submitted that, as the ratepayers had been consulted as to the works generally, and had had full opportunity of objecting to them, it was not necessary, for the sake of such a small sum, that they should be consulted again. As the Government had advanced part of the money to complete the works, it was necessary that this Bill should pass in order that they might be recouped. The works were of very great importance, and he thought there ought not to be any unnecessary delay, or any question of going to the ratepayers again. He need only add that, if there was any very great objection in another place to these amendments, inasmuch as the ratepayers could be consulted again, and would no doubt consent, it would be for the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill to consider whether he would still resist the amendments. With regard to the word "annually," he had explained that the Act of 1882 made provision for that.

Motion agreed to, and Mr. Hislop, Mr. J. McKenzie, and Mr. Duncan appointed Managers to draw up reasons for disagreement.

#### REPRESENTATION BILL.

Major ATKINSON moved, That the House do agree with the amendments made in this Bill.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I shall ask the honourable gentleman to postpone this Bill until half-past seven. The position of this measure has very much changed during the last few days. When it was originally brought in it appeared to be a measure which was brought down in compliance with a wish generally expressed during the elections, that the number of members of the House should be reduced; and it was brought down as though it were merely intended to reduce the number of members of the House, without any alteration of the other provisions of the law existing. But the night before last a resolution was come to by the House to the effect that this Bill should not come into effect for two years, and at the same time we learned that this Bill was not regarded by the Government as being a complete measure, but merely as a part of a series of general measures which are to be brought in next year. So that, from the point of view of the necessity for disposing of business as far as we can this session, it is quite evident that nothing can be said in favour of this Bill, unless it bears the character given to it by the Press, and by some members of this House, that it is a Bill by which the Government will be able to coerce a large number of the members of the House into complying with their will as to the manner in which they shall vote, upon the pain of extinction of their seats. Only from that point of view can there be the least necessity for hurrying on the Bill this session; because, if the Bill is not to be used until further alterations have been made in the elec-

*Sir J. Vogel*

toral laws, what can the object be of passing it this session? Of what use is it to pass it if its complement is not to be passed till next session? I say that either the Bill is unnecessary, or it is a Bill of a character which no honourable member who has any respect for the honour and independence of the House can possibly approve of. That it is in the mind of the Government to get this passed so that, on getting any excuse, they may be in a position to force on a premature dissolution I do not, myself, believe. I can hardly suppose that such a conspiracy, such a scheme, can be in the minds of the Government as to pass a Bill for the purpose of holding a whip over honourable members. Still, it has been stated; and if it is not the case—and I must say that I cannot bring myself to believe that that is the object of the Bill—then I say that there can be no need whatever for urging it on during the present session. Yet we see that the Government are carrying it by coercion. The other night we had the deliberate opinion of the House expressed in the shape of an amendment carried at the instance of the honourable member for Dunedin West, and yet that deliberately expressed opinion has been reversed, not because honourable members have seen that they were wrong in the opinion which they had expressed in voting for the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West, but because the Government have said that they look upon it as a Government question. I do not grudge the Government the triumph they have won by inducing those gentlemen who are their supporters to either vote against the amendment or to walk out of the House when the matter came up again. I do not grudge the Government that triumph, nor am I going to say anything harsh with regard to those honourable gentlemen who have been persuaded to adopt either of those courses, because I recognise that it is in consonance with parliamentary practice for members to make sacrifices of their opinions if they wish to keep a Government in office. I am not reflecting upon the conduct of those honourable gentlemen: still, the fact is that the opinion of the majority of the House is in favour of fixing a time for this Act to come into operation so as to exclude the possibility of its having such a character as that to which I have alluded. And, now that the Government have shown their power, have shown that they are able to enforce their will, I ask, how can they, with any reason, when, admittedly, there is no necessity for the Bill to be carried this session, and at a time when the Government are asking us to forego discussion in order to get the business through rapidly—I ask, how can they reconcile it to themselves to make so much point of a measure which there can be no reason to hurry on until next session?—because it is admittedly incomplete until further legislation can take place. I trust that the honourable gentleman will accede to what I believe is the wish of the House on both sides, and not press the measure forward this session. But, Sir, I shall not go so far as that at present. I will merely ask that

this order of the day be postponed until the order of the day for Supply, which we have just determined shall be set down for half-past seven, has been disposed of—in fact, to make it the second order of the day after half-past seven. In the meantime, we may be able to take into further consideration the question of whether we will allow it to pass, or endeavour still to ask the Government to reconsider it—whether we will ask for a recommitment, and review the vote that was taken, I believe, at three o'clock this morning. I confess, with no small amount of humiliation, that, physically, I am not strong enough to take part in a debate in the middle of the night, and there are probably other members who are in the same position; and it does seem a cruel thing that measures which affect the representation of the country, and which in all Parliaments are looked upon as matters of a most important character—we know how Reform Bills are debated for month after month—I say it seems a cruel thing that members who wish to exercise their right of discussing such measures should be put before the House in the character of obstructionists, and that they should be shut out from the consideration of such measures by the business being taken when the early hours in the morning are approaching. I felt incapacitated from taking part in the discussion of the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West, or the motion for the restoration of the Bill to its original shape. I tell the honourable gentleman that a measure which reduces the representation of the country by 25 per cent.,—a measure which will alter the existing representation as regards town and country and rural districts, —a measure which may give a large power either to the town districts or to the country districts, according as it is used,—a measure which makes a most important change in the present incidence of representation—is not a Bill which should be forced through the House without full and ample discussion, and without much consideration, not only by the House but also by the country. And I take leave to think that a Bill of this kind, of the meaning of which we now know much more than when it was introduced, should not be forced through in the manner in which the honourable gentleman is forcing it through. I know that the honourable gentleman will tell me that I have changed my position, and accuse me of fickleness. So long as the honourable member accused has no right of reply it is easy to make charges of that kind. But I say that my position has been perfectly consistent. When the Bill was brought in and read a first time I was aware that the feeling of the country was in favour of a reduction of members, and, though I thought it would be exceedingly mischievous, I intended to support it. But when I come to know of the larger objects of the Bill,—that it is intended to make a change from the democratic system of triennial Parliaments, of single electorates, of elections upon one day, and the various ramifications of the measures which have given our

representation such an extremely democratic character—that the Bill is, in fact, merely the thin end of the wedge, to be driven home for the purpose of effecting a complete reformation in all these matters,—and when I come to know that the Government would neither allow these alterations to be considered at once, as proposed by the honourable member, so that the country would know what they were like, nor would they agree to the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West so as to provide that the Act should not be used as it is feared it might be used;—when I come to a knowledge of these things, then I see that the Bill has a much larger scope, has a much larger meaning, than I had originally supposed, and I feel it my duty to urge on the Government, notwithstanding the large majority that they have, not to press on the measure during the present session. At any rate, we may ask them to allow us further time for its consideration, and therefore I move, That consideration of the amendment be postponed until half-past seven o'clock to-night.

Major ATKINSON.—I am sorry to say I cannot agree with the proposals of the honourable gentleman. I can see no good whatever to come from it. If it were really a question on which the House required further time for consideration it would be a different matter; but the House has had ample time to consider it, and the country has had ample time to consider it, and the Bill is now passed as it was originally introduced by the Government, with the exception that there is an increase of four members. That is the only alteration in the Bill. I must ask the House to proceed with the Bill at once, and to dispose of it. I do not propose to answer any more speeches with regard to it. The country may judge between us and the honourable gentlemen who say that they have a constitutional duty to perform. That, I think, is the best course. We have endeavoured to give reasons why the Bill ought to be placed on the Statute Book; those reasons are in print, and the arguments of the Opposition are in print; and it is for the public to judge between the Government and the Opposition in this matter. I hope the House will see its way to proceed with the Bill and pass it through its final stages this afternoon.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I understood the Premier to say, just now, that reasons had been given by the Government, and had been answered, and that those reasons were in print. Now, I have not seen one reason in print, nor have I heard any reason given why the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West should not be accepted by the Government. We are told that the country has had ample time to consider the whole of the Bill, and that the country has expressed an opinion regarding it. I have seen no such expression of opinion in print; but I have seen it stated that the Government are hurrying through this measure, which is uncalled for, and is not wanted. The honourable gentleman himself admitted that this measure could not possibly take effect next session or during the recess. If this is so, I ask

*Sir J. Vogel*

him, where is the necessity for passing it now? The honourable gentleman has further admitted that it will be absolutely necessary next session that some amending Bill should be brought down to complete the Bill; because it is a notorious fact that the Bill as it stands is unworkable and useless, and that it will not fulfil the object for which it is intended. This being the case, I fail to see why the Government should at the present time try to force the measure through, unless it is with some motive of which we are not aware. I myself moved an amendment in Committee that the schedule should be attached to the Bill; but the Premier would not consent to any amendment. But I hold that our experience in the past has shown that it is absolutely necessary that we should make some provision to have the representation of the colony adjusted by other persons than the Commissioners. However anxious the Commissioners may be to do justice to all parts of the colony, it will be readily admitted that they cannot have the knowledge of the various localities that is possessed by members of this House. If I remember rightly, when the Act was passed last session there was a proviso that objections might be raised to the boundaries of the districts as decided upon by the Commissioners; but that had to be set on one side during the last recess, as there was no time to do it. Then, the Commissioners are bound by hard-and-fast rules; no matter what objections are raised, they will be unable to go outside the four corners of the Act. Now, it is quite notorious that in many districts large tracts of country have been disfranchised. In the district which I come from—the Nelson Province—the electoral districts have been so amalgamated as to make the representation practically nil in some portions of it. Large districts which were purely agricultural and large districts purely mining districts have been welded together, although they are really geographically divided. I may say that this has been the case in the Waimea and Motueka Districts. As far as the Province of Nelson is concerned, I am afraid that under these proposals, as it has only a few inhabitants, the various electoral districts would probably be united with the City of Nelson, and they would only be able to send a representative to represent both town and country districts. I have always held that districts that are sparsely populated should have more representation than the more densely populated ones. A town that has twenty, thirty, or forty thousand inhabitants can be more easily represented by one man than can a district such as we have heard of, where a member has to travel four hundred miles on horseback to visit his constituents, be represented by half a dozen. I trust that the House will pause before passing a Bill of this kind, and the more so because if it passes the Bill as it stands the boundaries will have to be adjusted by the Commissioners. We have seen in the past that, on account of the large representation possessed by some portions of the colony, large sums of money have been expended in particular districts, and in con-



sequence of this expenditure the population there has increased; so that they have gained no end of power as regards other portions of the colony. If this Bill is to become law, and is acted upon without the districts being adjusted by the House, the consequence will be that the towns will be so largely represented that the country districts will be practically unrepresented. If we take towns such as Christchurch, Dunedin, and Auckland we find that they have eight or ten members within a very small area; and the result of this Act will be that they will retain their number by freely amalgamating with themselves districts in the surrounding country. This would be the result; and we also know that the representatives of towns are always ready to unite together to further their own interests. One has only to go through the country to see that the large bulk of public money has been spent on those places where the town members have a greater voice than the country members. I trust that the House will pause before it allows this Bill to become law, more particularly after what took place the other day when the honourable member for Dunedin West moved his amendment. He was urged to move it by a number of members of the House who were anxious that the proviso should be added to the Bill. It was clearly demonstrated that no harm could arise from having such a proviso, and it was also shown that the absence of the proviso might work a great deal of harm to the colony. As I have said, the honourable member was urged to move this, and he did move it, and it was carried. What took place next? The Premier told the House then that, this having been passed, he must consider his position, and that he would probably have to resign. On the following day he called his supporters together and they held a meeting, and then he caused them to agree to rescind that which they had done the day before. But so firmly were they convinced that their case was right that they said, "No; we cannot vote against what we have done; but what we will do is this: We will walk out of the House;" and thus they have been instrumental in inflicting what they themselves consider to be a grievous wrong to the colony. For what reason have they done this? Simply because the Government said, "We will have this," and flatly refused to give any reason whatever why. It is all very well for the Premier to tell us that reasons have been given, and that they are printed. I ask him, where are these reasons? They are not in *Hansard*, because what took place was in Committee; and they are not in the public prints, for the public prints condemn the action of the Government very strongly in this matter, and have been urging members of this House not to submit to what they call the indignity that has been placed upon them. I have taken no part in the discussion of this Bill; but, notwithstanding that fact, I have been taunted in the House by the Premier with obstructing the measure. Why was I told that I was obstructing the mea-

sure because I used the privilege which belongs to every man,—because I did my duty and opposed those portions of the Bill which I thought were injudicious and hurtful to the country, especially to that part of the country from which I come? And yet, because I did that, I was told that I was wasting time. I say, in reply, that I have not been wasting time but simply doing my duty; and I say that the Government have been deliberately wasting the time of the House in bringing forward a measure which they admit is unnecessary. For what reason do they bring it forward? Simply, they tell us, because they want it placed on the Statute Book that the number of members of this House shall be reduced. If that is all they want to do, they have really achieved nothing, because whenever a new Bill comes before the House next session it will be competent for any member of the House to move an amendment that the number be reduced or that it be increased. If the Government really thought it necessary that a Representation Bill should be passed during the present session, then, I say, it was an imperative duty on their part to prepare a Bill that would be final, and would be such as to give satisfaction to the whole country. If that had been done, there is no man in the House who would have shrunk from his duty to do his utmost to pass it. I say it is an utter waste of time to pass this measure, if it has to come up again and be chopped about next session. I say the Government have deliberately wasted the time of the House; but, more than that, they are asking the House to do that which is wrong, and they have brought pressure to bear upon their supporters to cause them to rescind that which was affirmed by a large majority of the House. That is a wrong act on the part of the Government, which, I think, we should not in any way countenance. For these and various other reasons—for I have no desire to prolong the debate—I shall vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Christchurch North.

Mr. WALKER.—I trust that I shall not be branded by the Premier as one of those who are obstructing. I have all along expressed the most confirmed distaste for the proposal embodied in the Bill. I have, whenever the opportunity has been afforded me, uttered my protest against it: and I venture also to say that I have never abused the privilege of speech in this House to prolong a discussion unnecessarily. I simply wish to say that I consider it my duty to place on record why I do not approve of this Bill, and why I regret exceedingly that the Government have been so ill-advised as to bring it forward, not only at all, but especially at this time. The Premier, in his public professions to the country and to this House, has stated that it is necessary that certain things should be done. In the first place, he said that we ought to put our house in order—that we ought to look after the finances of the colony. The few remarks which have proceeded from his side of the House go to show that that honourable gentleman took office on the professed understanding that the finances

of the colony were to be his chief care, and that no time should be lost by him and by his Ministry before the country should see that they were really in earnest in this matter. Well, Sir, what is the step now? What is he doing now in bringing down this Bill?—Taking up the time of the country simply with legislation which he and his side declare is only a fragment of what is necessary. He assured us, and we were assured by honourable members who are in his confidence,—or, if they are not in his confidence, they know very well how to put the matter in a reasonable way before him,—I say we were assured by those honourable gentlemen that this measure will have to be gone over again next year and put in a different shape. Why, then, this indecent haste, as I call it, that the time of the country should be wasted in this special session dealing with a matter which the Premier and his supporters admit to be fragmentary, and admit also to be unnecessary at this special time? I cannot conceive it, except that he has found the question of representation a very convenient stalking-horse for the last two years. He made as good a use of it as he could in 1886, and again in the last session of the last Parliament, of course using different tactics; and he again brings it forward to distract and disturb the public attention from topics that he knows are most necessary and vital to the true interests of the colony. It is all very well for him to talk about obstruction, but I challenge him to say that one unnecessary word has proceeded from this side of the House on this matter. —(Oh!)—Where do the “Ohs” come from, Sir? From honourable members to whom I give credit for conscientious opinions. They conscientiously believe that the number of members should be reduced; but I have just as much conscientious scruple in the matter as they have, and why should I not use the opportunity of placing on record my belief that the step is a retrograde and bad one? What is there unreasonable in doing that on the part of myself or any other honourable member who believes as strongly as I do that this is a mistake?

Major ATKINSON.—You spoke three times last night.

Mr. WALKER.—The honourable member says I spoke three times last night. Was it not on three different questions?

Major ATKINSON.—Just three speeches on the same subject.

Mr. WALKER.—There is no pleasing the honourable gentleman. If I sat quiet he would be just as likely to find fault with me for not treating his measures with proper respect. If this Bill is as important as he says it is, it demands proper discussion from the House, and it has not received anything more than the proper discussion it requires from this House in order that the country may really understand what it is doing at the present time. Besides being unnecessary, I also say this is simply fragmentary legislation, dealing only with one piece of a very large subject; for I maintain that you cannot touch one bit of our consti-

tutional structure without endangering and imperilling the proportions of the whole. The Premier, in his Financial Statement, sketched out certain reforms in our legislative system, and he began with certain reforms as regards the Legislative Council. Those reforms have never yet come before us, and I maintain that it is most important that we should have the whole before us, and not touch it in fragments. In the first place, if I understood his proposals aright, he proposed to make the number of members of the Council a fixed number, and that the tenure of office in that body was to be— However, I am not going to discuss that question now, and I admit that there is much to be said on both sides of the question. But it must be admitted that the proposal, so far as we can judge, was a step in the direction of conservatism, giving that body a much firmer position than they have had hitherto. It was depriving this House of the balance of authority which it previously held in the Legislature of this country. And therefore, if that step was to be taken which he proposed in his Financial Statement, I say we should also have had it before us. We should also do nothing to endanger the franchise, and the privileges of the people as represented in this House;—because, Sir, I maintain that this proposal as embodied in the present Bill also goes in the same direction, which is to divest the people of the privileges they have enjoyed for some years, which, I maintain, they value, and which they require. And therefore I consider this as a step which is reactionary, and one that will probably be disastrous in its consequences. Then, Sir, I presume, if there is any excuse for this Bill at the present time, it is because it bears on its face an expression of economy; and those who support it say that they believe that this measure will be of considerable importance in that direction. Well, I venture to think that, of all the devices for securing economy we have heard preached in this House, this is the most illusory. The honourable gentleman, I presume, imagines that by a rule-of-three sum he can reduce the parliamentary expenditure by reducing the number of members. I suppose he argues that, if ninety-five members consume a certain number of hours in talking and doing public business, if he reduces that number by twenty it will reduce the time occupied in talking, and the amount of parliamentary expenditure will be reduced in exactly the same proportion. But is anything more illusory, more absolutely belied by the experience of the past? Absolutely, if we look up the records, and compute the length of the sessions previous to the increase to the present number, we shall find that the sessions averaged longer in those days than now, that then the speeches were longer, that the discussions were increased accordingly, more than now; and since the change, the figures show that our sessions have been shorter, the discussions more reasonable, and the conclusions come to in a much more businesslike and quicker manner. I defy any honourable member to dispute these facts. I have worked

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them out. I find that for the four years before 1881 the sessions averaged 117 days, and since 1881 up to the end of last year they only averaged 102 days. I also state this: that the last Parliament and, I believe, this Parliament have shown a most reasonable exercise of its powers of speaking. During the last Parliament there was very little speaking done, comparatively; whereas, on the other hand, in a smaller Parliament it is just as possible for the talkative members to exercise their power of obstruction and impeding business by unnecessary talk. Experience shows that was the case in the past, and I have no doubt experience will show so in the future. The reason is very easy to see. If we could ballot out twenty—those whom some of us might think bores and nuisances—I admit we might get a very perfect Parliament as far as silence is concerned; but the honourable members who do talk long and delay business, in the eyes of some honourable members, are the very men who are elected, and who will be elected, simply because they have the power of talking, and can convince the electors of what they believe to be for the good of the country when they canvass for seats in this House. The class of men who take up time are just the very members who always will be, and must be, returned to a popular House of Assembly such as this. And the smaller the House the more effect, the more weight, the more importance these talkative members must have, simply because they are in a greater proportion in a smaller House than in a larger one. I feel very sorry indeed that the Premier has thought fit to raise this difficulty at the present time. Especially am I sorry that he has been unfortunately advised to make a reasonable amendment by the honourable member for Dundin West a Ministerial question; but I am still more sorry that those honourable gentlemen who voted conscientiously for that amendment were frightened by this bogey of another Ministry coming into office whom they possibly might not be able to support. Do those honourable gentlemen not know that if they choose to stick together on that side of the House they have a working majority; and, if the Premier had been weak enough to resign because of their conscientious and patriotic action the other night, are they not aware that the same majority must have the power of saying who the Ministers shall be, and who should be Premier? And even if the honourable member for Egmont had chosen to say, "I will resign; I will not carry on unless you allow me to do everything I choose," are they not aware that there still are members in this House as perfectly able to lead as the honourable member for Egmont, and possibly to lead with much greater discretion than he has shown during the present session? I would only contrast the action of the present Premier with that of the late Premier in respect to this very measure. The late Premier's supporters were as much opposed to the Bill which he brought down as many of the supporters of the present Premier are to the Bill which he has introduced. Did

they truckle to him and do whatever he told them to do? I say No. And did he ask them to do so? Like a sensible man and a reasonable man, he said, "I won't ask you to do anything of the sort;" and the consequence was that the Bill was passed in a form which, I believe, was acceptable to the country, and was considered as reasonable by the House; and I am very sorry indeed to see the present Government bringing forward a measure which goes far to alter the representation of this country in the wrong direction. I should be sorry if in the opinion of any honourable member I have taken up the time of the House unnecessarily; but, when I consider that a wrong thing is being done, I must raise my voice against bad legislation, and I will do so in spite of the Premier or anybody else.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—As I have been mixed up in some way or another with this question, I wish to say something in reference to it. I think the last speaker has stated what is perfectly true—that the mistake made was in the Government taking this up as a no-confidence question. I had no wish or intention that there should be anything of the kind. On the contrary, I was urged by some Government supporters to propose that amendment. They saw the difficulty which they were in, and could not solve it, and I suggested this as a way out of the difficulty. I realised the consequences of the amendment of the honourable member for Te Aro, and that that would lead to undesirable results. With that object I hurriedly prepared this amendment, intending it as an ordinary Committee amendment, and not desiring that it should be treated in any way as a no-confidence question. I believe I am right in saying that those supporters of the Government who voted with me did not look upon it as in any sense a question involving want of confidence; and I think there can be no question whatever that the object of the Premier in making it a question of "no confidence" was simply to endeavour to consolidate some of those supporters whose constant support the honourable gentleman does not seem as certain of as he desires to be. I have just received a telegram from some leading citizens of Dundedin, which I shall read for the information of the House, as showing the opinion taken by them on this very large question; because, although I have supported the reduction of the number of members to a reasonable limit, I do feel that this Bill is placing in the hands of the Ministry a power which they may exercise in an unconstitutional way, and this telegram very fitly and properly states the exact bearing of the question. They say, "All independent, thinking men cordially approve your amendment Representation Bill. Most unconstitutional leaving power in hands any Premier reduce members when he pleases by dissolution." This is a telegram which I have just received, which conveys in a few words the real bearing, object, and possible results of this Bill. I observe that the Colonial Secretary, who, apparently, is not able to understand its bearing, is indulging in those meaningless

ejaculations in which he occasionally indulges in this House. Now, I do emphatically protest against the exercise by the Ministry of this unfair control which they have endeavoured to exercise over some members who usually support them; and I think the Bill, if passed, will be—or is liable, at all events, to be—very unfairly used. As is suggested in the telegram I have read, the moment the Premier finds that he cannot control the business of the House he can say, "I shall reduce the number of members to seventy-four, by advising the Governor to dissolve Parliament." That is not a proper power to put into the hands of any Minister. I was much struck by the remark of the honourable member for Ashburton, that the unduly large number of members in the Council has been looked on by some more as a grievance than the number of members of this House; and I think it would have been very much better if the Government had also directed their attention to that so-called grievance at once, as well as taking up the time of the House in the way they have taken it up at this stage of the session. If this Bill had been introduced at an earlier stage of the session, when we could have debated it instead of the large number of useless questions that were then brought before the House, it would not be open to objection so much as it is now; but, seeing that, in all probability, there will be two or three other sessions before this Parliament ends, I think the Bill ought to have been introduced at such a time that it could have been discussed fairly and openly. We have now been here eight weeks, and we have done literally nothing, owing to the way in which business has been managed in the House, and the way in which adjournments and interruptions have taken place so frequently—we are practically just where we were a week or two after we started. I do most emphatically protest against this waste of time, when, though there are a large number of important financial questions to be brought under our consideration, all these irrelevant questions are brought out, and the financial questions kept from us. We were returned here primarily to put the finances of the country into a satisfactory condition, and we have carefully evaded that question. Some consideration has been given to one or two fragments of it, but the scheme as a whole has not been brought before the House in that comprehensive and satisfactory manner we are entitled to receive it in. I really hope that the Ministry will even now direct their attention and ours to the business of the country, and not fritter away our valuable time in the way that they have been doing for some weeks past.

Mr. SEDDON.—If any proof were wanted that the Government had wilfully wasted the time of the House it has been afforded this afternoon. The leader of the Opposition asked the Premier to postpone the consideration of the amendments in this Bill until this evening, and if the Premier had accepted that suggestion we could have had an hour and a half's solid work on the Railways Bill, which is the next order of the day. But the honourable

*Mr. W. D. Stewart*

gentleman seems to say, "You must either take the Bill as I wish it, whether you like it or not, or you shall have no other work to go on with." Had this Bill come on later in the evening probably one debate would have done for the agreeing to the amendments and the third reading; but now we have a discussion on the amendments, and then there is to be an interruption for Supply, and then we have to go back to another discussion on the Bill. I think, in the interests of the colony and of Ministers themselves, it would have been well if they had taken up another attitude, and if the Premier had endeavoured, in this debate, to show the House and the colony why he has deliberately abandoned the principles of this Bill since it was brought down to the House. He has changed front entirely as regards the Maori representation. The proposal by him was that there should be three Maori members; but, for reasons best known to himself, an arrangement has been come to with the Maori members, the effect of which we saw at the caucus held yesterday—the whole of the Native members attended that caucus and gave in their allegiance to the Government. Then, in every division taken last night, the whole of the Maori members voted with the Government, and that too is very significant, and it proves very conclusively that, seeing there was opposition from the Native members to this measure as introduced, in which they were supported by those of the Opposition who opposed the Bill, the Natives have secured for themselves that which we are fighting for. It does not say much for those honourable members; and perhaps in the future they will have cause to regret the action they have taken, because, before we have done with the Bills relating to the Natives and Native lands, the Native members will be in trouble of their own, and will need the assistance of their friends. They have now thrown themselves into the hands of the Government; and, for my part, I believe that a great many on this side of the House will leave them in the hands of the Government, and I hope their lot may be a happy one. But for the actual evidence we have of it, I could scarcely have believed that the Native members would act in the detrimental and objectionable way they have acted towards those who have been and were willing to assist them in getting their grievance remedied. Sir, that concession to the Natives alters the whole principle of the Bill, because, the Premier having consented to increase the Maori representation, he must necessarily increase the European representation somewhat proportionately. That is why the Government agreed to increase the number from seventy to seventy-four. They could not give the Natives increased representation and in the same breath refuse to give increased representation to the European population of the colony. By this alteration the Government have caused an increased direct expenditure of £1,000 a year to the colony for the expenses of additional members. Is that their retrenchment? Is that the cardinal point in their policy? Directly there was a little objection shown to their mea-

sure they gave way and consented to that increase of expenditure. But, leaving aside the increased direct expenditure, let us take the Premier and the Government on their own argument. They have told us that the larger the number of members the greater the demand on the public purse of the colony for the construction of roads and other works. Well, if that statement is true, the Ministry have arranged for increasing the public works expenditure by one-fifth, by the alteration they have made in the Bill. I should have thought that we should have from the Government some explanation of why they thought fit to depart from the principle of the Bill in this respect, and so to do what will cause a very heavy direct cost yearly to the colony, besides increasing the indirect cost by one-fifth, according to their own assertions. Then, I say, again, there has been no explanation why the Government should still wish to have the power that is contained in section 2 of the Bill—to hold in their hands an unconstitutional power. To demand, as they do, that the House shall give them the power to reduce the number of members by twenty-five whenever they choose is, to my mind, about the most pernicious and iniquitous proposal I have ever known to be brought forward. I do regret that a more united and a more determined resistance has not been made to this demand—a demand for a power to deprive the people of their liberties, and a power to “gag” members of this House. I say, Sir, that such a demand, such a power, is most dangerous and unreasonable. It is a power which no other Ministry has ever sought, and it is a power which we should not give to any Government. To say that that power will not be used is to say what is contrary to history and to experience. I have never yet known a power to be possessed by any Government but that, when their existence was at stake, they would always use it to the fullest extent. Then, I ask, why should we wilfully and knowingly—for it has been fully exposed—agree to give this power to the present Government? The fact of their insisting on this measure passing as it stands, and not allowing the limit of a single day in the coming into operation of the Bill, negating an amendment that it should be after six months, negating the proposal that it should not come into operation until this Parliament expires by effluxion of time; and then, when an amendment was carried that it should not come into operation until the 9th October, 1889, the fact of their exercising the power given to them as a party, and saying that they will resign if that amendment is not struck out of the Bill—all this shows that they are determined to have this power. I put it very clearly to the House whether it would not have been far better for that party to have reconstructed the Government, —because any Government in this Parliament must come from that side of the House. It would be very inconvenient for this side of the House to attempt now to form a Government, and there is no desire to do so at the present time. Therefore it was not a sufficient reason

for those who went back on the vote they had given to say that they did so through fear of a Government being formed from this side of the House. There was no such fear, and it was pure intimidation and bounce on the part of the Premier to say that he would resign. He will swallow far more noxious doses before he vacates those benches. It will be as it has always been with him and with those who have acted with him, that force alone will compel them to vacate those benches. I do not believe that they would vacate their seat even on a direct vote of the House being carried against them; but they will follow the course which was taken in the first session of 1884, when, although defeated by a majority of fourteen against him, the Premier claimed a dissolution. If he does that under this measure the result will be that the elections will be manipulated, there will be twenty-five members less, and he will expect to come back with a majority to support him. If it were a Government such as we used to have in the earlier history of New Zealand, then this indecent holding on to office would not be in the same position as it is at the present day. The assertion by the Premier the other night that he would resign stated a decision hastily arrived at, and, I believe, regretted five minutes after it was expressed, and then an excuse was sought to withdraw him from the position into which he had got. They held a caucus, and we find many of his own supporters telling him that the Government had acted wrongly, and had strained the relationship between themselves and their supporters, who would on the next opportunity vote against them. I should like to know why, under these circumstances, we should give the unconstitutional power conferred by clause 2 of this Bill. And, outside that, I should like to know whether there is not another large power given to the Government. Under clause 3 power is given to them to direct the Commissioners when they are to fix the boundaries. This is the first turn of the screw. There are some honourable members who are not blindly following the Government, and who wish to keep their freedom of action and vote conscientiously; but, as soon as they do that, on the first or second vote that is given against the Government the Government will direct the Commissioners to fix the boundaries. When honourable members find the boundaries of their districts being fixed, they will come to the conclusion that the Government are about to ask for a dissolution, and then they will immediately afterwards be found following the Government like lambs, and eating the leek as they did yesterday. That is too great power to give to the Government, and will be enough to force the weak-kneed gentlemen who dare to differ from them to recant and support them. Such a power ought not to be held in *terrorem* over honourable members, and I could not permit this Bill to pass in its present form without entering my protest against it. Then, with regard to the effect of this Bill on the people generally, there can be no doubt that, if it re-

mains without any alteration in the quota, it means that very large power will be given to the towns over the country.

Mr. FISH.—No, no.

Mr. SEDDON.—I think I shall be able to prove to the honourable gentleman that it is so. I say that, with the difference in quota fixed at 18 per cent., this Bill will give a preponderance of power to the towns. We have an indication from the Government side of the House that they intend to alter the quota, and that the country members will combine to increase it from 18 per cent. to 25 per cent., or, it may be, 33 per cent. or 50 per cent. in favour of the country. In that case the towns will suffer, and the great question of Free-trade *versus* Protection will remain in abeyance as far as the black sheep among the Government supporters are concerned. The Government are afraid to touch it. They have refused to do justice to the towns by dealing with the tariff this session. If this measure is passed, and the Government can hold a threat of dissolution over our heads, we shall not have that fair consideration of local industries which the position of the colony at the present time demands. We know from past experience that the country members predominate in this House. We know that in the ranks of the Government supporters country districts predominate, and therefore it is that the Government want to force this Bill through and get the large powers conferred by it. In the interest of trade and of the artisans of New Zealand it is not desirable that we should give too large powers to the country districts, more especially when the people of those districts do not understand what is for their benefit. If the towns are prosperous, then, instead of having unemployed working for 4s. 6d. a day, those men would be earning their 10s. or 12s. a day, and would not be compelled to ask for pay from the State, and be dragged down to the condition of pauperism, with their wives and children absolutely in want. If due consideration were given to the encouragement of local industries these families would all be prosperous, and the artisans of this colony, than whom, I say, there are none more intelligent in the Australasian Colonies, would be making a good livelihood. Instead of that, we have men of this class in the towns dragged down to a state of pauperism; and, instead of having a market for our produce amongst ourselves, we are obliged to send it away. That we should still further increase this pauperism and add to the ranks of the unemployed is about the most disastrous thing that ever could happen to New Zealand. If we give the power to the country members which is provided under this Bill it means distress and ruin to our artisans, to our towns, to the country districts, and to New Zealand as a whole. And, Sir, in this way wages must come down; and it is my opinion that it is the chief aim of the present Government to bring wages down. They are doing their best in every direction to bring wages down, causing depression, and stopping public works. I believe that when the Public Works Statement is brought down it will be seen that the Go-

Mr. Seddon

vernment, making an excuse of the present state of the London money-market, are not going to borrow any money. Public works are to be stopped, and there is to be no revision of the tariff. There are to be more unemployed, more destitution, and then, in sheer desperation, men will be compelled to seek for work at less pay than is sufficient to find them in the necessities of life. And we know that, as a result of that, the wealthy will become more wealthy and the poor poorer, and we shall have the poor-houses and the workhouses—we shall have the same state of affairs existing in New Zealand as exists in the Old World—the palace and the workhouse—that blot upon our civilisation. But now is the time, and those who wish to do what is just to the great bulk of the population will rise to the occasion. Let them be beyond party, let them not be swayed in the manner in which it is attempted to sway them, let them be true patriots, and let them do what is right and just to their fellow-men. If they do not, retribution will follow. We shall have to call upon the artisans in the different centres to assert their rights much more forcibly than they are doing at the present time. We shall have to establish unions to fight this terrible power that is draining the lifeblood out of the people of the colony. The Government, unfortunately for themselves, are being made use of, not to use a stronger term. They are neither more nor less than the representatives of wealth. They occupy that position knowingly and wilfully, and to their great discredit, or else they would not do what they are doing in the way of a reduction of salaries. What does it mean? It means that the power I refer to will be behind the scenes. Where are the best men of that party now? Are they on the Government benches? No; there are exceptions. The Minister for Public Works is an exception. If they were all like him my remarks would not be so severe. The best men in the party remain behind. They pull the strings. They are to get their own way. Wages are to be brought down; the masses are to have their representation taken away from them, which, to my mind, is the most serious matter of all. It is taking away rights that it has taken years to get for them, and a great injustice is being done. The Limitation of Votes Bill is not to be passed. Why should not that measure be passed, so that we should have manhood suffrage pure and simple? On the other hand, the property vote is to be retained; and if it is retained, and we reduce the number of members of this House, it means that the next House we have will represent wealth and property instead of people: and that will be an evil day for New Zealand. In the protest that I am making upon this occasion I am speaking in the interests of the people generally. I do not think that the people of the colony can know the full effect of the measure that is before us. If they did—if the Press of the colony had done its duty, and had pointed out to them the effect of this Bill—they would have protested against a measure which is depriving them of their rights and doing them an irreparable in-

jury. It has taken ten or twelve years of hard honest work to bring the representation of the people of the colony to its present position, and yet in one short session, not three months since the election took place, all the work of years is to be undone. Sir, I should not dare to go home to my constituents unless I had done in a legitimate manner all that could be done—all that should be done by a minority, even though challenged and driven from point to point by a dominant and servile majority. The forms of the House and the freedom of speech are the only power we have. The Premier has said that he will not reply to anything that may be said by us on this side of the House. His silence gives assent to what we are saying; but his silence, or the strongest power he can assert, will not prevent me from speaking and voting against this Bill at every stage.

Mr. KERR.—I wish to put on record the regret that I feel at this Bill being pushed on at the present time. It will do a great deal of harm to the place I come from, and, if I were not to protest against it in the fullest manner that I can, when I went back to my constituents they would say that I had not done my duty. We were the first province that was settled in the South Island, and in due time we had our proper share of representation. But the present Premier, when he was in office before, did all in his power to take away our representation; and now he is going further in the same direction. We had the night before last a majority which said that the provisions of this Bill were not right. But then we had the Premier taking it as a no-confidence motion, and bringing pressure to bear upon the weak-kneed members of his party who had gone into our lobby; and now we have the Bill before us in the same shape as it was the other day. Now, if there had been any reason why this Bill should be passed this year, I could have had a reasonable excuse for going back to my constituents and saying that it was necessary to pass the Bill in the interests of the country. But the Bill can be of no use. It can be used for no other purpose in this world than to be held as a whip over us. If the Government had exempted the smaller districts from the operation of the Bill I should have been glad to see it pass; but the Premier would not do it, and it is quite true what people say and believe, that the present Premier does everything in his power to wipe Nelson out. Why he should do it I do not know. I can remember the time when his province was in difficulties, and when the people of Nelson did everything they possibly could for them. We put up houses for them, fed them, clothed them, did everything that could be done for them at our own expense; and this is the gratitude we are to receive for what we did in those days! If this Bill is passed our country districts will be wiped out altogether, to the great detriment of the farmers in the country. We shall be in this position: According to the population basis the country will have no representation whatever, or next to none; the

town members will have to represent both country and towns. One honourable gentleman says, "Hear, hear;" but I would give him twelve months to go over the district I represent, and unless he had a man with him he would never do it at all. It is certain that town members know nothing at all of what the country members have to do. I would give the honourable member three weeks to go through my district, and I expect that, when he saw the rivers and the roads that I have to go over, he would turn back: he would do what some members of the House did last night—he would retract, and say he would have nothing to do with it. I maintain that it is not necessary that towns such as Wellington should have the number of members they have; it is a curse to the country. They are of no benefit to the country, they know nothing of country life, and when they give a vote they do not give it intelligently, for they do not know what they have to give it for. I speak especially of the Town of Wellington. What do its members do? All they do is to worry the Government for post-offices and printing-offices, to get the expenditure of money here; and as long as they can get that they care nothing about the outlying districts. I should like the Wellington town members to go through the country districts in their own province, and then to ask themselves if the country districts do not require double the representation of the towns. The population basis is wrong altogether, and I shall do my best to get it made two to one. I think 25 per cent. would be too small an allowance to make to the country districts. Who are the "backbone and sinew" of the country, if not the men who live in the country? I speak for myself. I came in one of the first ships to New Zealand, and when we landed at Nelson there was not a house in it. We brought everything that we wanted with us from England—even what we had to eat; and we made the town, and after we had made the town we went into the country, and we live now the furthest back in the country. But it appears to me that the "new-chums" in the city—those who have borne little of the burden—are going to represent the people of New Zealand, and that they know nothing about the country. I shall do my best to give the country two to one, and I think if we do that—if we give the country more representation—we shall do a good thing. I want to know what is the use of this Bill if it is passed; it cannot come into force for three years. When I was before the electors, going my rounds, they all said, "Well, there are very few people who could get through this district as well as you." The throat of the Premier does not frighten me a little bit; but it seems that the majority are in his power. When a substantial majority carried the amendment against the Premier, why did he not use the forms of the House to stop business? He and his colleagues then did not say a word; but the next morning they called their supporters together, took them into a room, and told them they would have to do what he wanted, and that, having a majority,

he would carry the Bill, whether it was for the good of the country or not. That is what they did, and I say they did it by unlawful means. Last night did not one member after another condemn the Government for what they had done, in the strongest terms they could use? And, then, what do they do? They quietly go round and, like—I was going to say something perhaps not parliamentary—but they were as frightened as I have ever seen a woodhen when I have been riding along the road. Can they possibly think that those on this side of the House are going to be domineered over?—because, if they do, they may depend upon it they have made a mistake. I shall have my say, and say what I think proper. As I told the Government before, if they did what was right I should follow them; but if they are going to bully me they will find they have made a great mistake, for I will stand up against them as long as I have breath in my body. I ask, what is a fair thing for the district I come from? You may depend upon it the people there will back me up in what I am doing. But my opinion is that the Government do not care quite so much for pushing this Bill through as to kill time. If they did want to push the business on in the way they pretend, they would never have brought this Bill on the floor of the House at all. There is the retrenchment which was to be done, and which we wanted to come down on the floor of this House more than anything in the world. I do not believe they want to bring it down at all, or that they will ever make anything out of it. I wanted to help them to retrench all that was possible; but I shall have to go home, and I shall be asked what we have done in the House with regard to retrenchment, and I shall have to say that I have done everything I could to get it done in this House, but that it was only promised to be done during the recess. What is the result of the retrenchment? There is one man in my district who has been discharged, and I think it was very wrong, for there was a great deal of work to be done at the station during certain seasons. There is not a day but I get two or three telegrams from that place; and what do the Government do? They are going to send a man back to look after the platelaying during the day, and his wife is to look after the parcels. That is retrenchment! However, I am satisfied with that. But they have done worse than that. The people are now finding fault with the taking-away of the telephone office; the Government have taken away the telephone office, and placed the telephone in a store. Now, that is a wrong to the people who live there, and it is wrong to the Government. It is well known that there is great jealousy between one store and another, and by putting the telephone in a store other people will not use it. Now, I want to know if that is right, and what retrenchment it will effect. They might just as well have put the telephone in the office where it was before, and have let the woman look after it just as she is looking after the parcels. By so doing the

*Mr. Kerr*

work could have been done for a quarter of the money, and it would have been a boon to the district. If these little places were not represented in the House there is no doubt they would get nothing. As I have said, I want the retrenchment proposals on the floor of this House, so that I may be able, when I go to my people, to tell them what is being done.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member for Motueka was in possession of the chair when the House adjourned at half-past five o'clock. The honourable member can either finish his speech, or, with the consent of the House, move the adjournment of the debate in order that the motion to go into Committee of Supply, fixed for half-past seven o'clock, may be proceeded with.

Mr. KERR.—I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Debate adjourned.

#### IMPREST SUPPLY BILL (No. 8).

Mr. SPEAKER.—I may say, with regard to the course that has been formerly adopted as to Imprest Supply Bills, that it has been this: On two previous occasions when the House proceeded with Imprest Supply Bills there were debates proceeding on the motion for going into Committee of Supply, during which amendments were moved expressing a want of confidence in the Government. On both those occasions—in 1877 and 1880—the main debates were put aside, and special sittings, as it were, on Supply were held in order to enable Imprest Supply Bills to be passed. I presume that may have been done under arrangement with both sides of the House. No arrangement has been come to to-night, and the order is called on. It will be my duty to call on the honourable member for Ashburton to resume the debate on the question formerly before the House—namely, That the Speaker do now leave the chair, in order that the House may resolve itself into Committee of Supply.

Sir J. VOGEL.—It will perhaps be convenient that I should answer the question, put to me earlier in the afternoon by the honourable member at the head of the Government, as to the course the Opposition will adopt with reference to the Imprest Supply Bill he desires to pass through. Sir, I felt a hesitation in giving that answer this afternoon, because I could not help feeling that the honourable members with whom I have the honour to act are suffering under a very keen sense of irritation at the insinuations and, in fact, the open accusations which have been levelled at them during the last two days because they considered it their duty to discuss, I will not say amply, but in a very modified form, a measure of the very greatest importance; and therefore I thought it better, before I would give a reply, that I should place myself in communication with the honourable gentlemen who are acting with me. Sir, I am able, as I anticipated I should



be, to say that, notwithstanding the excuses which they might have for a different course, the honourable members on this side of the House have determined to interpose no obstacles in the way of the honourable gentleman obtaining the supplies which he deems necessary. We think it better, following the general course, that an Imprest Supply Bill should not pass through all its stages to-night. It is not the custom—that I need not point out to you, Sir—except in cases of emergency, to allow resolutions from the Committee of Supply or Committee of Ways and Means to be reported the same day on which they are passed. It is only in a case of the very last emergency that such a course is adopted. Indeed, there is an instance in the House of Commons where a report from a Committee of Supply was adopted, and where the House the next day cancelled the adoption of the report, and insisted that it should not come on without notice. And, Sir, I think it would be better not to allow it to appear that imprest supply could be obtained so easily, and to pass the measure through only part of its stages to-night and finish it to-morrow. But, at the same time, if the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government will say he considers it so urgent that the Bill should pass through to-night, and recommends us to disregard the usual practice, then honourable members on this side of the House will interpose no obstacle. They will place upon the honourable member the responsibility of saying that he considers it is urgent that the Bill should pass through all its stages to-night; and we will accept his assurance, and allow the Bill to pass through without any difficulty. Sir, it is legitimate, as I need scarcely point out to the honourable member, on occasions of this kind to elicit from the Government information upon all questions which are not already upon the Order Paper, and it is usual for the Government to afford the fullest information. Now, Sir,—

Mr. SPEAKER.—There is no motion yet before the House. I understood you were answering some question; but I think you had better let the order be called on for going into Committee of Supply.

Sir J. VOGEL.—You had called upon the honourable member for Ashburton to resume the debate on the Financial Statement, and I was explaining why it would not be necessary to do so.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I had intimated that, if no arrangement were come to for further adjourning the financial debate, I would call on the honourable member for Ashburton to take it up. I thought you were answering some question that had been put to you by the Treasurer earlier in the day. I thought, having arranged that, the Treasurer would move the House into Committee of Supply for the special consideration of the Imprest Supply Bill.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I think the course I am pointing out will be an easier one. I was saying that it was usual on occasions of this kind for the Government to answer freely such

questions as they are able to reply to. And, Sir, I think it will not be inappropriate that we should seek to obtain information from the honourable gentleman in the course of the Bill passing through. But I must say this: that we do not wish the honourable member to understand that we are putting questions as any threat held out to him in regard to the Imprest Supply Bill. Whether he chooses to answer the questions, whether he treats us with courtesy or not, we shall still interpose no obstacle to the Supply Bill passing through. Whatever provocation we have received, we do not consider it would be right to deal with such a matter on a question of supply. And now, Sir, I would suggest to you that it would be better to call on the honourable member for Ashburton and allow him to move the further adjournment of the debate, and then call up Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The order having been called on, I think it will be for the honourable member for Ashburton to move the further adjournment of the debate.

Mr. WALKER.—I beg to move, That the financial debate be adjourned.

Debate adjourned.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, I beg to move that you do leave the chair, in order that the House may go into Committee of Supply, for the purpose of passing an Imprest Supply Bill. The matter is one of urgency. I forgot to ask the House for supply a few days ago, and I have to apologize for the omission. But, as to-morrow is Friday, and as we must have money by Monday, it will cause considerable inconvenience if this Bill be not passed. I therefore move that you do leave the chair. It is quite in accordance with our ordinary custom, and not, as the honourable gentleman said, "very exceptional." Many a time we assisted the honourable gentleman to pass an Imprest Bill through at one sitting, so that there is nothing unusual in it. This is not an Appropriation Act, or anything more than a Bill to provide money to carry on the necessary business of the country. Nor are we abandoning any of our privileges by adopting the course I propose. I beg to move, That you do leave the chair, in order that the House may go into Committee of Supply, in order to pass the Imprest Supply Bill.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I should like to ask the honourable gentleman if he will be kind enough to give to the House some idea as to the course and order of business which he proposes during the rest of the session, and especially what further business he proposes should be attended to.

Sir G. GREY.—Before the Premier replies, I beg to move an amendment to the motion. It is, To omit all the words of the question after the word "That," with a view to inserting the following words: "in the opinion of this House it is desirable we should, without further delay, proceed to consider what measure should be taken to relieve the distress prevailing amongst the farming, labouring, and industrial classes of New Zealand." I have no desire, Sir, to

raise a debate on this subject at the present moment, and to stop supply; but I have not been able to get a motion before the House this session. I tried to get one on, but it was struck off the Order Paper in due course; and this is my only chance of bringing forward one of the most important subjects that can possibly occupy our attention. If the Premier will give me an opportunity at some other time to move in this matter, I will not debate this question now, but will allow supply to be passed with the least possible delay.

Major ATKINSON.—It is quite impossible that the Government can, under a threat of this sort, promise the honourable gentleman an opportunity. The honourable gentleman must take his own course. If the honourable gentleman had thought proper to consult the Government something might have been arranged; but, certainly, under these circumstances we cannot make any bargain with the honourable gentleman.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I am sorry to hear the remarks the Treasurer has just made. The right of bringing up subjects on which honourable members feel strongly on the motion to go into Committee of Supply is one of the greatest rights this House has.

Major ATKINSON.—I do not dispute the right. The honourable gentleman asked me a question, and I gave him an answer.

Mr. TURNBULL.—It is one of the greatest rights of any honourable member to be able to move an amendment on the motion to go into Committee of Supply, and thus to bring up subjects for consideration of the House. The honourable member for Auckland Central has been rather hardly used this session, because measures which he deems of great importance he has not been able to get before the House at all. I think the honourable gentleman should have the fullest facilities for bringing on a subject of this kind, and he should be able to do so without being spoken to by the Premier of the colony as the honourable gentleman has just been spoken to. I hope the House will not forego its privileges, but that, when an honourable member wishes to bring forward a subject of public interest, he will be allowed to do so.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I think the motion of the honourable member for Auckland Central is one deserving of the greatest possible consideration. Although I have often to disagree with the honourable gentleman, I must admit that, in my opinion, his sympathy is always with those who are being oppressed, and therefore I say, if he deems it his duty to bring forward a resolution of this kind, I cannot conceive why the Premier should threaten the honourable gentleman.

Major ATKINSON.—There was no threat at all. Will the honourable gentleman allow me to explain? This is not an ordinary motion to go into Committee of Supply, of which honourable members ordinarily take advantage, and very properly, for bringing forward matters which they consider of interest to the country. The House has now consented to go into Com-

mittee of Supply simply for the purpose of granting funds to carry on the government of the country; and therefore it was that I could not agree to the interception of the motion by the resolution of the honourable gentleman, or any other.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I understood the honourable member for Auckland Central to say distinctly that he would support the Government in getting supply; and therefore I cannot conceive why the Premier adopted the tone he did in speaking to the honourable gentleman. The oftener the subject is brought forward by the honourable gentleman the better it will be for the country. Sir, what do we find to-day? The Radical Reform Association are writing up to honourable members, protesting against this power being placed in the hands of the Government to dissolve whenever they like.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member cannot now speak on the Representation Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Sir, I will endeavour to keep in order. We see that the papers throughout the country are showing that the people are beginning to see that, if we give any honourable gentlemen occupying those benches the right to send people about their business,—

An Hon. MEMBER.—We shall be unemployed.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Yes; a great many honourable members will find themselves unemployed—these radical reformers will find themselves not here again, because, in my opinion, they are sacrificing the best interests of the people. At the last election the great objection raised to me was that I was a blind supporter of the late Government. Sir, I would not follow any Government blindly. I am surprised at honourable gentlemen like the honourable members for Te Aro, Thorndon, and members of that kind,—

An Hon. MEMBER.—Marsden.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Oh, I do not know anything about Marsden. I am referring more to honourable members for city constituencies, because I believe when they come before their constituents we shall find they will apologize, and turn right-about face;—that is what they have got to do. I say this: I support no Government against my conscientious convictions. I was exceedingly amused at what has occurred recently; and I hope the honourable member for Te Aro, at any rate, will be able to satisfy the minds of those who put him here as to his action. I cannot conceive of an honourable member voting one way one night and in the exactly opposite way the next.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must again remind the honourable gentleman that the Representation Bill is not under discussion now.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Sir, I will try to keep in order; but I understood that on an occasion of this kind we could traverse the whole policy of the Government.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Honourable members must not debate subjects that are set down as orders of the day. Debate on orders of the day or notices of motion cannot be now anticipated, as the House has fixed another time for their consideration.

*Sir G. Grey*

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, I rise to a point of order. Unwilling as I am to see any question raised, I cannot help thinking that on a motion that you do leave the chair it is open to honourable members to discuss any question. Although the honourable member is referring to a question on the Order Paper—that is, the Representation Bill—he is not referring to the merits of the Bill so much as expressing his admiration at the conduct of certain honourable members. I contend that that is within his right on an occasion of this kind.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The rule is absolute that honourable members cannot, on this motion, speak to the orders of the day, as the House has already fixed a future time for their consideration, and that time cannot be anticipated on the motion for going into Committee of Supply.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I will leave the honourable gentlemen to their constituents. And now I am going to deal with a little matter in connection with the honourable member who is interjecting that he cannot hear me;—I am sorry he is rather deaf. Sir, the Premier the other night complained that some honourable members are all “talkee, talkee, talkee;” they are everlastingly talking. During his election the honourable member for the Hutt was spoken to thus by the electors: “Why, you were in the House, certainly; but what did you do? Did you open your mouth?” and the honourable gentleman had to admit that he did not do so, but promised that if they elected him again he would do better for the future, so that he might gain their confidence before the next election. It is evident to me, therefore, that honourable members who can talk have their advantages. Take the Premier himself as an illustration. If he could not talk, would he be Premier of the colony? Certainly not. And I want to see honourable members on this side of the House able to get up and talk as well as the Premier does repeatedly. I am not going to be charged with wasting time, but I must enter my protest against what I consider to be an undue insult to the honourable member for Auckland Central. Now, I have a very great respect for that honourable gentleman, and I regret that the Premier should have spoken to him in the way he did. I do not consider that the honourable member for Auckland Central has in any way threatened the Government.

Mr. KERR.—Sir, I also regret the way in which the Premier answered the honourable member for Auckland Central. I am quite sure the honourable gentleman provokes and prolongs debates by the answers he gives to honourable members. If he were more courteous he would be dealt very much better with. I believe that the honourable member for Auckland Central was not aware that there was an arrangement between the Premier and the honourable member for Christchurch North, or perhaps he would not have moved his motion; and I think the Premier gave him a very curt answer, and one that was sure to provoke discussion; whereas if he had given a civil answer

not a person would have spoken. Therefore I think that all the “talkee, talkee,” in this House which has been referred to is on account of the answers given by the Premier.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir,——

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member has already spoken, and he cannot speak twice on an amendment.

Sir G. GREY.—I only asked a question.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman seconded the amendment.

Mr. SEDDON.—I move the adjournment of the House, in order to give the honourable gentleman an opportunity of speaking.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, the amendment I moved is couched in language which, I think, should appeal to every feeling heart in this House. All know the distress prevailing in this colony; and, in inviting the House to take that distress into consideration, did I ask the Premier to perform a benevolent action, or did I threaten him? What threat was there in asking that person upon whom all power of benefiting these classes rests to consider how best he could do it, and to take into us his confidence and ask us for our advice? I had no intention whatever to hold out a threat, and cannot imagine the nature of that disposition which can distort a just and reasonable request into a threat. Well, Sir, the honourable member said, with certain expressions of wonder, that he thought if I had consulted him upon this subject all might have been settled. But I ask him this: Did he recently, in the presence of this House, say that I have never done anything for the working population of New Zealand? Did he repeat that, with strong affirmations? and yet, at the very time he said that, did he not know in his heart that throughout this session no chance had been given to me to move in this direction? Has he not carefully, for some weeks past, kept from us the financial debate? Has he offered any opportunity whatever of bringing a motion forward? The only motion I put upon the Order Paper was never allowed to come up, and was struck off from it; and I believe that very few honourable members ever got a motion on except one kind of motion, which is called an uncontested motion—that is, a motion for the production of some ordinary papers. I say that this opportunity offered by going into Committee of Supply is my only chance of raising my voice in defence of the miserable, and, in some instances, the suffering, the overtaxed, and, I must say, oppressed people of this colony. And, now, why am I to be reproached with wrong action when I avail myself of the first opportunity of bringing this question forward? I think the course the Premier ought to have pursued was this: When I put to him a reasonable request that he would name a time when this question would be discussed without any interference taking place with other public business, with the whole range between this time and the end of the session at his disposal he would have acted more in conformity with public interest if he had thanked me for my offer; and then he could have allowed the

Imprest Supply Bill to go through, and have named a day when full attention could be given to the condition of all industrial classes of this colony. The request that I made was a reasonable one — one which ought, I think, to have been complied with, and one which would have left this House more time and liberty and, I think, inclination to go into this question than it is possible for me to get on the present occasion. I say that the farming interest requires some attention to be paid to it before this House breaks up. I say that a large portion of the farmers of the country are in a situation in which they should not be left to continue for an hour longer than is necessary. In the case of those who are tenants of the Crown, and who owe sums of money to be paid to the Crown, their fair rent ought immediately to be adjusted. In the case of debtors to the Crown through having been forced, by the system of auction, and by the small number of pieces of land put up to sale, to bid inordinate prices for the land, and become responsible for sums of money which they cannot discharge, they were entitled to instant relief from this Parliament—a relief which should have reached them within a very short period of time from the present date. And not only that; this question arises: Is any relief to be afforded to them in reference to the severe competition to which they are likely to be subjected? That is a question which should receive immediate attention and should be dealt with before we return again to our different destinations in the Colony of New Zealand. I now pass to the labouring-classes, and I think there it is necessary that some instant steps should be taken. What things have we seen done this session? We have seen, in point of fact, a new debt of one million two hundred thousand pounds imposed upon the country; because it really amounts to that. Land is taken away which is the security for the payment of the money which we owe at the present time; and this land is taken from them. We take from the poor of this country a portion of the land by which they might discharge their debt. In point of fact, it is imposing a new debt upon them, and compelling them not only to pay the capital of the debt, but the annual interest it is necessary to pay on it. That is what we see. Not only is the land taken from them in that respect, but it is taken from them for ever. They have no chance. They have to pay their debt; and they cannot recover that land again, except at some enormous price, from those into whose hands it has passed. Then, I ask the House fairly to deal with this question. I ask them, if possible, to dismiss all party spirit from their minds, and to ask whether, in the late negotiations which passed, as it were, between the Government and this House with reference to an agreement to be entered into with a great railway company, the proper information was put before us. I did not ask that the House should be put in possession of information which we ought to have before being compelled to vote a resolu-

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tion on the subject; but was that information given to us in the full and proper manner that it ought to have been given before a single step was taken by this House? And when was it given to us? Absolutely, when the thing was completed in this House; and then only a portion of the information was brought down, and that was brought down as if the whole information was given to us. I say that the most important part, relating to nearly half the land, and the amount paid for the additional runs, was withheld from us until we had passed the resolution we were required to pass. Was that necessary information not also withheld from the Legislative Council until they had passed the resolution? And was it not given to us only at the very last moment, when we were settling our differences—if I may say so—with the Legislative Council on the subject? Was that fair to this House? Was it fair to the country? Was it fair to those whose land was to be taken away from them? No, Sir; I think it was not so; and I cannot help feeling a pity that I can hardly express that the population of the colony has suffered so great a loss, not only in the present time, but one which is to be inflicted on their posterity for generations to come. I cannot help thinking that it was cruel that, at a time when the people of the colony, the inhabitants of New Zealand, were only allowed to go on small blocks of land, not exceeding fifty acres, upon the condition of continually paying an augmented rent on that land for themselves and their descendants for ever, upon the condition of residing perpetually for ever upon that one spot, upon the condition of never expecting to have the freehold tenure given to them—that, whilst the poor of this country had no resources left open to them, and were treated on such hard terms, this great company was to be given millions of acres in freehold, subject to no conditions of responsibility, to be given to them simply to raise money on the land, and to have the disposal of it until they were to construct a railway, which railway was to be their own property. I ask the House, will it separate without doing some justice on this subject? Will it separate, being told that this act has been committed to give employment to the poor of New Zealand in the construction of this railway? Will it separate, saying that those who are in distress, without food and without means of subsistence, are to go forth to labour on that railway, to be paid so much a day of money raised by the sale of their own land, paid by their own money for their own labour, and to lose that land for ever, and to know that they and their children must probably become tenants of distant proprietors? I cannot help thinking that the House will see that I am right in asking them to give some assistance to the poor under these circumstances. Let them tell the men who are in poverty, who can only subsist by public work being given to them, that the work shall be given to them somewhere else than upon their own land, which, by their labour, they are to render of great value to others and then lose

it for ever. Do not subject them to such degradation—hopeless degradation, I may say. In fact, I can hardly find terms strong enough to characterize it—that they should be compelled, in order to live at all, to go and work upon lands which were their own, and have been taken from them—to be paid by their own money raised by the sale of their own land. It is a terrible picture. I am sure that the more it is analysed the more it will strike honourable members' minds as something that ought not to have been done; and that it ought not, even now, to be carried out, if any arrangement can be made to prevent it. I think that it might be possible to repay the company any expense that they have been put to, and to purchase back from the contractors what they have obtained from us. Then, I further say, another wrong has been done about this, because I know that it was never made manifest to us that the lands to be given up to this company were in great part lands occupied for years, not as waste lands of the Crown in the ordinary sense, but as land on which rentals had been paid for years, and were still being paid—rentals of about £21,000 a year. I believe that with many persons the real reason for making this railway was to put certain persons in possession of runs, which they have occupied for many years, at an unfairly low price. Were we told that? Does anybody hardly in the colony know it? I think not. I therefore say that, on that ground alone, the poor of New Zealand have a great claim upon this House. But they have a further claim, which I represented the other night. They cannot go to other lands to obtain work. They cannot go, for instance, to Australia, when they have wives and families, because the cost of passage is so heavy. That is an additional claim on their behalf for consideration at the hands of the House. Flight is with them an impossibility. To me it seems that their position is one of slavery. You may put it as you like. They are on an estate from which they cannot move. They have no power to escape, if they are poor. They have no lands of their own to go upon, because you unfairly give them to the rich, or to friends; no lands are offered to them on fair and reasonable terms. There is no proper system at the present time under which the poor may obtain land. What hope, therefore, is there for them? No such hope as they would have in any other country. If they were Australian colonists it would be different. Even if they were in Europe there would be a better chance for them; for in Europe, bad as is the condition of the poor there, their position would be better than it is likely to be here for some years to come. We hear of Ireland. But Ireland was never threatened with such distress as we are here threatened with, except in the time of famine; and Ireland never had a larger non-resident proprietary than New Zealand has at the present time. I do not know whether the honourable member for Timaru has had his return printed yet, so that we can all get at it; but from what I hear of that return I am sure that it shows New Zealand in a worse

aspect than Ireland ever occupied. Then, we have an enormous debt which oppresses the poor of this country—something unknown elsewhere in proportion to the population. How is it possible that they can discharge that without great suffering? I ask honourable gentlemen to look into the figures. I will not trouble the House with details. But let them ascertain what the labouring population have to pay, and see if it is not enough to press any man down. And what must be the mortification to them to know that the money which has been spent, and from which they only got the return of work for the time being, has mainly had the effect of giving an increased value to the lands of a few—too often unfairly taken. The masses have to pay the interest; the few get the benefit of the expenditure. Yet, knowing of the distress of the poor, this House has not yet passed a single day in considering the position of the people. I say that we should insist on something being immediately done in this matter. Then, I will speak of the industrial population. I ask many of the members who are here present, knowing the pledges many of them gave that this subject should be taken into consideration, and that something should be done, how have they kept their pledges? What has been done during the session? Has any voice been raised to insist upon the promised step being taken in this matter? What is the position of those who have not fulfilled their promises? They may say that the Premier is the cause, because it is with him that the matter should have originated, and that, by preventing the financial debate from coming forward for such a length of time, he has cut off all opportunity, all power of our calling attention to the matter. But, I may ask, why have these members constantly followed the Premier, instead of insisting upon his doing his duty? Will they, tonight, agree to the motion I have submitted to them, and force from the Premier that attention to the subject which it is his duty to give to it? Is it much to ask him to allow us to consider this important matter? The whole matter could be settled in a day or two. It is the question above all others which we are bound to consider. I ask for no complete revision of the tariff. I believe there are two or three things that we might do that would have a good effect in relieving the distress, if due consideration were given to the matter. Now, I say this: A great fall in wages is likely to take place. There is no doubt that the passing of this Railway Bill that is to come on will greatly tend to bring that about. I feel certain that the meaning of introducing three people, independent persons, into the Railway Department, and putting them at the head of the department to do exactly as they please, is to do nothing more or less than what is commonly called to put a buffer between the Government and the public. That is the manner in which it is spoken of by those who understand the question and know what is to be done—that the Government will relieve themselves from a certain amount of unpopularity by letting the odium fall upon other

persons. They will give up to careless people the consideration of the wants and circumstances of those who have the greatest possible claim upon the care—I would say upon the loving care—of the Government. I cannot, in my own mind, believe that, at a time of difficulty, a really loving parent would relinquish his authority, would escape from the duty of doing that which is right, simply to avoid the unpleasantness, perhaps the temporary unpopularity, which would follow from the reductions which are really necessary, forgetting that, if justice were done and only unnecessary excrescences were touched, a few months would restore not only popularity but also a feeling of admiration and reward for the man who had not hesitated to do his duty, and had done it with fairness and ability, and in a manner which redounded to the welfare of the whole community. I believe that a statesman really desirous of doing his duty would accept the opportunity of doing the good he might achieve by making these necessary reductions, and would gladly embrace the opportunity of seeing that none were unnecessarily injured, and that only what the public good required was done. I could not conceive that he would think it an unenviable task, and that he would, at such a moment, desire to put it in the hands of strangers who would care little for the inhabitants of New Zealand, nor have their interests at heart, but whose sole object would be to make money out of them. I cannot believe—and I have considered that subject—that the example of other colonies should influence us in this respect, because in New Zealand none of the difficulties with regard to our railways have yet arisen which have occurred in other colonies. There has been perfect freedom from accident of any kind. There has been an admirable management of railway affairs. The only complaint has been as to the tariff imposed, and the unwise regulations made in reference to that. But there has been no complaint of mismanagement such as required so drastic a change as is proposed, and I think the House would do well to consider this point, if the Premier will allow us to take the whole of these questions into consideration. Now, passing to another point connected with this, I would say that there is no hope for the poor in New Zealand getting either remedies or redress unless this Parliament does it, because I defy any Government during the recess to carry out instantly measures that may be necessary. It requires that the Parliament should be sitting at the time that the difficulties are considered, and in that way instant relief might be given in any direction that the Premier thinks proper. It requires that he should have advisers and assistant Committees sitting upon these different subjects; and I say, let us now, or the next day, when the Premier has got his *imprest supply*, deliberate upon this matter, and form such Committees—a Committee to consider each interest—three great Committees to consider the three interests I have spoken of. Let the Committee make recommendations, and let us pass resolutions, assuring all the

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necessary sums of money for the carrying-out of any recommendations they may make. That might be done at once; and why not? What reason is there to the contrary? Is it necessary that we should spend days upon the Representation Bill, which, after all, is not to come into force for three years—is it necessary that we should do that, whilst at our doors lies so much of misery, of distress, of anxiety of heart, of hopelessness for the future? I say it is absurd to waste the energies of this Parliament, keeping us night after night upon a question which does not concern us for three years to come; and yet that there should be misery, poverty, uncertainty, and distress in every part of New Zealand which we are not permitted to consider or assuage, and that, whilst there are in this House the talent, the energy, the will, to deal with these questions at once, nothing of the kind should be done. I could continue for a great length of time to urge this question upon the House; but the House is too greatly exhausted by its previous labours now to attend to it, although I apprehend that they might vote, as I believe they will, in the direction of the recommendations I have made for their consideration. I will now leave it to others to treat of the subject more at large, and I am confident, if they discharge the feelings of their hearts, there will be some who will speak and who will raise their voices in favour of the motion I have made. If I speak alone I cannot help it;—at least it will be seen that the taunt made the other night by the Premier to myself, that I had made no effort to relieve the working population of the country, was not justified. I have done all I possibly could do to rouse attention to it, and on me no greater blame lies than this—I hardly know whether it is blame at all or not, but no greater blame will lie than this: that I have not strength sufficient now, or energy sufficient, to argue out this question as I might have done had it not been for my fear of causing embarrassment by trying to lead others to agree to support me before I came into the House, and thus causing unnecessary delay and working, as it were, against authority. My unwillingness to take that step might have led me to stand in a less forcible position than I might have occupied. Yet I still rely upon the love of their country which is in the heart of honourable members; I rely upon the promises they made to their constituents; I rely upon their feelings that they ought to do something at such a time and in an emergency such as this; I rely upon their knowledge of their duty to their fellow-men generally; I rely upon all these things, that yet some voice will be raised in support of the appeal I make, and that perhaps the Government itself might yield to my request, or that, if it does not, there may be yet found a band sufficiently strong to force and compel them to do their duty.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, I would only just say, with regard to the honourable gentleman's speech, that all these matters are exercising the attention of the Government and of this

House. In fact, the whole reason for this session has been to relieve the country of its distress; and we are taking the first steps, in a practical form, to give effect to the proposals which the honourable gentleman is making. That is the actual and real position.

Am Hon. MEMBER.—Which is the first step?

Major ATKINSON.—The first step is retrenchment, in the opinion of the Government, and in the opinion of the House. I do not propose to make a long debate of this. I do not think that any good would come of it. But I say this: that these matters are as near to the heart of the Government as they are to that of the honourable gentleman, and that the Government, to the best of their knowledge and ability, are taking the most effectual steps to restore prosperity to this colony. If the honourable gentleman can suggest any practical means to the Government, in addition to what they are doing, we shall be very glad to consider them. But we claim that we must exercise our own judgment in doing what we think right. We cannot adopt measures which we think would not be effectual. We must adopt those which we believe will give effect to what we desire, and to what the honourable gentleman desires—that is, the prosperity of the country. And, Sir, I submit that the House is doing its utmost. Why I object to the honourable gentleman bringing the motion on at the present time is that it seemed clear to me that this is not the opportunity for a general discussion of this nature. The House never does discuss great questions upon such a question as going into Committee of Supply upon an occasion of this kind. Within a few days we shall require to go into Committee of Supply, and the honourable gentleman will have an opportunity of bringing forward any resolution he likes. "The whole question can be settled by consideration in two or three days." Those are his words. If he thinks that, we shall have more than two or three days to consider the financial position; and I say that every member of the House—and I speak this with the utmost confidence—that every member of this House is bent upon doing his utmost to restore prosperity to every class of people. As I said, we may differ as to the means; but there is no help for that. We must pursue the course that we think right and proper; and I submit, further, that we ought to give one another credit for our motives, and not be accusing each other of trying to do wrong acts.

Mr. FISH.—I do not intend to endeavour in any shape or form to prolong this debate, because I agree with the Premier that at the present time it is quite inopportune; and I would suggest to my honourable friend the member for Auckland Central that he should take another opportunity for discussing the very important question he has brought up. I would point out to the honourable member, also, that it is hardly fair to the House that he should bring a question of so much importance before it when he has given no previous intimation to his friends that such a question

was going to be brought up. We can hardly expect that a matter of this kind can be discussed, even by those who most earnestly think with the honourable gentleman, unless he pays them the compliment or the courtesy of letting them know he is going to have the question discussed. I therefore trust that the honourable gentleman will be content, in the meantime, with what he has said, and that he will let us proceed with the business.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I should like to say just one word about this. This is my first session in Parliament, and the procedure of the House has struck me with a certain sense of strangeness and astonishment. It seems a curiously complete contrivance to prevent anybody doing anything. I fear that in time I shall get used to it, but at present I suffer under it. I have very great sympathy with the amendment which the honourable member for Auckland Central has moved. Of course I accept the Premier's assurance that he and his Ministers are devoted heart and soul to restoring prosperity to the colony; but it would appear that he considers the first essential to the attainment of that end is his secure possession of the Treasury benches, and he is so careful to secure that that everything else melts into the dim vista of the future. Whatever comes up or whatever is wanted to be brought up of a practical nature is to be considered during the recess or in the future. The result of all this is that, during the whole of this session, I venture to say, we have not done one thing in any way tending to restore prosperity to New Zealand. I am very sorry that it is inopportune to discuss this question raised by the honourable member for Auckland Central. The curse of party government seems to blight every effort made by any one in this House to do anything practical to remedy the very great evils under which the colony is now suffering.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I am sorry, for one thing, that the honourable member has brought this forward, because, after the meeting that took place this afternoon, honourable gentlemen who attended it are bound not to offer any opposition to the House going into Committee of Supply. I should very much like to support the honourable gentleman's motion, but my hands are completely tied. It would not do for honourable members who make arrangements to run from them, and it was decided that the Government should have supply without debate. I therefore just state the reason why I shall not debate this subject.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I do not wish to say anything beyond this: that in a letter I received from Dunedin yesterday the statement is made that there are very pronounced evidences of distress there, to such an extent that those persons who can leave are leaving for Melbourne. We find that artisans and workmen, afraid of starving in the colony, are leaving it; and I do implore the Government to give, as I have no doubt they will give, this matter very immediate attention. There is very decided necessity throughout the colony for some mode of administration or reform which will bring

about prosperity, which we all so sincerely desire, but which none of us seem able to accomplish.

Mr. TAIWHANGA.—I wish to say a few words to defend ourselves from the honourable member for Kumara for supporting the Government. I do not think we are ashamed of doing that, because the Government agreed to leave our number the same as it was before; and therefore, consequently, we shall vote for the Government. The people in my part of the Island sent me here in the interests of the Maori people, not in the interests of the honourable member for Kumara. The whole four of us were returned in the interests of the Maoris. I have two Bills here in the Maoris' interests, and, if the honourable member for Kumara can force them through to become law, I shall say he is a very good man; but of course we know that he only wants to support his own ideas. Therefore, as I said before, whether this Government or that give us good laws for the Maoris, I will support them. I do not care which side it is. But, then, the Premier promised that he would leave us the whole four, and that is the reason we stood by him.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

Mr. MOSS.—At the request of the honourable member for Auckland Central, I beg to move, That the debate be adjourned. This is a subject on which we feel very strongly, but I do not wish to say anything to-night, because it would have the appearance of interrupting Supply.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—What would be the effect, Sir, of the adjournment of the debate?

Mr. SPEAKER.—That you would not go into Committee of Supply to-night.

Mr. MOSS.—Perhaps the better course would be to move the adjournment of the House, on the understanding that it may be negatived. It is right that the honourable member for Auckland Central should have the opportunity of speaking in reply on the important question he has raised; but he does not wish to obstruct going into Committee of Supply. The honourable gentleman tells us he could not have any other opportunity of bringing it forward; and I think he has really great claims upon the Government. There is no doubt about that. The Government have been treated very generously, and were allowed an adjournment of three weeks to prepare their policy. I do not think the policy they framed at all approaches completeness in any shape or way. I can only say that the admirable frankness of the honourable member for the Northern Maori District might very well be emulated by all of us. He has told us very plainly the arrangement he made with the Government which has secured the support of the four Maori members; and if the secrets of the prison-house were all disclosed in the same way it would be a great advantage. I do not wish to say anything further to-night, as it might have the appearance of obstructing going into Committee of Supply. I have no desire to do that, but simply move, That the debate be adjourned.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I think it is a great pity

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that honourable members should waste time now. There will be another opportunity whenever there is a motion made for going into Committee of Supply.

Motion for the adjournment of the debate negatived.

Sir G. GREY.—I now move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman cannot move it, as he has already spoken.

Mr. GOLDIE.—I move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—This motion is in order, and will enable the member for Auckland Central to speak to the question.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I simply wish to make a few observations. It must be patent to honourable members that I had no other opportunity of bringing this matter forward this session, because I feel perfectly sure, from what I have seen of the tactics pursued in the House, that, when I should attempt to move that the Speaker do leave the chair, some one else would jump up and move something first, and prevent me from having any chance of bringing a motion forward. In several sessions I have tried to bring matters forward on the motion for going into Committee of Supply, but my attempts have never succeeded. There are various obstacles, which I need not allude to, and various arrangements are made which prevent an honourable member under such circumstances from bringing a motion forward. The plan I have now pursued is the only way in which I could gain my end. I leave it to the House to say whether what I ask is not something different from what the Premier has done with regard to considering the circumstances of the country. He has brought forward a Representation Bill which is certain, from its obnoxious features, to provoke much resistance, and prevent us from giving time to the consideration of what are the real interests of the country. The Government had a right to pursue their own line of policy, and did pursue it. Every candid man will admit that I had no other opportunity afforded me than that which I have taken to-night, nor was I likely to have any other. Unfortunately, it appears that arrangements have been made which prevent honourable gentlemen from assisting me, and I cannot think any arrangement should be made which would interfere with a debate of this kind. When I made this motion, such a thing could have been in no one's contemplation. I put it to the Premier to drop for a time this motion of mine, and take the debate on the Imprest Supply Bill at once, resuming the debate on my motion at any time he might fix. I think I released every individual from any promise he might have made; because the Premier had a fair offer made to him and he certainly declined to accept it, in the presence of the House. I say that no fair consideration of the condition of the people of New Zealand has taken place. Will any one say that reducing the Governor's salary to a trifling extent was relieving the people of New Zealand from their present state of misery?



And it is only three years hence that Bill is to take effect! Will any one say that a trifling reduction of the honorarium will relieve the population from the great distress that presses upon them?

Mr. MONK.—It is a commencement.

Sir G. GREY.—The honourable gentleman is always fertile with excuses for the present Government. I say it would be better for him to recollect what his constituents were led to expect. We are told that the reduction of the honorarium to this trifling extent is "a commencement" in taking the misery off the shoulders of the people; and this trifle from the Governor's salary, and this trifling reduction of the Ministers' salaries! Here is the work of a session, while there is a suffering population on every side, extending over hundreds of miles in every direction. Was that what they were led to expect? Was that what was to restore New Zealand to prosperity? Was that a sufficient atonement for taking away 2,500,000 acres of land from the people, burdening the country by the loss of a territory, and making large numbers of its population beggars for the future? This is what has been achieved! And I ask honourable members if we have been taken into consultation as to how reductions were to be carried out. Is there time left now? I say the only chance left is to form Committees forthwith on various branches of the public expenditure, and let them bring up recommendations. Is it not enough to grieve a man's soul to be told, "Do allow the business of the country to go on; let me pray you not to stop it;" whilst he is trying to raise a spark of pity for people who are suffering all over the country? I am told that I might delay the business of the country, and that therefore I cannot have my motion considered. If the Premier had accepted my suggestion the Imprest Supply Bill might have been passed, and this debate might have been taken at another time. What evil spirit can have got into the Premier's mind to prevent him acceding to the request, which, I submit, I put to him in a most respectful manner? And that, then, I should be told I used a threat! Is that the way one is to be encouraged to fight against injustice done to a large and suffering population? I think not. The debate can be raised in another way hereafter by some other amendment or change; but I do hope honourable gentlemen will speak out this night, and that some other voice beside my own will be raised: and I hope I shall not sit down with the melancholy reflection that, having one chance of bringing this matter forward, they allowed me to sit down unaided and alone, hopeless and miserable at the thought that I can do no more to help my suffering countrymen. And, then, I shall have the taunt repeated that I have done nothing for the people of New Zealand! I care not; but all I will say is that it is as hard a fate as ever man had to meet on this earth.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I can assure the honourable member for Auckland Central that he shall not stand alone in this matter. We cannot help him now, because we are pledged, as it

were, to allow the Government to get supply, and, if we go on with this debate now, the Government cannot get supply to-night. The honourable member will have another opportunity of bringing on his motion, on the next occasion of moving for Committee of Supply; and I can assure him that not only myself but many other members of this House will assist him most willingly.

Mr. BLAKE.—I also can assure the honourable gentleman that he will find me assisting him when he has another opportunity of bringing the matter forward. I will be more true to my promise than some honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House. I promise the honourable gentleman that I will assist him to my utmost; and I will stick to that promise.

Mr. MONK.—I must make one or two remarks in reply to the honourable member for Auckland Central. That honourable gentleman, by his talents, his position in the colony, and his age, commands from me nothing but the very highest respect; but I must say that I hardly expected an honourable gentleman of his position to charge honourable members with breaking their election-pledges, without being able to show in the least how they had done so. I defy the honourable gentleman to show a single instance of any kind wherein I have forgotten the pledges I gave my constituents. I came here to try to do my best for the colony by insisting on retrenchment. I came here to do my very best for those for whom the honourable gentleman has pleaded to-night. The honourable gentlemen, the Ministers on those benches, have given pledges that they will accomplish certain retrenchments, and I contend it is my duty religiously to maintain them in the position they occupy, in order that they may have a reasonable time in which to show to the country how far they are sincere or not in their promise to carry out those pledges; and I think in assisting to keep them in that position I am doing my very best to bring about those results for which the honourable member for Auckland Central has pleaded this evening. If there is any man in this House working and striving in the interests of the artisans and working-men of this country it is myself; I can thoroughly and conscientiously assert that. Sir, my political career is short, and it may soon close, even while in its swaddling-clothes; but, at any rate, it is without the stain implied by the taunt of the honourable member for Auckland Central, and I defy the honourable member or any other honourable member to prove one single instance of my having broken a pledge I gave to my constituents. Every pledge I have given I have fairly and sincerely kept. I have pledged myself to the present Ministry; but the moment they show they are unfaithful to the pledges they have given to this House, and are no longer worthy of my trust, then I shall stand up and vote against them. I wish to avoid saying anything that would be unpleasant. I do not want to disturb the good-feeling of this House by reciting any of the many grievances that

have been heaped upon me as a citizen of the colony by the administration of the last few years, but I think I could fling out an apple of discord if I mentioned a few of those political measures that, because of the evils they have inflicted on the colony, are now ranking in my breast. But, Sir, I am not going to sit in this hall and silently listen to charges that I have broken pledges I have given my constituents. The honourable member for Auckland Central has complained that a large area of land has been given to land-monopolists by the present Government, and that I am fertile in finding excuses for them. I am as strongly opposed to land-monopoly as any honourable member could possibly be, and on every occasion on which that subject has been brought before the House I have voted against the proposals that have been made in regard to it. I shall probably continue so to do. I refer to the Midland Railway. But what has been done in regard to that question is not the work of the present Ministry. It is a legacy left to them by those who preceded them, and they have shown their conscientiousness in regard to it by doing their very best in the interests of the colony: they are performing a very disagreeable task, thrown on them by their predecessors, and they have taken away much of the venom that was lurking in that measure, by making it more favourable to the country than it was before it came into their hands. I am afraid that if we were to follow too closely the suggestion made by the honourable member for Auckland Central it would plunge the affairs of the country into confusion, by again placing them in the control of those who have left such a hard task to the honourable gentlemen now in office, and who, we believe, would carry out the great work that has to be done in the interests of the colony in a less efficient manner than the present Ministry will do. I shall thank the honourable member for Auckland Central if he can show one single instance in which I have been unfaithful to my pledges; and if he does so I will fully acknowledge my wrong. But to be accused wrongly of doing so I cannot possibly submit to. I trust I shall be pardoned for occupying the time of the House for a few minutes. I have spoken but little, and I think I have been best serving the interests of the country by maintaining silence on many occasions when I could have spoken. I have spoken a minute or two now because I feel that to have kept silent would have been doing an injustice to myself by allowing a grave charge to pass unnoticed.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I think the honourable gentleman who has just spoken has been very discourteous to the honourable member for Auckland Central. The honourable member for Waitemata has owned that he has pledged himself to support the Government, right or wrong, simply for the purpose of keeping one man out of the Administration.

Mr. MONK.—I did not say so.

Mr. TAYLOR.—The honourable gentleman implied that, I think. It is time we had less of this preaching on the other side of the House,

as though all the morality in the country was there. I think there is as much morality on this side of the House as on the other. I cannot understand any member pledging himself blindfold to support any Government. I would not do it if I never set my foot in the House again. If members have not the courage to vote according to their opinions they are not worth consideration. I think if the honourable member for Waitemata, and the honourable member for Auckland West too, were to learn a little more from the honourable member for Auckland Central they would much better carry out the wishes of their constituents. We have heard a great deal about the Financial Reform Association in Auckland; but do we not find now that the influence of the honourable member for Auckland Central is being used by the radical members of that Association? I am quite sure, if the country had time to listen to the arguments of the honourable member for Auckland Central, whom I regard as one of the greatest word-painters in the House—Honourable members may smile, but I should like to have that said of myself. I do not think the honourable member for Waitemata, who, I admit, is great on timber, should have spoken in the way he did of the honourable member for Auckland Central. If the present Government hold their seats another twelve months I shall ask for a return showing the concessions that have been made to the timber industry, and then we shall see the honourable member's disinterestedness. I do trust we shall have no more of this assumption of morality, and treating us on this side of the House as if we were outcasts. I thought the honourable gentleman had more charity—which, as we know, covers a multitude of sins. I hope when the honourable gentleman next addresses us he will, at any rate, not attack one of the ablest men in the colony in the way he has done to-night—an honourable gentleman who is doing his utmost in the interests of the working-men of the colony.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

Amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to, and Imprest Supply Bill read a first, a second, and a third time.

#### REPRESENTATION BILL.

On the question, That the consideration of the amendments in the Representation Bill be postponed till after the order for Committee of Supply.

Mr. KERR said,—My constituents will expect me, when I go to them, to tell them what retrenchment the Government are going to make, and I shall be only able to tell them that I protested that the Government should bring its retrenchment proposals down. The little retrenchments that have been made in my district have raised the ire of the public; but if I had known what they were going to do I could have saved the Government a lot of trouble, and put them to no additional expense. If I knew what the Government were going to do I could save the country a good deal of money, and therefore I hope and trust

Mr. Monk

that the Government will, before we leave this session, bring down their policy of retrenchment, and let us know what they are going to do. My constituents would put blame upon me if I did not do everything in my power to get the Premier to bring down his retrenchment policy, so that I could tell my constituents what the Ministry mean and what they are doing. I do not wish to take up the time of the House; but I do want to say that it will save honourable members much trouble if the Government will only tell them what they are going to do in the districts they represent. I, for one, would do my level best to help them with their retrenchment. I was pledged to retrenchment; my constituents asked me to do all that I could for retrenchment. If the Government will tell me what retrenchment is to go on in my district I will tell them how to do it, and how, in making the retrenchment, they may save trouble hereafter. When a candidate goes round, the constituents bind you hard-and-fast to go in for retrenchment in every way; but when you touch their toes they are ready to turn round and blame you for doing so. I wish to have it placed on record that I have done everything in my power to get the Government to bring on the floor of this House their statement with regard to the retrenchment they were making, at all events, in my district. I hope I shall not be told that I am stonewalling or doing anything of that sort. I have done my duty as far as in me lay, and therefore I shall say no more in the matter.

Amendment negatived, and amendments made in the Bill in Committee agreed to.

Major ATKINSON.—I move, That the Bill be now read a third time.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I shall not make any lengthy remarks. In fact, I shall simply give a few reasons which I think quite sufficient for moving, That the Bill be read a third time this day three months. I go, first, upon the ground that there is no urgency for the measure, as it is admitted by the Government that it is not intended to use it before we meet next session, and that it is part only of the measures which it is proposed to introduce next session. And, secondly, I protest against the Bill because it is evident from what has taken place, and from the feeling of the country, that the Bill as it is proposed now—indeed, as introduced, although it escaped our notice—gives to the Government a power to the last degree unconstitutional in the way of determining, when it shall so please, that the number of representatives of the country shall be reduced by 25 per cent. Sir, on these twofold grounds I ask the House to agree to postponing the Bill. I do not grudge the Government the triumph it has had during the last two days: not, Sir, I think, triumphs in the way of carrying the measure, but in the influence it has been able to exercise over honourable members in the direction of preventing them from expressing their opinions on the measure. A Government often possesses, very properly possesses, a power of

influencing the votes of members; but when that influence is extended in the direction of being able to prevent members from expressing their opinions, of being able, in fact, to order them out of the House when it is not desired they should listen to a speaker, it appears to me that such influence is of great danger. Putting that on one side, leaving honourable members to answer to their own consciences, as they must, one time or another, how they allowed this Bill to pass as they have done, how they allowed the arguments against it to pass without any answer or rejoinder, I go back to the fact that this measure is not of such urgency that at this period of the session we ought to hurry it through. It is not, I say, of an urgency to make it necessary that it should be passed this session; and we emphasized that many times over when we considered that the Bill passed in a shape which does not represent the opinions of the majority of this House—because we were justified in accepting the opinions honourable members had given when they were unconscious of the pressure which the Government intended to place on them. We had their opinions on the subject. We know, therefore, that they do not approve of the Bill as it stands; and I ask, are they, for the sake of helping the Government, going to consent to this measure being carried, with a full knowledge that it places in the hands of the Government an utterly unconstitutional power? It is utter rubbish to say that there is any urgency for the measure. The other evening we were told it was but one of many other measures to come to alter the electoral system, to affect triennial Parliaments, single electorates, and one-day elections, the grouping of the town districts, and some modification of the Hare system. All these are before us as a contingency, and we are asked to pass this Bill, not according to the Government statement that it is wanted, but as an indication of the power they have over this House. As this measure will not be used until next session at any rate, and as we have before us a number of measures of the last urgency, is it right we should be compelled to pass the Bill under these circumstances? I should like to know, when questions come on, as they must do before the end of the session, how the Government can logically urge that honourable members shall not discuss them at length, when they have occupied so much time over a Bill which, admittedly, will not pass into use before we meet for another session. I avoid making remarks more lengthened, first, because I do not wish to delay the business; and, next, because I am quite certain, although honourable members on the other side have not expressed their opinions, that they are well aware of the facts I state, and that they are only supporting the Government not because they agree with the measure, but because they wish to retain the Government in office. I do not say that is not a legitimate thing. I am not reflecting on honourable members. Honourable members have to consider all through their parliamentary career a choice of whether they will follow a certain course as

against the chance of ousting from office those in whom they have confidence. It is not, therefore, upon honourable members I am reflecting; but it is to the Government I am appealing. I ask the Government not to use the force it possesses to compel the House to adopt a measure which, it is not too much to say, is evidently not in accordance with the opinions and feelings of the majority of this House. I move that the third reading be delayed for three months.

Mr. FISH.—Without intending at all to prolong this debate unduly, I do not feel that I should be doing justice to myself or to the constituency I represent were I not to make a last statement to the effect that I trust the amendment of the honourable member for Christchurch North will be carried. I am in this position with regard to a reduction of members of this House: When I appeared before my constituents I gave my pledge—not asked by them, but given by myself—that I thought the numbers could be reduced; and the number I thought it could be reduced to was seventy-five. Therefore, Sir, unless I altered my mind considerably on the subject, or thought the opinion of the country had changed, I should have been bound, I think, in honour to have voted for a Bill as nearly as possible giving effect to the views I expressed on the hustings. But when I came up to this House and read this Bill I thought the Bill contained all the policy of the Government with regard to this question of representation. But, Sir, as the debate on the Bill progressed I found that this is a mere bagatelle in the policy of the Government with regard to the representation of the people, compared with what they propose to bring forward next session. And, Sir, I say, and say it with all earnestness and sincerity, it is not fair to the country, to myself as a member, or to other members of the House to ask them to pass a policy of this kind in detail. It is, as it were, seeking to get a whole carried in a fragmentary manner—a whole which, if it were proposed at one and the same time, would be rejected by a large majority. I find that, in all probability, by the passing of this Bill city electorates will be seriously interfered with next session, because it is quite patent to my mind that an attempt will be made by the country members next session to increase the quota with regard to cities and country districts in such a way as will materially lessen the representation of cities. Therefore, as the representative of a city electorate, it is my bounden duty to refer this matter again to my constituents before giving a final voice upon it; and, when I recognise that there is no urgent necessity for the Bill passing this session, I feel justified in asking the Government to delay it, and in giving my vote in favour of such delay. We have another question still before us in the future, the amalgamation of city electorates; and, among the other subjects coming up for discussion, are these: the amalgamation or grouping of districts, the interference with triennial Parliaments, and the altering of the

system now in vogue of holding elections on one day. If all these questions are brought up—and it appears they will be—in the amending Bill of next session, I say all these facts combined irresistibly call for delay in the final dealing with this Bill until the whole of these great questions are before us. Is it not one of the biggest questions we could be called upon to discuss—the propriety or otherwise of undoing legislation which it has taken this colony years and years to perfect, as we believe, in the most perfect way for a democratic community? Is it not reasonable to say that we should have the whole of the policy down before we are asked to determine on it piecemeal? With regard to retrenchment, I do not deny that the Government are anxious to retrench; but I say this, without fear of contradiction: that the passing of this Bill this session or next cannot interfere in the slightest degree with their proposals of retrenchment. There is another fact in relation to this measure, and which I feel bound to refer to—that is, the really shameless way in which the Maori members of this House have been induced to vote for the Government. I do not wish to hurt their feelings, or to say anything I would not say to Europeans, but they have shown conclusively in this debate that they are unfit to be present in this House at all, when they openly declare that the principle of the measure is nothing to them—that their votes can be given one way or another in accordance with how it affects themselves personally. It is one of those things that I think are quite shocking; and it leads me to believe that the sooner we do away with the special representation of the Maori race the better it will be for the legislation of this country. We have, outside of this, another fact, and, if there were nothing else which should lead honourable members in the direction of postponing the making of this Bill law at present, it is the fact that a majority of this House has said that the Bill should not become law in its present shape. I do not, as I said this afternoon, altogether blame those honourable members who voted against the Government the other night for receding from that position, so far as they have gone; but I say to those honourable gentlemen that, the Premier having had the words added to the Bill deleted, they can, with perfect faith and honour to themselves and to the party, even now vote for the postponement of this measure for three months; and I say that, at this late period, the Premier could, without any derogation from the position he has taken up, consent to the proposition. It is not for me to personally blame the Premier; I can only do it in my position as a member of this House; but I do say that I think he is riding the high horse in regard to this measure in a way that is not necessary for party purposes or retrenchment purposes, or any purpose whatever, except, as it appears to me, the gratification of his own strong will and determination that he will have this done, right or wrong. I trust, at any rate, that this amendment will be carried; but, whether it is or not,

Sir J. Vogel

I feel it to be my duty, in the interests of my constituents, to protest against this Bill being passed now. I trust every member on this side of the House, at least, will take that view, and I call the attention of my honourable colleagues in the representation of Dunedin to it. One of my colleagues, like myself, has pledged himself to retrenchment; but I urge that honourable member to consider what the result of passing this measure now will be to ourselves as city representatives, and to the people we represent. When we remember the legislation that will be put before us next session we cannot but be very apprehensive. We shall have a measure then in which the quota for the town and country districts will be dealt with, and every town member knows as well as I do that a majority of the House will be against us, and that our districts will materially suffer as the result of that legislation. Therefore, I say, if there is any chance, by the shelving of this Bill, of making the representation of the country fair and equal to all parties, we should all, irrespective of party, unite and vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Christchurch North. I have no desire whatever, nor, I believe, has one of our party, to embarrass the Government in a party way. We have no desire, in any action we take on this Bill, to seek office for our party; I am sure the Premier and his colleagues will believe me when I say that we have no desire of that kind. I am sorry that there should have been a single party vote in connection with this Bill, which is not one that should be made a subject for party struggles. Sir, I have said what I have said not with any wish to delay business, but simply to take the opportunity of entering my last protest against this Bill being passed on the present occasion.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—I feel bound to enter my protest against this Bill being now passed. I am not an obstructionist, and in the proceedings on this Bill I have taken no part except to vote; but I do object most strongly to it. The honourable member for Sydenham has accused me of speaking too seldom, and has said something about a promise I made to my constituents.

Mr. TAYLOR.—No; I did not charge you with speaking too seldom. I said that during your election your constituents asked you what you had done in the House, and said that, though you were there, you never opened your mouth; on which you said you would try to improve in the future: and I notice that since the beginning of the session you have improved.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—I am very much obliged to the honourable gentleman; but he is entirely mistaken. My constituents said nothing of the kind; but I told them this: that, being a young member, I spoke but seldom, not like some other young members—and some old members—who spoke on every possible subject. My constituents approved of the course I had taken, and said they hoped that, in the future, I should only speak when I thought fit. No doubt I shall learn from the eloquence of the honourable member for Sydenham to speak

more often, for I always listen with great pleasure to his classical and logical speeches, and we know that directly he begins to speak the House becomes crowded. No doubt I shall learn in time to be as eloquent and logical as the honourable gentleman himself, if I do not afford the House an equal amount of pleasure. But I did not get up to address the House on the honourable gentleman's eloquence, or his wonderful qualities, but to say a few words on this Bill before giving my vote. It is quite clear that if all honourable members were to vote as freely and as conscientiously as they would wish to do there would be a strong majority against a portion of this Bill. I, for one, support a reduction to seventy-four members; but I do strongly object to the way the Bill is framed, giving the Premier power to bring it into force when he chooses. If the Premier is defeated next session, as he probably will be on some matter, he will ask the Governor for a dissolution, and, as dissolutions are very seldom refused, he will, no doubt, get it, and he will then go to the country and have the reduction made, or, if he does not go that length, he will keep honourable members trembling under the fear of dissolution, and will be able to carry whatever he desires, no matter what honourable members' wishes may be. The other night a number of honourable members voted for a certain amendment in the Bill, because they believed it a proper thing to do, and they were not aware the Premier was going to take the stand he did. After doing so they said, when talking to us, "We are going to be stiff in the back, whether the Government resign or not." But the next morning the Premier had his whips calling them together, and he took them upstairs and talked to them, and they came down like lambs. There were a few honourable exceptions, but most of them came down like lambs, and said to us, "We must support the Government—everything the Government propose." Now, to that procedure I object most strongly. When honourable members, who have convictions of their own, will do exactly as the Government wish, whether it agrees with their convictions or not, I think it is a matter that is deeply to be regretted. The honourable member for the Northern Maori District has told us very frankly to-night that he and the other Maori members voted with the Government because they have retained the four Maori members. But I ask that honourable gentleman, who proposed to take away one of those members? Was it not the Premier himself who proposed to take one Maori member away? That concession was made simply to get the four Maori votes, and if they had voted against the Government the Ministry would be in a very different position from what they are in. The Government knew that perfectly well, and they arranged matters so as to retain those four votes. And what will the Government probably do with those honourable members? Supposing some very important measure affecting the Maoris comes up next session, to which the Maori members ob-

ject strongly, and say they will vote against the Premier and thereby turn him out, the Premier will say, "You pledged yourselves to me, and if you do not vote for me I will dissolve, and very likely you will lose your seats." That is the threat the honourable gentleman will hold over them, and those honourable gentlemen, if they think the Bill a very improper one and it is against their convictions, were very foolish indeed to pledge themselves as they did to vote with the Government in the last division. Now we have heard no argument whatever from Ministers why this Bill should be passed—not a bit of argument has come from them for it, and especially has there been none for the provision to which there is so much objection. The Premier has spoken and lost his temper several times, but the other Ministers have not spoken, and have rarely been in the House even during the discussions. When they have been here they have simply sat in their seats without saying a word. I think such an important measure, so long under discussion, should have been spoken to by the members of the Ministry themselves. Several Government supporters have expressed their views very candidly; and one of them, the honourable member for Manawatu, has said that the Bill is a very improper one, that he is dead against it, and that it is everything that is bad; but, although he condemned it in that strong language, he said he would vote with the Government, because he had an objection to the honourable member for Christchurch North getting into power—he was prepared to sacrifice his constituency and the country for the sake of gratifying his own personal animosity towards the honourable member for Christchurch North. Is that a proper frame of mind in which to deal with a measure of this great importance? I say it is a most improper one. One argument we have heard urged was that in Great Britain the average quota is about twenty thousand, whereas here it is only seven thousand. Now, things are very different at Home from what they are here. In England you have a very thickly populated country, and, whether the population of the electorate is twenty thousand, thirty thousand, forty thousand, fifty thousand, or sixty thousand, or whatever number it may be, the electors are all close together, and on a very much smaller area than the population in the electorates in this colony. Things are totally different in the two countries. Although the quota may be only seven thousand people here, you may have that number spread over hundreds of miles of country. One honourable gentleman from the North has told me that he had to ride over seven hundred miles to address his constituents, having no fewer than fifteen different polling-places. Now, how would any constituency in England compare with that in area? There is no comparison. Numerical strength must not at all be the only consideration with us; we must look also at the importance and size of a district; and I must say, for myself, that, although I vote for reduction of members on the score of retrenchment, I do not think the present number is too

*Mr. Fitzherbert*

many, considering the circumstances of the country. That number was fixed in 1881, when the population was much smaller than it is now, and I do not see why we should make so large a reduction now. However, I will not discuss that, because we have already affirmed the principle that the number of members shall be seventy-four; but I do ask the Premier to do this. We might have obstructed him, and prevented him passing his Imprest Supply Bill just now. The Premier never listens to what any one says. He is the most discourteous Premier I have ever seen. If there is anything which makes this side of the House object to the honourable gentleman's measures, and to anything done on those benches, it is the absolute want of courtesy shown to honourable members on this side of the House, and often even to the supporters of the Government, by the Premier. I recollect the time when we had Premiers in this colony like Sir Frederick Weld, Sir Edward Stafford, and others of that stamp; but we did not see any of this discourtesy then. We look to the Premier for the tone of the House, and if he will not give it a good tone we shall sink into the condition of a debating society, or become little better than a bear-garden. I hope the Premier will be kind enough to listen to my remarks. We have not opposed him in the passing of his Imprest Supply Bill, and I think he might, for once, be courteous enough to allow us some little privilege with regard to this Bill, and let it stand over for a time. We have all been very warm on the subject, and are not in a position to approach it in that spirit which its importance demands, and, if any one has approached it in a spirit not calculated to produce a proper result, it has been the Premier himself. Therefore I ask him to give us another opportunity to discuss the Bill, and, if he will not, I shall feel compelled to vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Christchurch North. I do so because I think it is a most improper Bill in this respect—and it has been mentioned several times this evening—that it places most extraordinary powers in the hands of the Premier. I do not believe that there has ever been a Bill introduced into this House before in which the time at which it should come into force was left almost at the discretion of the Premier. This Bill is to come into force at some indefinite period—that is to say, that it rests very much with the Premier to say when there shall be a dissolution of Parliament. It is, therefore, not a constitutional measure, and is an innovation to which I very much object. I hope the Premier will see his way to modify this Bill in the direction I suggest, and give us further time to consider it; or, if not, I shall, as I have said, be obliged to vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Christchurch North. That it be read a second time this day three months.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Sir, during the late contest I stated to my constituents that I would support a reduction in the number of members of this House; and I mean to carry

out that statement, and shall vote in favour of the third reading of this Bill. I wish, however, to express my very strong protest against the attitude taken up by the Premier in reference to the amendment which I proposed, and which was carried. That was not proposed as a hostile amendment in any way; it was supported by a large following of the Government party, and its sole object was to prevent the Bill being used as a species of terrorism over the House for the next two years; and I venture to say that any intelligent man in the colony, recognising the circumstances in which that amendment was proposed and the fact of its acceptance by a large portion of the independent-minded members of the House, will see at once that it was a proper one. I am glad to say that not only the Press, but a large section of the inhabitants of the colony have appreciated that amendment, and have indicated to me their appreciation in a very satisfactory manner. I wish only to state that, having indicated during the elections that I would support a reduction of the number of members, and as this Bill has accomplished that object, I shall support the third reading. However, I hope that the Government, on reflection, will see the desirability of having the Bill amended in the other branch of the Legislature or by message by the Governor. Probably the Premier, who is learning day by day, as most of us are, will realise that the step he has taken is a very unconstitutional one, and one not at all satisfactory to the colony.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I gave a pledge to my constituents that I would do all I could to secure a reduction in the number of members of this House, and, while I recognise the objectionable features of the Bill the third reading of which we are now discussing, yet, after carefully weighing the *pros* and *cons*, I do not feel myself justified in doing anything else than keeping my pledge. Therefore, although very much against my will, I shall have to vote for the third reading. As to the objectionable features it is not necessary to say a word. They have been iterated and reiterated by every member who has spoken, and I heartily indorse all that has been said about them. It may be that I am wrong, and that the evils of the Bill will outweigh the good it may do, but, if so, my constituents will, at all events, recognise that I prefer to commit an error of judgment than a breach of faith. I shall therefore vote for the third reading.

Mr. WHYTE.—I desire to say a few words to explain why it was that I voted last night against an amendment of which I myself had given notice with respect to the percentage of advantage which country districts should have as compared with towns in the matter of representation. I considered that it ought to be increased; but I decided to withdraw that amendment for the present, and even to vote against it, because it was very evident it would be used as another means of obstruction, and would certainly lead to a very great deal of discussion, and no doubt assist those honourable gentlemen who were obstructing

the business so very persistently. I, however, have by no means given up my intention of fighting this out and obtaining the fair proportion which the country districts should have as compared with the towns in the representation of the country. The proportion which I proposed in my amendment was exceedingly moderate. At any rate, we shall have that out next session, and I have no doubt the House will treat the matter fairly. I have only said these few words in order that it might be understood why I gave notice of an amendment one day and voted against it on the next.

Mr. CARROLL.—I only rise to make a few remarks mainly to disabuse the minds of honourable members of the impression that the Maori members had entered into a compact with the Government, or pledged themselves to support the Government on consideration of being granted four members. I say it is totally untrue. Yesterday the honourable member for the Northern Maori District explained his vote in this way: that his objection to the Bill was that the Government proposed to reduce the number of Maori members to three; and once that objection was removed he voted for the Bill. Sir, if honourable members on the other side of the House would only criticize the action of members of their own party, they would be doing very well; for what do we see, time after time, but a state of thorough disorganization on that side of the House, some of its members voting in the "Ayes" lobby and others in the "Noes" lobby on the same question? Besides that, we are not to take advice from those honourable gentlemen as to what we are to do. Surely we are entitled to have an opinion of our own. What we demanded during this debate was simply justice. We thought it would be unjust on the part of the Government to reduce our number to three, and we objected in strong terms to that action, and the Government saw the justice of our objection. Sir, we were very much edified with the few remarks made by the honourable member for the Hutt, and with the advice he has given us; but I think we should prefer to take advice from more experienced politicians. The honourable gentleman said that we are in the hands of the Government, because they can threaten us with a dissolution at any time. Well, I can only say this: that the Maori members are not afraid to go back to their constituents as the honourable gentleman is; and when the honourable gentleman talks about his constituency being a large one, it does not seem to have entered his mind that the constituencies we represent are very much larger. I represent a constituency extending over one-third of the area of the North Island, and at the last election I had to go round to sixty-four polling-places and address meetings everywhere. Still, I did not grumble, and I am not afraid to go back to my constituents. I believe that the honourable member for Dunedin South said that the Maoris were not fit to be representatives at all—not fit to have seats in this House. That may or may not be true; but I will say this:

that when I see pakeha members taking up the time of the House, abusing the forms of the House, and putting the country to enormous cost by getting up and continuing useless discussions by stonewalling, I feel that, if we are not fit to hold seats in this House, much less so are those pakeha members. I hope honourable gentlemen will not be so free in accusing us of wrong motives when we exercise our votes. We do not say that So-and-so has had his vote bought by the Government, or that another honourable gentleman has been bought by the Opposition. We leave every honourable gentleman to be the judge of his own actions, and we leave him to his constituents, and honourable gentlemen might as well leave us to our consciences and our constituents. We claim to do our duty, and we certainly do not waste the time of the House.

Mr. FITZHERBERT. — The honourable gentleman who has just sat down seems to be very indignant at the remarks I made; but I wish to say, in the way of personal explanation, that I said nothing in the way of reflecting upon the Maori members or their votes.

Hon. MEMBERS. — Oh!

Mr. FITZHERBERT. — "Oh!" says the Premier. That is very becoming of the Premier. What I wished to say was this: that the honourable member for the Northern Maori District distinctly stated in the House that the reason that the Maoris voted with the Government was, that the Government had conceded to them an extra member. That was all I said; and I believe that honourable members will bear me out that it was perfectly true and correct. If that is any reflection upon the Maori members, I am not aware of it. The Maoris who know me will be aware that I would not say anything improper of them. I am almost a Maori myself, having been born in the colony. I am surprised that the honourable member should have spoken as he did.

Mr. KERR. — I must certainly protest against the Premier and other members of this House saying that I am stonewalling or obstructing this measure. I am doing nothing of the kind. I am certainly opposing the Bill strongly, because I am sure that it will injure my constituents, and I am quite willing to be judged by them as to whether I am doing right or wrong. The Premier says he will go into my district and tell my constituents that I am stonewalling the Bill. Well, I do not care whether he goes there or not. But I now tell my constituents, through *Hansard*, that I am opposing the Bill, and have done all I could to prevent it passing. I know that this matter of representation had been talked about by them for years before I became their representative. They have been twice robbed of their representation, and now they are being robbed a third time, and I object to it; but I altogether disclaim having stonewalled this Bill. But I enter my protest against the Bill as a whole. I did not vote for seventy members, or any less number than ninety-five, the present number, which I think ought to be retained, at any rate, until such

Mr. Carroll

time as we have a proper system of local government; and when we get that you may have less than seventy members if you like—I do not care in the least. I say that this is a tyrannical Bill, a Bill that is going to do a great deal of harm to the country constituencies of New Zealand; and I feel that before two years are over the country members will be vexed and sorry for having allowed the Bill to pass the House. I feel satisfied, too, that their constituents will call them to account. If the Bill were a matter of urgency I should not object to it so much; but it is not, and therefore it is the Government who have been wasting time by bringing it down. The only reason that I can think of why the Bill should have been brought down and pushed through this session is that the Premier wants his own district enlarged, for he is afraid that if he does not get some change he will not come back to this House. I must say that I should be very sorry to see him out of the House; but that, I believe, is the reason why this Bill is to be pushed through. I believe another reason why he is so anxious to pass it is that he fears the next session he will be unable to keep a majority. But I would point out that next session, when the tariff is brought down, he may have to come into the cool shades of opposition, and then he will see the inconvenience of this measure. Now as to the Maori members. I say that they have just as much right to do what they think proper as any member of the House; but there can be no doubt that they are now supporting the Bill because they have retained their four seats, and there can be no doubt either that if it had not been for our calling attention to the matter and helping the Natives they would not have kept their fourth seat. They can thank us for keeping the seat for the South Island for them. As to the honourable members who, having voted one way the other night, changed their minds last night, I must say that they broke their promises in a way that was not creditable to them. The honourable member for Te Aro was the most rabid in his objections to the Bill, and proposed the first amendment and voted for the second; but then, last night, he made a very good speech, but said he was going to change his mind and not vote for the amendment again. He would not say that he had done wrong. He knew he had not. But he did not want to see the honourable member for Christchurch North on those seats again, and therefore he would not keep to the vote that he gave on the motion of the honourable member for Dunedin West. I do not care much about the honourable member for Egmont or the honourable member for Christchurch North. I came here quite willing to support the honourable member for Egmont if he would do what was right and bring down a tariff and other measures. If he had done that I would have supported him, and he would not have found me going from one side to the other. I would be one of his most consistent supporters. But I did not like his not bringing a Tariff Bill down, and I did not like his



bringing this Bill down. However, I am not going to take up the time of the House longer, but on behalf of my constituents I protest against this Bill being carried.

Mr. DODSON.—It was my intention to give a silent vote on this Bill from beginning to end of it. The reason why I meant to do that was that I was not much enamoured of it. I conceive that we could do without such a Bill as this for a considerable length of time; and I believe now, speaking broadly, that the trouble we are labouring under is not so much the number of members of the House as the quality of those members that we have here, and I am not sure that we shall be much better for a reduction in the number. One reason why I did not intend to speak on the Bill is that it will neither suit me nor my district. That, of course, is taking a very selfish view of it; but if I chose now to take that selfish view, and to vote against it, I am sure that my constituency would back me up, because there is nothing more clear to my mind than this: that they do not believe that the trouble which New Zealand is labouring under arises from the number of members. I have, however, during this discussion, made up my mind to vote consistently with the Government on this Bill. I did so not to please my constituents, or consult my own feeling with regard to the Bill, but rather on the ground of retrenchment. I conceive that this is one of the planks in the platform of retrenchment the Government have put forward; and I quite believe also that it may possibly lead to the saving of some public money in the future. For these reasons I have given a consistent vote on the Bill, and mean to do so till it is finally landed on our Statute Book. There has been an unusual amount of obstruction over this Bill. Perhaps honourable gentlemen who dislike it, and see in it a possible chance of political extinction for themselves, may have a good deal of excuse for that obstruction; but to men who come, like myself, to do the business of the country in a quiet, orderly way, it is very irksome to sit day after day, and, I might almost say, week after week, and listen to a lot of repetitions—I was going to use a hard word, but I will only say repetitions—and to hear the same speech over and over again. Why, Sir, the speech of the last speaker we have had in the pages of *Hansard* at least twenty times over. There is not an objection that has been raised to the passing of the Bill to-night that has not been given days ago. There is, however, one good feature in connection with the delay, and it is one which quiet members like myself, who do not make long speeches or speak more often than is necessary, can appreciate. I conceive now that there is a possibility of real retrenchment being effected, and I despaired of seeing that when this House first met and for the first few weeks. This latter opinion has been forced upon my mind through the obstruction that has been offered to the Government, for the senseless obstruction that has been offered to

them has tended to consolidate a party round the Government that will back them up and enable them to carry those reforms that they have given notice of and that the country so urgently requires. This grievous obstruction has had much to do with bringing about that very good result. The Opposition have now managed, by their mismanagement and their conduct, to consolidate a party prepared to give effect to that retrenchment which the Government have announced, and which I believe it necessary that the country should receive at our hands. I have sat here in this House many sessions, but this Parliament has shown a greater waste of time than any previous one that I have ever sat in. I lay no blame upon any particular individual, but there does seem to me to be a demoralisation going on in the Opposition parts of the House that the honourable gentleman at the head of it will do well to take an account of and a note of.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What part?

Mr. DODSON.—Demoralisation in the Opposition ranks. We shall never have a settled Government unless we have a compact and good Opposition; and, if I chose to draw a contrast between the Opposition of the last three weeks and the Opposition for the three years previously, what an opportunity for so doing is presented! What obstruction for three years was given to the Government? The Opposition then gave every assistance and help to the Government; nothing was done in the way of obstruction: but now there is nothing but delay, nothing but the same speeches over and over again, useless and valueless repetitions of what has been better stated by previous speakers. I shall say nothing more, but shall vote to put this Bill on the Statute Book in the shape in which it has been brought down.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—It seems to me that this is availed of as an opportunity for giving explanations why honourable members have voted for or against this Bill; and I shall give my reasons. I do not think that the Government or any member of the House can say that I have wasted the time of the House, or obstructed the measure in any shape or form. I have supported this measure for this reason: that I hold the opinion myself, although it is contrary to the opinions of a number of members of this House with whom I have been working for some years past, that there should be a reduction in the number of members of this House. That that has been my opinion is pretty well known. I know that during the last elections, or at any rate during the first part of the elections, there was a very strong feeling throughout the country that the number of members should be reduced, and it was made, to a certain extent, a test question of the election.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—It has been in a good many of the constituencies; but I may say this: that after the boundaries made by the Commissioners under the Act of last session were declared public opinion changed con-

siderably on this subject, when they found the way the districts were cut up, and people found that community of interest had been broken off, and that they had been taken away from old associations and added to new associations. There is not the slightest doubt that, later on in the elections, when these changes were discovered, there was a considerable amount of opposition to them, and public opinion changed considerably. However, my own opinion was that we should have some finality in this matter; and, in the hope that we should not be disturbed too often, I supported the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West, and I did so also because, apart from that consideration, I believed it to be a proper amendment. I thought that the Premier said that in Committee those supporting the measure would have an opportunity of amending it in any reasonable way that they thought proper. In supporting the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West I was under the impression that those who were supporting the Bill were at liberty to do so, and I thought that it was a proper amendment to make. I hope that we shall have some finality in the matter; but I am afraid, owing to the feeling that has been aroused in the House on the present occasion, that we shall have this subject over again before the Bill can be of any use to the country. So far as I can see, unless a dissolution takes place the Bill will effect no saving to the country for three years; and I do not see why the Premier should be in such a hurry in passing it this session, unless he is afraid that the House and the country will change their minds before next session or the following session. My own opinion is that they will not change their minds, and that the honourable gentleman would be quite safe in bringing this forward next year with the other measures that he proposes to bring forward then. However, he has his own opinions, and, of course, he is perfectly right to hold those opinions, and to push the measure when he thinks there is the best opportunity for carrying it. I give this short explanation as the reason why I am going to vote for the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. PARATA.—I am constrained to speak on account of the charges that have been made against the Native members. It has been stated in this House that they have been bribed to support the Government. I should like to tell both sides of this House that there is no truth in that statement so far as I am concerned. I based my objection to this Bill on the proposal to take away one of the Native members, and also the proposal to include the South Island in one of the North Island Native districts. On account of the opposition made by the Native members, and the support accorded to them by members on both sides of the House, the Government thought fit to change their minds with regard to that proposal. I think the reason why we withdrew our objection to this Bill is quite clear. It was simply this: that the Government withdrew that part of the Bill which was objection-

able to us. They withdrew that entirely on account of the opposition which we gave, and which was given by the honourable gentlemen who were supporting us. I do not say that the Government made these alterations entirely out of deference to us, but it was on account of the opposition which was given by several honourable gentlemen on both sides of the House. I should like to express my thanks and gratification to those honourable gentlemen on both sides of the House who admitted the justice of the opposition that we made to the Bill, who saw that it was not right, by a clause of the Act, to alter the special representation given to the Native people under another and separate Act. There was no arrangement with the Premier about this matter at all. The Premier came to us and said in a few words that the Government had decided to excise the objectionable portion from the Bill. Honourable members know perfectly well that I am not a supporter of the Government; but I say this: I will support this Government or any other Government in doing what is right. I do ask honourable gentlemen not to make such pointed allusions to the Native members in future. I think the allusions which are often made about us have a bad effect. They prevent work going on in an *ex parte* manner. An erroneous impression was created in the minds of some honourable gentlemen owing to the statement made by the honourable member for the Northern Maori District. He did not express himself clearly, and I must admit there was some ground for the mistake which was made. I do not feel sore about this matter at all, and I intended to speak in any case, if only to thank honourable gentlemen for the sympathy and support they have afforded us. I have to thank the Government also for having done us justice.

Amendment negatived.

On the question, That the Bill be read a third time,

Mr. W. P. REEVES said,—I am glad to see that this debate is concluding; and if I had any reason to suppose that by my speaking I should cause the debate to be further prolonged I would not now speak, for I am exceedingly anxious the debate should conclude. As there appears to be no danger of the debate being much prolonged, I shall take the opportunity of saying a very few words. I must reply to the accusations which the honourable member for Wairau has thrown out against the Opposition. These accusations are entirely undeserved, and if the honourable gentleman does not know it he ought to know it. Speaking for the majority of the Opposition, I may say there have been very great and persistent efforts to hasten on the business of the session, and that over and over again, both in this House and out of it, many of us have gone to a great deal of personal trouble to endeavour to get discussions shortened and the business of the House gone on with. I will give my word of honour that that is true; and it is not only the case in regard to my own humble and insignificant efforts, but it is the case regarding the efforts of the more im-

Mr. J. McKenzie

portant members of our side. The honourable gentleman's accusation against us was totally undeserved, and he certainly had no possible means of knowing that it could be deserved. There has been no organized obstruction whatever since the session began; and, if it is the case that certain honourable gentlemen have spoken rather at length and repeatedly, that has been because of the action which the Government have chosen to take. I do not think that any session could have been more mismanaged than this session has been by the Government; and, as the Government are responsible for the management of the business of this House, and as they have, since the session began, had a most crushing majority, I consider that the onus lies on the Premier and on his party of what has taken place. The first piece of obstruction we had was the unnecessary delay of three weeks, against which many of us protested, but it was granted. And the second piece of obstruction was the way in which the Premier delayed bringing down the vital part of his policy. He was contented first with giving us nothing to do, and, secondly, with throwing firebrands amongst us, which he must have known would cause long discussions. Could he expect that such measures as those—

Major ATKINSON.—This settles the half-past twelve business.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—In order to show my earnestness in the matter I will sit down.

Major ATKINSON.—You have done it already, of course.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—Very well, I will go on. He amused himself by flinging firebrands among us. He has over and over again thrown out remarks which he must have known would create ill-feeling and exasperate the Opposition. If he has not done that purposely, I can only say that he has been for some time past in such a state of irritation as to be quite unable to control his demeanour in this House. For these reasons I consider that the remarks of the honourable member for Wairau were entirely undeserved; and I again repeat, in order to put it on record, that the Opposition have, both in the House and out of the House, repeatedly made every endeavour to hasten on the business of the session.

Mr. DODSON.—The honourable gentleman who has just spoken, and many other honourable gentlemen, I am quite aware, have not obstructed the business of this House. The fact, however, remains that from the Opposition benches the obstruction has come.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—The Premier has said that I aided obstruction by voting with those who obstructed. That is contrary to fact. Whenever an amendment was moved which seemed to me to be anything in the nature of mere delay, I have walked into the Ministerial lobby; and the division-lists will prove that what I say is true.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—As one of those who voted against this Bill from the very beginning, I think I may here say one word as to what has been said as to the obstruction coming from

this side of the House. No one can charge me with obstructing this measure or any other. I have voted consistently against this measure, for what I consider good reasons. The Premier cannot charge me with being a bitter opponent to his Government. I have voted against him, for reasons which appear satisfactory to me, on this and other occasions. In this case I voted on the principle of preventing a gross unconstitutional wrong being committed on this colony. That is my opinion, and I shall hold to it to the last. I now make a final protest against the passing of this Bill. It is intended to place power in the hands of the honourable gentleman who wields power with the greatest severity, who is surrounded by a number of almost tiros in politics as Ministers. It is proposed to give the Premier a power over this House and the country for the next three years, by the action he has taken in connection with this measure—that is, by passing that unconstitutional clause enabling him to dissolve the House and thus deprive twenty-five members of their seats. That is a power which no sensible man ought for a moment to place in the hands of any one man. That is the sole reason for my voting against this Bill. Whenever the Premier has brought forward measures which I considered for the good of the country I have gone into the lobby with him, and I am prepared to do so again. I should have voted for this measure, and for the reduction of members, with joy; but I could not, and will not, allow such an unconstitutional measure as this to be carried without protesting once more against it. I warn honourable members who have voted with the Premier on this Bill that the time will come when they will bitterly rue it, and that they will be treated as the Canterbury members were three or four years ago. They supported the Government, and yet, contrary to a resolution of this House, the Ministry levied a grain-tariff on a certain portion of the colony without informing a single member of the party from that part of the colony who were supporting the Government. Without giving us the smallest information, the honourable gentleman threw us over, and imposed this grain-tariff. And why? Because he thought he had obtained sufficient support from other parts of the colony to enable him to do without their vote. This is precisely the action which the honourable gentleman will carry out towards those honourable gentlemen who are supporting him in carrying out this measure, and I warn them that he will use this power with what is called a "hobnailed boot" policy, and that they will yet rue having acted with him in carrying through this Bill.

Mr. BUXTON.—Sir, I have been greatly surprised in listening to the charge made against the members of this side of the House of obstruction. It has been made repeatedly, again and again. I happen to be almost surrounded by several friends of the Government who constantly, whenever any honourable member that is on what is called the Opposition side gets up, will begin to say, "Question, question," and want him to sit down at every moment.

To my mind, we are something like what I once saw in a school. I once was in a school where the master was absent for a few moments: when he came back there was confusion, and he inquired who was the cause of this confusion, and every boy said, "Not me, not me." It is something like that in this House. We do not like to hear the name of "obstruction." Few of us here are free from the charge. I have not been charged with speaking very often. I have been charged with going into the lobby with those who are obstructing the business of the House. I think, as far as I am able to judge, we are more or less guilty of obstruction, from the highest to the lowest; and I do think there has been a great deal of obstruction, and, if I rightly judge, the greatest minds in this House have been the greatest obstructionists. To my mind, those who have the greatest ability and power in this House have obstructed the business in this House the most; and I do think there has been great waste of time, and, rather than that I should be guilty of increasing that waste of time, I beg leave to say no more.

Mr. GRIMMOND.—Even though I am not open to the charge of being an obstructionist, I am one who must enter my protest against the passing of this measure which is now before the House. I do not know that gentlemen coming here and opposing a measure with which they do not agree can be charged with obstruction. I have never attempted to waste the time of the House; but I have a right, on behalf of the constituents I represent, to lodge a protest against this Bill. Not only does it destroy the representation of a great part of the people of this colony, but it places in the hands of the Premier a power that is without a parallel in constitutional government in any part of the world. I ask, has such a thing ever been done in any constitutionally-governed country or colony in the world? If not, why should the people of New Zealand, in this fair country, place themselves in such a position—not only the Opposition, but the gentlemen supporting the Government—in the position of fear and dependence that they are, or may be at all events, in: that they will not feel inclined to vote against the Government as there might come a dissolution? If there was a Government measure on which there was a close division, what position would the members of the Opposition be in if they were to vote in favour of the Government? It would be thrown in their teeth that they voted for the Government in order to prevent a dissolution. The whole thing is surrounded by many difficulties, and it is such a measure as I do not believe that any independent member has a right to vote for; and, for the last time, I enter my protest in the matter, no matter what the consequences may be. It has been said that the man who votes, as it were, in the opposite lobby is an obstructionist; but what will be said of those honourable gentlemen who merely walk out of the House? It takes no longer for a teller to put down a name extra; but some honourable gentlemen feel more keenly and

more strongly than others, and therefore there is a greater obstruction from those gentlemen. If I thought I could have any influence or exercise any power which might prevent this Bill becoming law, I would do a great deal more than I have done, because I believe it to be a bad Bill, which would bring on the members of this House the charge of not being free and independent members.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—I regret very much that I have again to lodge my protest against the carrying of this Bill. I think it would have been better if the Premier had taken the second reading of this Bill only, and thus had had the principle affirmed that a reduction of members should take place. I believe in the reduction of members; I have always consistently spoken and voted in the same direction. I think we have got too many members in the House. That is my opinion, and has been my opinion all throughout. From the time this Bill was first brought down, I think the Premier and other honourable members will bear me out that I have supported the Bill; but, when I say that, I do not mean for one moment that I support the placing in the hands of this Government or any Government such an overwhelming power as they will have by the passing of this Act. Had the Premier consented to accept the second reading of the Bill and affirm the principle, that would have been quite satisfactory to me and other honourable members. But the action that has been taken in regard to this Bill by some honourable members is, to my mind, of the most humiliating kind. What did we see? We saw here that the House calmly and dispassionately discussed this Bill. We saw none of the Government supporters go into the lobby against them. It was never intended, as far as I am concerned, to be a party question. It was never, on this side of the House—as far as I know—put in that light at all. We were prepared, in every sense of the word, to assist the Government to bring this Bill up to the second reading, and were supported by nine honourable gentlemen who, by their action yesterday, have stultified themselves, and, to my mind, I will not say brought contempt on the House, though I might say so if it were not an unparliamentary expression. The action of these honourable gentlemen I consider of the most pusillanimous kind. What is the result? I do not wonder that the Premier or any one placed in his position should become a little bit irritable. I myself am perhaps one of the most amiable men anywhere—(Oh!)—it may be egotistical to say so, but, at the same time, I think it is a fact—but perhaps I might have been a little irritable under the same circumstances. The Premier forgot the high position he holds when he spoke to certain honourable gentlemen who believe in him right up to the hilt. He forgot, I say, his high position when he spoke to them on going into the lobby, and told them if they voted for the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West he should take it as a vote of want of confidence and should resign. I

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can hardly imagine how he could have done so, although he has no doubt had very great provocation. He is under the impression that myself, the honourable member for Kumara, the honourable member for Nelson, and the honourable member for Motueka are obstructing the business. But I do not think for one moment we should, in discussing such an important and vital question as this, be accused of obstruction. Every honourable member, let him be ever so humble, has a perfect right to express himself, and show the reason why he votes one way or another. I shall not vote against the Government on this occasion; but I wish to point out the very serious position they are placing this House in, and particularly their own supporters. The honourable gentlemen seemed to me this morning to be like cattle driven into a pen. It was a case of putting down his foot, and saying, "If you do not vote according to your instructions I shall feel compelled to resign; and, if I resign, what will be the result? The result will be most disastrous to the country." If he resigned the result would be that the honourable member for Christchurch North would be sent for to form a Government. Now, Sir, I mean to say there are men in this House who are quite as capable of taking the reins of government as either the honourable member for Egmont or the honourable member for Christchurch North—perhaps, if the truth were known, more so. I contend we want to have new blood. It is all very well to say that the Premier has got new men in the Ministry. I admit he has. I contend there are men in this House who are quite as capable of taking up the reins of government as either of those honourable gentlemen, and perhaps more so. It may be said that the honourable member for Egmont has got a new team along with him; but the new team, with the exception of one or two that have a backbone, are of such a nature as that they are bound to follow whatever course is dictated to them by the Premier. I do not blame the Premier for that. But I say, again, that there are men in this House—I am not speaking of myself—quite as capable of conducting the business of the country as either the honourable member for Egmont or the honourable member for Christchurch North, and I hope the time is not far distant when we shall have a different class of men in the Ministry altogether.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, I believe this is the last occasion that I shall have an opportunity of saying a few words on this Bill. I am positive, in my own mind, that there are many members who will say that they are only too thankful it is the last occasion. I hear many honourable members on the Government side say, "Hear, hear;" but let me tell them that, though it may be the last time I shall be able to speak on this Bill, the day will come when many of those who now say, "Hear, hear," and who feel so pleasant at the present time at the passing of this Bill—I am positive, I say, that they will come to regret it. Now, as regards obstruction, I feel proud of what I have done, and regret my inability to do

more. Let me tell the Premier that he himself is in a great measure responsible for some of the delay that has taken place in the passing of this measure. This is not the first time I have told him so, and perhaps it may not be the last; but if he saw his way to set aside the *fortiter in re* and to adopt the *suaviter in modo*, it would be better in the conducting of the business of the country in this House. I say the Premier does provoke members; and he goes beyond the bounds we have been used to in the past. During the time of former Governments, with other honourable gentlemen at their head, we have at all events had civility.

Mr. FISHER.—From Sir Robert Stout.

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes; and from Sir John Hall. The present Premier has been in the position of having to retire from high positions he has occupied a number of times, including the Premiership; and I had hoped the honourable gentleman would have learned from adversity, and that when we again saw him in the responsible position he now holds we should have from him something different from what we were accustomed to in former times. There are other members in this House having very much the same nature and ways as the Premier; but I should have thought the high position the Premier holds would have had the effect of curbing those undesirable characteristics in him. The honourable gentleman is irritating and quarrelsome on the slightest pretext, and his manner and language to honourable gentlemen are sometimes very provoking indeed. I believe that any honourable gentleman in the position of head of the Government and leader of the House must be firm, and unless he is firm it is quite possible that he may not lead long; but it is one thing to be firm in a gentlemanly and courteous way, and another thing to be obstinate and irritating. If it would not be too strong a term, I would say that the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government has been often, during the last few days, somewhat offensive; and that recoils on himself in this respect: that the business of the House does not proceed very rapidly. The honourable gentleman attributes to other honourable members base motives, and tells them that they are conducting themselves in a disgraceful manner; and, if he expects such terms to pass unchallenged when applied to honourable members on this side of the House, I must tell him that he must not judge of honourable gentlemen on this side by the meek and lowly followers he has on that side. There is a spirit on this side of the House that will upon every possible occasion resent treatment of that kind. Sir, on this particular question I am consistent, and have been consistent. The Premier has known that ever since I have been in the House I have taken a deep interest in the question of representation, and have always tried to prevent any alteration being made to the detriment of the sparsely-settled districts of the colony. The honourable gentleman, in 1881, by the passing of the Representation Act injured

Westland to the extent of taking away one-third of its representative power, that Act abolishing the Totara District. The Premier was a member of the Government that did our district that wrong. By the same measure the neighbouring Provincial District of Nelson lost two of its representatives. Every time the honourable gentleman has made a change in the matter of representation he has done an injury to the west coast of the Middle Island—he has deliberately and, I believe, intentionally so framed the measures that we have been deprived of part of our representation. The honourable gentleman must know that if you take away the representative power of a district you are taking away that which is of the utmost importance, because without representation people do not get justice done to them. And would it be right, or fair, or just for me in my position as a member of this House to see this done time after time by the honourable gentleman and by Governments he is connected with, without raising my voice? If I kept silent at such a time I should not be doing my duty. Under adverse circumstances, and without help, I have done my best. I brought forward an amendment providing that there should be a census taken before redistribution, so that we should have justice according to population. On the west coast of the Middle Island there has been a great increase of population, and without a census we should not get justice. The Premier admitted it was right that there should be a census taken before redistribution, and that we had suffered injustice by the passing of the last Representation Act; and yet, in the face of that injustice, he refused to allow that small amendment regarding the census to be made. The honourable gentleman admitted that the electoral districts ought not to be re-formed before a census is taken, and he said something must be done; but, if it is necessary and right to do it, why should it not be done at once? Why trust to the future when it is quite possible that there might have to be an early election under the Act, and when, if no census could be taken, we should lose part of the representation we are entitled to? Then, the Premier himself admits, as to the quota, that there should be an increase proportionately, in view of the reduction made in the number of members, to equalise the relative position of the country districts and the towns. He admits that there should be an increased quota given to the country districts, but he refuses to allow an amendment to be made to that effect. The honourable gentleman has a large majority of followers who are country representatives, and no doubt they are satisfied in their own mind with what is to be done next year. I do not say that any arrangement has been come to, because the Premier has denied that; and whatever faults I find with the honourable gentleman I always give him credit for being straightforward in his statements to us, and not knowingly trying to mislead—

Major ATKINSON.—You said the very reverse yesterday.

*Mr. Seddon*

Mr. SEDDON.—If that is really the impression on the mind of the Premier of what I said, I take this early opportunity of saying that I never intended it. I may have been somewhat irritated, and conveyed a meaning by my words that I never intended; and I think it is only fair and manly on my part to disabuse the mind of the honourable gentleman, and to say that I regret if I said anything that could cause an impression that the Premier would wilfully mislead us in any statement he might make, because, during all the time I have known the honourable gentleman, I have known him, in that respect at all events, to be always straightforward. He has told the House that there is no arrangement between himself and the country members in this respect; and all I would say is this: that the country members who are supporting the Government may be relying on their being able to bring sufficient pressure to bear on the Government next session, and so compelling the Government to allow an increased quota to the country districts. But when I moved an amendment that 25 per cent. should be added to the country districts, we found the country members who are on the Government side refusing to vote for it. The honourable member for Woodville interjects that my amendment did not go far enough. Well, I hope the town members on both sides of the House will remember the ejaculation of the honourable gentleman, and will be prepared for what is coming when the country members on the Government side of the House wish, perhaps, to have 33 per cent., or perhaps 50 per cent., of increased quota given to them. Then, I moved another amendment, that in the mining districts the quota should be increased 25 per cent.; and that was negatived: and I then, as a last resource, moved a further amendment, that the Bill should not apply to the electorates in the Provincial Districts of Westland, Nelson, Marlborough, and Taranaki. I think the Premier will admit that the four provincial districts I thus took in are now labouring under difficulties that no other parts of New Zealand are labouring under. We have, in Westland, a vast and valuable estate that requires to be developed, and it requires money to do that; and the less representation you have for that part of the country the less chance there will be of getting justice done to that estate. In the southern part of Westland there is a vast tract of country that only requires a little money to develop it, and it is so full of mineral wealth that in a very short time you will find there a home for the overpopulation of the older-settled districts. But you have denied us money for this purpose; and, when we have asked for roads and tracks to open communication there, you have denied us that also; and when we asked for a railway to connect us with the rest of the colony, as was promised when Westland was separated from Canterbury in 1868—although since then you have spent between £14,000,000 and £15,000,000 in public works in other parts of the colony—we have been left out in the cold, treated as stepchildren, and looked upon

as if we had no relationship to you. When this position of affairs was brought before the House, a statement was prepared by Sir John Hall, the then Premier, which showed that very nearly half a million of money was owing to Westland, if it was to be placed in the same position as other parts of the colony with respect to the expenditure of borrowed money. Now, the Parliament has done us some justice, because it has decided that we are to have railway communication: but we have there to submit to what has not been done in any other part of the colony; the whole of our landed estate has to be handed over to a foreign syndicate, and it is in the womb of the future to see whether that syndicate will be a boon to us or not—whether they will allow those who come to Westland to enjoy the benefit of that estate, or whether they will act the same as other absentees, and either increase the tariff on us in the price of the land, or, instead of spending money on that estate to develop it, hold it back and keep it for sheep-runs and timber-licenses. I say we have been treated wrongfully in this respect, but there was nothing else for it if we were ever to have railway communication. I should prefer to have the half-million which is due to us from the Public Works Fund of the colony, and make the railway as others have been made. But it is want of representation, want of votes in Parliament, that has kept us back from having our fair share of the public money. I do not wish to throw blame on those who have passed away, and who at that time represented that part of the colony, but I say that the few pounds which were spent there on water-races were wasted through a want of knowledge on the part of the head of the Public Works Department. Had those who represented that part of the colony insisted on railway communication when the Act was passed, in 1868, private enterprise would have done all the rest as regards developing our mines. I say, if you still further take from the representation, the chances will be that we shall have less opportunity of making our fair claims on this Parliament, and getting justice done to us. Then, I would say again that the opposition which I have shown to this measure has not been factious opposition. I have not gone beyond what I can answer for to my constituents. I may tell the Premier, without disclosing party secrets or doing an injustice to those who have been working with me, that members of the Opposition have asked me to withdraw my opposition to this Bill: they deserted me, and refused as a party to indorse the steps I have taken. What I did I did on my own responsibility. Now, let me say that I regret the Opposition did not take the proper constitutional course with regard to this Bill; for I believe it to be constitutional, where you find that a majority of the House have come to a conclusion after due deliberation, and then that the Government, by threats on resigning, has caused men to go back on what they did deliberately—I say it would be thoroughly con-

stitutional, and would have been indorsed by the country, if the Opposition had used their power, and said, "We will use every means in our power and every form of the House to maintain the decision of the majority." If that had been done, we should not now see a complacent smile on the face of the Premier. I knew there was something more than the Representation Bill troubling the Premier. To-day the honourable gentleman had to tell us he was wanting money, and must have it. Well, if you are in difficulties, and the purse is empty, that is the greatest power the Opposition possesses. The Premier did not tell us that it was want of money as well as not having his own way with regard to the Bill; but, if the Opposition had used the forms of the House, and had stopped the Bill going through Committee, the Premier would have had to tell us that he was in want of money, and he would have had to make terms with the Opposition, because there are thirty-nine or forty honourable gentlemen who cannot be called Government supporters, and who, I believe, would be well justified, under those circumstances, notwithstanding that a large number of them are supporters of the Bill, in opposing any further progress being made with it, especially when by that means they would be supporting a decision come to by a majority of the House. The Premier has now had his supply granted to him, and is on the point of carrying this measure, no doubt, by a large majority. At the same time, I would say to him that he is insisting on carrying this measure through in, I think, even a worse manner than the Bill was carried through in 1881; and those who have read the history of that occurrence have come to the conclusion long ago that the privileges of the House were invaded and the Bill pushed through in an unconstitutional manner. Again history repeats itself. The Premier has forced this through in an unconstitutional manner, and he is asking for an unconstitutional power under the Bill. I hope it will not be used by him or by any other Premier to the detriment of the people of New Zealand; but still the power is in the Bill. Then, there are some honourable members whom I cannot understand supporting this Bill, who, when you meet them outside this Chamber, tell you that they are opposed to the Bill. There is the honourable member for Wairau: that honourable gentleman does not disguise the fact that he believes the Bill will do a serious injury to his district. Is it that he comes into this House representing a minority, and because a majority would not support him this is the means of punishing them? If that is the position he has taken up, no more cruel punishment could be inflicted on the people he misrepresents. I will undertake to say he could not defend his conduct in this respect on any platform in the district he misrepresents. The honourable gentleman gives as an excuse that his reason for voting as he has done, against his conviction, was because of the obstruction of the Opposition; and when the explanation was made by the leader of the Opposition, and by the honourable member for St. Albans and

other honourable members, that the Opposition had refused to be parties to the obstruction to the measure, he said, "You belong to the Opposition, and because two or three members of the Opposition thought fit, on their own account, to oppose the measure, you are just as bad as they are; and that justifies my vote." Last evening I moved, as an amendment in the Bill, that the Province of Marlborough should retain its present number of members and be excluded from the Bill; but, though the honourable gentleman knew full well that there were forty or fifty honourable members going into the lobby against me, we find him joining that large majority. If he wished to do his duty to the people that he misrepresents in this House he, at all events, as a protest, and with a view of carrying out his convictions, should have gone into the lobby with those who wanted to see excluded from the Bill the Districts of Westland, Nelson, Marlborough, and Taranaki. I think upon this question, when the first election takes place under this Act, when the division of electorates is made, among the names of those honourable members who will be found absent, and who "never will be missed," will be the name of Dodson, the honourable member for Wairau. I was taunted by the Minister of Education, in an early part of the debates on this Bill, that I had, when the late Government were in office and were passing a Representation Bill, forced the House to reverse a decision that it had previously come to.

Mr. FISHER.—Hear, hear.

Mr. SEDDON.—The honourable member says, "Hear, hear." Sir, does the honourable gentleman desire to pay me a very high compliment? It is true that I obstructed—if he will have that objectionable phrase—it is true that last session I objected to the Bill going further when, on a snatch-division, a decision was arrived at which did not express the feeling of the House. The Minister of Education knows as well as I do that it was done at half-past seven. A number of honourable members in the lobbies, without any notice to those who were not there, suddenly decided that they would take a division, and they rushed into the House and a division was taken, and by this means it was carried that the number of members should be seventy-one. There were thirty honourable members absent on that occasion. Some were in the lobbies, and thought the bell was ringing for "a house"—were not aware that it was for a division on the main question; and only two-thirds, or not much more, of the House voted. It was because the division was taken in the manner that it was taken that I used every power that I could use to insist upon the House having an opportunity of reviewing that decision. The result was that in the next vote all the members in the House voted or were accounted for, and the numbers were equal; and, on the casting-vote of the Chairman, the Committee gave its decision in favour of an increased number of ninety-one European members, besides the four Maori members. The Minister of Education knows very well that another attempt was made

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to reduce the number of members, but that it was negatived by a large majority. The Act providing for ninety-five members was placed upon the Statute Book and became law. He cannot say, therefore, that the last Parliament declared that there should be a reduction in the number of members. And what thanks do I get from the twenty-five members now in this House who, according to the dictum of the Minister of Education, owe their political existence to the honourable member for Kumara? If that decision had not been reversed, and the number had not been allowed to stand at ninety-five, there are twenty-five members in the House who would not be taking part in the politics of New Zealand at the present time; and therefore these twenty-five members, if they agree with the Minister of Education, will think they have no right to be here. If so, why do they not resign or allow this measure that we are passing now to have effect at once? That would cut short their political existence, and they should have no objection to that. Why should they sit and vote in this House if, as they think, the last Parliament never intended them to sit and vote? But they will not do this, and the Government will not allow them to do it. The Government do not say to these twenty-five members, "You are not wanted here." What they say is, "If you do not vote for us and behave as good boys should do we will send you about your business." I think those honourable gentlemen ought to thank me for their seats.

Mr. FISHER.—A public man never receives thanks until he dies.

Mr. SEDDON.—Then I hope that thanks, as far as I am concerned, are a long way off. Perhaps it is political death that the Minister of Education means. Well, at all events, I do not wish to see his political death.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Ministerial death.

Mr. SEDDON.—As soon as you like; but "political death" I would not say, because I think an honourable gentleman possessing his ability, and who has done the work that he has done for the country, should have the confidence of those who send him here, and I hope that he will live long to have a seat in Parliament. Now, my chief objections to this measure are three. One is that it gives the Government power at any time to say that twenty-five members shall be wiped out of political existence. The second is that the Government does not take power to order the boundaries to be fixed at once, so that each district and those representing it would know where the boundaries were. The third objection I take is that the passing of this Bill means that the wealthy men—the landed proprietors, and the importers, and the representatives of absentees, and all property-owners—will obtain a power we have no right to give them. A decrease in the number of members, and the retention of the property vote—these two things co-existent are bound in the long-run to prove detrimental to the people of the colony—the mass of the people; and on this ground I have used my



best endeavours to prevent this Bill from passing. However, it goes to another place; and if those who are in that place desire the good wishes of the people of this colony they will prevent the measure from becoming law. They always refuse to be parties to retrospective legislation, and I hope that they will refuse to be parties to legislation which is only to take effect three years hence, if we are to believe what the Government say are their intentions as far as this Bill is concerned. We do not know what position the colony may be in three years hence, and why we should waste a whole week in forcing this Bill through is a matter that I cannot understand. I am reminded by an honourable gentleman that the party is likely to suffer because I have spoken on this subject in the way I have done. Seeing that the party alluded to has refused to have anything to do with the course I have taken, I cannot be expected to recognise the party, or to care very much whether it is injured or benefited by the step I have taken. I have belonged to a party of one, and that is the member for Kumara. I have taken my own course; I have done what I have done from a conscientious conviction, and the day will come when those who would not join in the course I have taken will regret that they have not done so, and when those on the other side will regret that I have not been successful. However, there is yet time. I believe that there will be an opportunity of reviewing what has been done. I believe that when the people fully understand and are aware of the effect of the measure there will be a request on the part of the people to have the measure repealed. What I have done in this matter will let the people know that they are being deprived of their rights; because I hold that the life or death, the adversity or prosperity, the weal or the woe of the community depends upon the representation of the people. The wider the franchise the more the people can use their votes and execute the functions of free-men, the greater will be the prosperity, and the greater a country's progress. I say this is a retrograde step. We are going back twenty years. In 1881 the honourable gentleman now at the head of the Government said there should be ninety-five members. At that time we had a population of 450,000, and now that we have 600,000 it is proposed to have seventy-four members. The thing is clearly inconsistent; but it is done for a purpose. The Government know the full effect of it, but it is a question whether the Government can blind the people so that they cannot see through it. I think there is sufficient intelligence in the colony to see through the Bill.

Major STEWARD.—I have listened to the whole of this debate, and I am one of a number of honourable members, on this side of the House, who remained silent, and did their best to secure that we should be able to proceed with new business this evening; but, as that opportunity has been missed, I shall say a few words on this subject, though, as the hour is so late, I shall not detain the House more than a couple of minutes to explain the course I intend

to take. During my speeches this session, and during the recess, I have clearly indicated my own view: that it is desirable for the number of members of this branch of the Legislature to be considerably reduced. I have consistently voted for this Bill up to the present stage; but I have been placed in a position of very great difficulty, because of the refusal of the Government to accept what I believe to be the very reasonable and necessary amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West. I recognise clearly that the Bill as it stands contains a power which ought not to be intrusted by any Legislature to any Government; and it is not because the honourable member for Egmont is at the head of the Government that I say that. I say the power should not be intrusted to anybody, and there is a power in the Bill now that may be used to the injury of the independence of this Legislature. I should have only been too happy, if I could have seen my way, to support my honourable friend the member for Kumara on this point; but, having consistently supported the reduction of the number of members in the House, I do not wish to place myself in a false position, whereby my vote might be misunderstood; and therefore I cannot oppose the third reading, although I strongly protest against the unconstitutional power which is contained in this Bill, which would have been removed by the reasonable amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West, and which I understood was such an amendment as the Premier himself invited. By the removal of the safeguard provided by that amendment I am placed in a position of great difficulty. Still, I shall vote for the third reading of this Bill, because I look to the whole question of representation laws being brought before us when we next meet—probably in April next. And I believe that in such a Bill as we may then pass we shall undo any mischief that may have been done in the present measure. I protest against the form in which it stands, and I must express my sincere regret that the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government has not seen his way to accept the amendment.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be read a third time."

## AYES, 38.

Allen	Hamlin	Pearson
Anderson	Hislop	Stewart, W. D.
Atkinson	Hobbs	Taipua
Barron	Jackson	Taiwhanga
Bruce	Larnach	Tanner
Buchanan	Lawry	Thompson, R.
Cadman	McGregor	Thompson, T.
Dodson	McKenzie, J.	Ward
Fergus	Monk	Whyte
Fisher	Moss	Withy.
Fulton	Ormond	<i>Tellers.</i>
Goldie	Parata	Carroll
Graham	Peacock	Rhodes.

## NOES, 13.

Blake	Guinness	Levestam
Grimmond	Joyce	Mackenzie, M.

Marchant	Vogel	<i>Tellers.</i>
O'Callaghan	Walker.	Feldwick
Taylor		Seddon.

## PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Beetham	Fish
Cowan	Buxton
Fitchett	Fitzherbert
Hall	Macarthur
Hodgkinson	Jones
Izard	Perceval
Mackenzie, T.	Reeves, W. P.
Mills	Duncan
Moat	Seymour
Newman	Loughrey
O'Connor	Samuel
Pyke	Fraser
Richardson, G. F.	Kerr
Ross	Turnbull
Russell	Smith
Steward, W. J.	Richardson, E.
Valentine	Reeves, R. H. J.
Wilson.	Lance.

Majority for, 25.

On the question, That the Bill do pass,

Mr. WHYTE said,—I wish to say a very few words just now; and I do so for two objects. The first is to me agreeable, and the second decidedly disagreeable. I wish to say in the first place a few words with regard to what the honourable member for Dunedin West stated regarding the motion which was carried last night, and which was afterwards reversed. That honourable gentleman said he had received a communication from several of the leading men of the colony highly approving of the amendment. I believe that to be true to this extent: that he has received a telegram from Sir Robert Stout on that subject, and to the effect stated. Now, we all know that there is no doubt he is a very high authority on constitutional matters; and we also know, from three years' experience of him, how little his opinions were influenced and guided by his wishes in such matters. So much for that; but in the second place I wish to say that I am sorry for the behaviour which we have seen throughout this debate, more especially from the honourable member for Kumara and the honourable members for Nelson and Motueka; and I also regret the conduct of that amiable young man the honourable member for St. Albans. I believe this conduct is regarded with such feelings of exasperation by even the most reasonable and moderate men in the House that I have heard it has been threatened to retaliate by blocking the Midland Railway Bill when it comes on. I earnestly trust that they will think better of this before that time comes; but I mention it now to show the effect which the obstructive conduct of those honourable members has on even the most reasonable and moderate men of the House, and to warn them of the consequences which they may thereby bring upon themselves and upon their constituents.

Mr. SEDDON.—I am sure that anything

coming from the honourable gentleman will have very little effect. When I go back to Kumara they will want to know who the honourable member for Waikato is, and I shall explain that he is a nonentity. When there are occasions that the Government want work done of a nature not over-clean, he takes up that situation.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I would ask the honourable member not to make remarks of that kind.

Mr. SEDDON.—Well, if the remarks are offensive I withdraw them. But I say that the honourable member has endeavoured to cast ridicule on other members to an extent that was reprehensible. Who was it, Sir, who on another occasion made a remark that had to be withdrawn? Who is it that has endeavoured occasionally to play a funny part? Sometimes we know that those honourable gentlemen who endeavour to be funny are not altogether consistent or successful; and sometimes a would-be funny man is somewhat deficient in intellect. I would like to know, is it in good taste, to say nothing more, for the honourable gentleman to refer to a private telegram from Sir Robert Stout? How does the honourable gentleman know the contents of the telegram when the same was confidential? Has he been communicated with by Sir Robert Stout? To do what he has done is a course some honourable gentlemen would not pursue. If I were to use the term "ungentlemanly" it would be improper, and perhaps a little too personal, and so I will simply say that it is not in good taste. I suppose that if we are to act as gentlemen we should accept the statement of an honourable gentleman if he reads a telegram and says that it is from a number of gentlemen in Dunedin. That statement was made in the House, and we must take it for a fact. Perhaps the honourable member for the Waikato has been round the lobbies—I will not say eavesdropping, because that might be also objectionable; and I question very much whether there is another gentleman in the House who would have taken the course that honourable gentleman has taken in the matter. The honourable gentleman does not conduct himself in the manner in which other honourable members do, and I think he should be the last to say that the members for Kumara, Nelson, and Motueka abused the forms of the House to obstruct the passing of this measure, and that consequently he and other honourable members will endeavour to stop the Midland Railway Bill. Let him do his best; let those who wish to retaliate do so if they like, because other honourable members used the forms of the House to try to prevent the Government from forcing through an unconstitutional measure. If there is to be this retaliation, I say at once, do it. I defy the honourable member. I do not think that any honourable member besides himself, because of the action taken by certain honourable members in opposing one measure, would stand up in his place and oppose another. I trust honourable gentlemen are a little above doing what he says. I regret having, on these occasions, to use these

terms. Perhaps I have been over-severe, but I should not have said this if the honourable gentleman had not been so personal. I am responsible to my constituents, and so are the members for Nelson and Motueka to their constituents. We are under no responsibility to the honourable member who represents the Waikato—that plague-spot of former years. Every acre of that land is sodden with blood, and it is worth very little. Every inhabitant of the colony has to pay about £1 a year for that accursed spot—a spot costing, as it has done, about eleven millions of money. It has cost, I suppose, about £50 an acre; and what does it produce? What is the use of it? What is its good? An honourable gentleman says it has produced, at all events, a representative: I hope they are—save the mark!—proud of him. I hope this is the last time we shall ever hear in this House that, because one honourable member sees fit to vote against the passing of a measure, other members will retaliate on that part of the colony from which he comes.

Mr. FISH.—I am not altogether surprised at the indignation of the honourable member for Kumara; and I think my honourable friend the member for the Waikato was a little indiscreet in saying anything at this stage of the debate, when everybody, I think, is agreed. We have fought this out fairly, and, at any rate, those who have voted against the measure have, I think, been actuated by a sincere desire to do right, according to their convictions. I do not think we need go any further with this discussion. I am sure the honourable member for the Waikato did not intend to wound anybody's feelings, and that the honourable member for Kumara has only done what he has a right to do in vindicating himself. If we stop now I think we shall please everybody. My honourable friend the member for Motueka is primed, I know, to make one of those slashing speeches of his; but I feel sure he will pay some regard to my request, and will restrain himself on this occasion, or, at any rate, not say more than three words. The time for bitterness in this matter is passed.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I would like to ask the Government this question: Is it right of them to put up a prominent member of their party to insult us?

Mr. WHYTE.—Nobody put me up.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Well, I do not know what you mean by "putting up." All that I know is that the honourable gentleman is a prominent supporter of the Government; and I take it that he expresses their views. I cannot understand why he should have made use of such injudicious remarks, so far as I am concerned. This side of the House has been charged with delaying the business of the country; but what do we find? At nearly half-past one o'clock in the morning a prominent supporter of the Government gets up absolutely insulting and threatening this side of the House. We are told that if we do not behave ourselves the Midland Railway Bill will never go through. I am sorry to hear the Government insinuating anything of that kind. Why,

the Midland Railway will cause this Government, if they carry it out, to exist. They cannot borrow money,—we know that; and I shall oppose their borrowing proposals at any rate until we get a fair share over our way; and we shall not get it unless it is from the Midland Railway. If we do not get the expenditure from the Midland Railway, then I pity the occupants of the Treasury benches. What do they think we are made of? Do they think we are to be frightened by threats of this kind? Why did not the honourable member for the Waikato get up at the early stages of the debate and state that that was the intention of the Government? That would have been the fair way of doing it. If the honourable member for the Waikato, or the members of the Government, think they are going to gain anything by threatening us they are mistaken. As I said a month ago, I am not opposing the Government, except in what you may call a fair opposition. But we are not going to be threatened. I have never said one word against any one member of the Government. If the honourable member for the Waikato will withdraw the injudicious speech he made, I will withdraw my remarks; but I think there is a principle at stake, because the Canterbury members are not going to be frightened or intimidated by the honourable member for the Waikato, or by any members on the Government benches, because if we cannot get justice in one way we will have it in another way. I am sorry that the remarks were made by the honourable member for the Waikato that have created all this disturbance and waste of time.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It is not a waste of time.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Well, it is not a waste of time, because we are here for the purpose of talking. At any rate, we are here for the purpose of trying to enlighten those who are in ignorance; and my few remarks—

An Hon. MEMBER.—Apply to the honourable member for the Waikato.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Just so, and I do trust now we shall go to a division.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—I would just remark that I think this debate has been a very good lesson to the young members of this House, and that in a very short time the younger members will be trained in the art of obstruction, because I think you will admit, Sir, that obstruction is reduced to an art in this House. But I should be sorry for the young members to copy the example set them by the older and more experienced members, so far as obstruction is concerned; and I trust that they will not be led into fighting these battles over and over again when they come to the House in subsequent sessions. During this debate it has been patent to every one that a great deal of time has been taken up by the leaders of the House on both sides simply fighting their old battles over again, and I am certain that not one of the young members of the House wishes to have them fought again. I trust that a division will be taken. We wish to go on with the work as

business-men should, to forget all the unpleasantness that has arisen during the debate, and to do our business in the manner which our constituents expected us to do it in when they sent us here.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I do not know why the honourable member for Waikato should have spoken as he has done. He says he was not put up to do so. If he was not put up to do so I cannot give him credit for very good judgment, because I must say that the speech was pointless, beyond displaying questionable taste in referring to a telegram which I read in the House, and which telegram I stated was from certain old citizens of Dunedin. The honourable member, for some unexplained reason, referred to some telegram from Sir Robert Stout. I can only say that if the honourable member considers that good taste I hope he will in future take the lesson which he has received this evening. I think his speech was the most unaccountable speech which I have ever listened to in this House. I cannot understand why he got up at all.

Mr. KERR.—The honourable member for Dunedin South has asked me not to speak. Why does he not do what he preaches? He has no right to dictate to me what I should do. If he had done his duty he would have helped us. However, this is to be the last occasion, and it is only the first on which I have stonewalled, and I am only sorry that I did not know last night what I do now. I feel quite satisfied that if I had stopped the business for another three months I should have been doing my duty to my constituents. The honourable member for Wairau stated that he has consistently voted with the Government. Has any one accused him of doing anything else? So long as I have been in this House he has never been known to give a vote against them. I do not believe he would vote against the present Government even if it cost him the loss of any quantity of money to his district. I know that the honourable gentleman has stated, both in the House and out of it, that he detested the Bill as brought down; yet he is supporting it. I have done what I consider my duty to my constituents; and I am sure if he had spoken the true feelings of his heart, and what he has stated before, he would have spoken on our side and helped us. I am quite sure that what will suit my district will suit his. I think it was very ill-becoming of the honourable gentleman to say what he did as regards me and those working with me. However, we are not crushed; we have plenty more fight left in us. If we had taken the course I have indicated, I am sure that both the House and the country would have been obliged to us before twelve months were over. I am sorry we have been beaten: but we have not been beaten by fairness or intellect, but by brute force. I consider that what has happened has been a disgrace to this House. I am satisfied that before twelve months are over honourable members will say, "Kerr, you were right." The fight is over, and we are beaten, but not fairly beaten. I shall now do what I consider right for the country, and I will help

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the Government when I think they are right; but when I feel they are in the wrong I shall vote against them.

Sir J. VOGEL.—It almost seems that the remark of the honourable member for St. Albans, that there has been a settled purpose to throw an apple of discord on this side of the House, has been literally realised. I do not know what object the honourable member for Waikato could have had at this late hour to make remarks which he must have been aware were calculated to open up another debate. However, I wish to say half a dozen words in quite another direction. The honourable gentleman at the head of the Government stated the other day that he was only anxious to see the number of members fixed. It is quite wrong to say that the Opposition have been acting in an obstructive manner over this question. Honourable members who saw the division this evening must see that there is a division of opinion upon the subject of this Bill. In fact, as far as I can gather, some honourable members are favourable to reducing the members even to so low a number as the Bill provides; and some honourable members are discontented with the Bill not on account of the number, but on account of the provisions in the Bill, which leave it so uncertain how the changes are to be effected, consequent upon the reduction of members. I believe, if this Bill had dealt only with the number of members, the views of the majority would have been accepted readily; and it seems to me that this is a question which the House has a right to settle, and which the minority are bound to accept—that is, the question of the number of members. But the provisions which leave it to the Government to decide when and how the Act is to come into force give powers which I believe are very much objected to by honourable members on both sides of the House. I put it to the honourable gentleman whether he might not, in another place, cause the Bill to be so altered that the numbers might be fixed, and that the mode of determining the distribution might be decided upon at a future time. As the Bill stands now, it is a very dangerous Bill. It took four months to carry out the provisions of the Act of last session, and then we suspended the operation of the clause which provided that objections might be made to the decisions of the Commissioners before they made their final award. Those provisions are not suspended under the present Bill. After the Commissioners have decided the divisions of the districts they have to submit them to the constituencies to receive objections; and I think I do not exaggerate when I say that it might take some five or six months to make the divisions under the present Act. There are contingencies in the way of a dissolution. There is one which one can hardly refer to without feeling that the whole nation would be plunged in grief; but there is a contingency to which all mortals, of course, are liable—the death of the Sovereign, which dissolves Parliament; and there are other contingencies of the same kind. In what position

would the colony be? It would be in the position, if this Bill passed, that it could not obtain another Parliament in less than five or six months. Surely it is not a safe or constitutional position to be in, if this Bill passes, that, if anything should occur to cause a dissolution, a fresh election cannot take place unless all the provisions of the Act of last session are carried out, including the provisions of the clause which makes it necessary that reference should be made to the constituencies before a final award is made by the Commissioners. Honourable members must agree that it is neither good nor wise for us to determine by Act of Parliament virtually that there cannot be a fresh election without five or six months' delay. The honourable gentleman has gained a very decisive victory in the lobby this evening; and I hope he will consider whether he will not simply decide the question of the number of members, and leave the whole of the rest of the matter until next session, and that he will have the necessary alterations made in another place.

Major ATKINSON.—I feel very sorry to trouble the House at this time, but my patience has been sorely tried. I have refused to reply several times, and very little has been spoken on our side of the House. We are told by the leader of the Opposition that he is powerless; but we see by the division-lists that he paired for those who were obstructing the Bill. I wonder that some honourable gentlemen are not ashamed to say that there has been no obstruction to this Bill. We have been told by more than one honourable gentleman that he opposed this Bill as he did because he felt it was his duty. I am not going to call that in question. If an honourable member feels that he is doing his duty in acting as some honourable members have acted, we must submit to it, however painful. But I say the experience we have had in connection with this measure shows that we must stop such honourable gentlemen, for I say the public business cannot be carried on. I say the leader of the Opposition deliberately encouraged it.

Sir J. VOGEL.—No.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; by his vote being found paired every time by the honourable gentlemen who are doing this. There is no getting from this; and it must be taken that the party must be responsible for its members. We were told that the Opposition have had a meeting, and that they have determined to offer no more opposition to the Government. We were told that the other day; and yet the leader of the Opposition gets up and talks, his followers get up and talk, the honourable member for Waimea gets up and talks, repeating the same idle talk over from beginning to end, without any idea in it—repeating, repeating, repeating it. Some honourable gentlemen have deliberately taken up the time of the House in delaying business. I shall never be a party to stopping fair and honest discussion. One honourable gentleman has told us that, had he known last night what he knows to-

night, we should have been kept here for three months. That shows the spirit with which the work of the country has been obstructed by these honourable gentlemen. We have had speeches from the honourable member for Lincoln and the honourable member for St. Albans, and three or four speeches from the leader of the Opposition. They said that we did this and we did the other. Sir, I say the honourable gentleman is responsible if important legislation is not got through this House. I say he has produced such a feeling of irritation on this side of the House that it may be impossible to do things that I should like to see done. All our patience has been tried out of measure. They would try and make us believe that they have been carrying on fair and honest discussion; but I say that it has been a most outrageous waste of time, looking at the important measures that are now before the country.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Rubbish.

Major ATKINSON.—The honourable gentleman will understand about the rubbish presently, and we will see what his constituents say. He and those working with him are responsible for what has taken place, and I say that the time that was wasted last night was not honourable to him. He was responsible to his constituents, and not to me. Sir, I want it to be distinctly understood that, if these honourable gentlemen choose to carry on the business in this way, the country should understand their actions. I say that they have obstructed us in every possible way. What have we seen to-day? My honourable friend got up opposition after opposition. He seemed as smooth-mouthed as possible; but what was that? Even before the honourable member for Kumara got up and spoiled their little game we were assured that they were anxious to get through the debate. I will mention what they did. They continued with the discussion up till a quarter past twelve; and this prevented any further business being proceeded with.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who caused us to do that?

Major ATKINSON.—The Government did not cause the honourable gentlemen to adopt the course they have taken. The Government were anxious to proceed with the business if they had been allowed to do so. The honourable member for the Hutt has described me as a person unfit to be in the House, and besought me to do what was reasonable and right. If I was the person he describes, it would be impossible for me to be in the position I now occupy.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—I said you were not fit to lead the House.

Major ATKINSON.—I shall not worry the honourable gentleman's feelings by further reference to him; but I see through all this, Sir, and it will be impossible for us to take the statements of these honourable gentlemen if they act as they have acted now—

An Hon. MEMBER.—You are mistaken.

Major ATKINSON.—How can I possibly be mistaken? How many gentlemen on my side of the House spoke to-night? On no occasion

at any stage of the Bill have I replied to the remarks of the other side. I have kept perfectly still; and yet the honourable gentlemen opposite decline to leave me a sufficient time to reply. What was their reason? It is evident. It was contrived so that it should be said the Opposition was quite ready to go on with the work at half-past twelve o'clock, but Major Atkinson would take up the time, and thus prevent new business being gone on with. That was the consideration—the help they were prepared to give to the Government. Is that the sort of help we are to get? I say I do not want such help. I say it is best we should understand each other and fight it out, and let the country understand us. I have gone to the utmost limit, even to weakness, to meet the honourable gentleman, and to get the business forward, by concession after concession. The honourable member for Christchurch North has done more in the way of obstruction than the honourable member for Kumara. The latter gentleman has done it on conscientious grounds, and I understand he was prepared to break away from his party.

Mr. KERR.—The leader of the Opposition did everything he possibly could to keep me from talking, and I would not be dictated to by him or other members of the party. The honourable member for St. Albans came to me and asked me not to speak, and I told him to go and mind his own business.

Major ATKINSON.—I saw the honourable gentleman going in and out of the Opposition whips' room, and until he has declared that he does not belong to that party I must consider that he is one of its members. If he does not belong to that party he ought to have told us that he had ceased his connection with it. Sir, I have been obliged to make this statement in self-defence. I say that if honourable gentlemen will look through the debate they will see that we have been obliged to hold our tongues simply to get through the business, because those honourable gentlemen opposite would not debate the question, but would indulge in talk which parliamentary usage will not permit me properly to describe. It is all very well saying the Opposition are not responsible for it; but, if they did not wish for it, division after division they backed up those honourable gentlemen who were obstructing the business. Now, I say, if they were sincere in what they told us, the leader of the Opposition would have got up and said that he did not approve of their proceedings; and the junior members might also have done the same thing. I refer particularly to the honourable member for St. Albans, who did make one or two half-and-half statements in that direction. I say these honourable gentlemen would have got up in their places, if they had wished to help the business of the country forward, and said, "We shall vote steadily with the Government on every division, right or wrong." They may have mistaken the honourable gentleman, but I say that if they are prepared, by their votes, to support such obstruction of business they must be charged with being parties to it, and

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there is no escape from it. The constitutional course would have been for the leader of the Opposition to have dissevered himself and have told his followers, "On no account walk into the lobby with those who are obstructing the business. If there is such obstruction as this we will support the Government." I am quite prepared to admit that the honourable member for St. Albans went quite as far, and perhaps a little further; and I will give him credit for that. My complaint is not so much against him. It is the leaders I take, and I say that they are responsible for allowing this obstruction to continue. Of course the honourable member for Motueka cannot go into the Opposition whips' room, after this.

Mr. KERR.—But I do go.

Major ATKINSON.—Well, all I can say is that, if he came into our room, under the circumstances we should turn him out at once. I presume the honourable gentleman is a member of the party of which the honourable member for Christchurch North is leader, and the latter was therefore responsible for the obstruction which the honourable member for Motueka offered to the progress of business. It is still worse now, because we might have excused some weakness or tenderness to a member of one's own party, but, when acting in opposition to the party, it makes it all the more inexcusable to be dragged into the lobbies by those who obstruct. Now, I want to say a word or two about the Bill itself. I was not going to say anything but for the last speech of the honourable member for Christchurch North. About Maori representation I say this: that those honourable gentlemen, the Maori members, are quite as capable of knowing what is right or wrong as many of those honourable gentlemen who object to them. I venture to say that if their lives were examined, and if their moral nature were looked into pretty closely, they would be far above many of those honourable gentlemen who have been so particular about their moral state.

Mr. KERR.—My moral character will compare with yours or that of any one else.

Major ATKINSON.—I have not referred to the honourable gentleman at all. I am defending the Maori members. I think the honourable gentleman was one of those who found fault with their moral nature.

Mr. KERR.—Nothing of the sort. I said they had as much right to do what they did as anybody else.

Major ATKINSON.—I am sorry the honourable gentleman thought my remarks applied to him. What happened with regard to the Maoris? The Government proposed an equal reduction of the Maoris with the Europeans. The Maoris seemed very much affected, and representation was made to me that the Maoris would very much prefer that they should retain four members, which was about the right proportion, and not vote in the European elections. Under the Act of 1870 they have a right to a member for between nine and ten thousand of population. The Maoris at present have the double right of voting for European

and Native members, and it was represented to me that they would very much prefer retaining their four members—one member to every ten thousand of population—and to be taken off the European rolls. When that was represented to me it seemed a very reasonable proposal—a better proposal than that of the Government. I myself object very strongly, in the present stage of Maori civilisation, to see them mixed up with the Europeans in voting. It does not affect my own district, but might, very materially. The reason is that the majority of the Maoris think differently from the Europeans: their objects in life are not similar; and the time has not come, it seems to me, when we should mix up the two races in election matters. The reasonableness of the proposition presented itself to my mind at once. I said, "Certainly, if you are prepared to abandon your present right to interfere in the election of some eight or ten Europeans, it is quite fair and reasonable you should have the special representation of four members." Surely there was no bribery, corruption, or anything unreasonable in that! The honourable member for the Northern Maori District has not the same facility of expression as European members. He expresses his views in much broader language, and all he meant to say was that he had got what he thought a fair and reasonable concession. He did not mention what he had given up. But there was nothing like bribery or corruption in the transaction. The honourable gentleman who has referred to the subject will excuse me for saying that he must know very little about the inhabitants of various northern electorates, or he would not say anything. He would know the Maoris can affect some five or six seats, and that a little organization on their part could win three or four of the seats. Now I have disposed of that, and come to what fell from the leader of the Opposition. He has two objections to the Bill—first, that it was not wanted now; and, second, that it reduces the number of members. Well, I will take the second first. The honourable gentleman told us, when the Bill came down—

Sir J. VOGEL.—I said that the Bill is not an urgent necessity at this time, and that it places in the hands of the Government too large a power by allowing them to make the division when they like, instead of our fixing a date. I have always admitted that the question of the number of members was an open one to the House.

Major ATKINSON.—I am much obliged to the honourable gentleman for correcting me. But the provisions which the honourable gentleman objects to now so strongly were in the Bill when he said we should pass it.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I said I would not oppose the second reading.

Major ATKINSON.—Well, Sir, and what is the second reading of a Bill? It is admitting its principle; and the principle of this Bill is that the number of members should be reduced.

Sir J. VOGEL.—You said, before the second reading, that if you got the number fixed you

would be content—that you would not want anything more.

Major ATKINSON.—No, Sir, I did not say anything like that. I said—until the honourable gentleman turned round—that, supposing we should get the principle of the Bill affirmed, I was prepared to receive any reasonable suggestions in Committee, and that I would invite honourable members to discuss the various points in Committee in a friendly spirit; but the honourable gentleman rendered that course impossible by the action which he took afterwards, and so obliged me to take a very different stand. But what the honourable gentleman objects to now was in the Bill as the honourable gentleman assented to it on the second reading. The honourable gentleman said he was prepared not to oppose the second reading, which, of course, in the case of an honourable member in his position, means that he was prepared to support the second reading. Then, the honourable gentleman said the Bill was not wanted. Why did he not find that out before? He did not tell us that when it first came down, but he admitted, indeed, that the country demanded it by a large majority. There is no getting over these statements of the honourable gentleman. Now he tells us it is one of the most terrible Bills from a constitutional point of view ever brought down to the House. Well, I have shown now that the Bill as it stands at this moment contains the very same provisions in that respect as it contained when I moved the second reading. Then, Sir, how is it possible for the honourable gentleman to take up the attitude he does now, if there is any consistency in him, if it is not true that his only object is to delay the business of the House with a view to bringing the Government into discredit, and with a view of showing that the Government is not able to do its work? Sir, I have cut all the ground from under the honourable gentleman's feet: he has nothing to stand on. I ask, what other reason could there be for it than the reason which has been made so manifest to-night, and after the declaration that no opposition would be given to us? What can be more manifest than the desire of the leader of the Opposition to delay the business with a view of bringing the Government into contempt in the country? Then, the honourable gentleman discovers—and, mark this, it is after he assented to the general principles of the Bill—that it is going contrary to the liberal principles that we have been building up so long. Fancy the honourable gentleman speaking for liberal principles! No wonder honourable gentlemen laugh, and did laugh when they heard the honourable gentleman say that. We were compelled to smile in our sleeves, those of us who have been behind the scenes and know what the honourable gentleman's principles are. I can well excuse honourable gentlemen for laughing, and I can imagine what their feelings are when the honourable gentleman endeavours to talk about liberal principles. Then, the honourable gentleman said this is the thin end of the wedge for doing away with the

system of all the elections being on one day, triennial Parliaments, single electorates, and so forth.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I suppose the honourable gentleman does not wish to misrepresent me. All these remarks I made referred to the statement of the honourable gentleman that this Bill is the forerunner of a number of alterations, some of which he mentioned specifically.

Major ATKINSON.—No, it is not a forerunner in any sense of the term; but I will tell the honourable gentleman what the Bill is, as he does not seem to know, although he knew very well when he agreed to the second reading. The object of the Bill is neither more nor less than to reduce the number of members to be returned to the next House. That is what the Government say the country has demanded.

Mr. SEDDON.—And it gives the Government the whip-hand over those who are in.

Major ATKINSON.—Of course the honourable gentleman can discover that it does all sorts of things; but I am not dealing with him now. I was coming to that point, and was about to refer to the honourable member for Dunedin West, who, I am sorry to see, is asleep.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—No, I am not asleep.

Major ATKINSON.—I am glad of that. I was about to try to wake up the honourable gentleman; but I know he usually sleeps with one eye open. No doubt he was in a reverie, incubating some of those wonderful amendments he is always making. The bane of the honourable gentleman's life is that intellectual activity which is always causing him to try to introduce amendments in measures, whether they are reasonable or not. I do not think the characteristic to which that habit is due was implanted in the honourable gentleman by nature; but I think his training has had a good deal to do with it. The honourable gentleman is great on amendments; and, when he sees an opening for one, it is very amusing to see how honourable members—especially those who like a joke—crowd round the honourable gentleman, urging him to move his amendment; and then presently he comes up the room to me and says, "A great many members have advised me to move this amendment. What do you think of it?" I say, "Oh! it is rubbish." But the honourable gentleman, after going back for a little, again marches up to the table—sometimes on the other side of it—and assures me that a number of members insist on his moving it. Then he moves it, and sometimes gets it put in, but the thing usually ends as the honourable gentleman's amendment has ended on this occasion. The House wastes an evening discussing it, and ends by rejecting it, because it is quite unfitted to the Bill. We have had torrents of eloquence about this alleged unconstitutional power given to the Government by the Bill; but, if it is so unconstitutional, why have such large numbers of Opposition members supported this terrible Bill? We have had all sorts of big

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majorities, up to twenty-five, in the various divisions on this Bill, and I regarded that as a complete answer to the talk about unconstitutionality, and I did not intend to say anything at all in reply. I was merely going to say that I regarded a majority of twenty-five as quite sufficient answer in the eyes of the Government: and no doubt it will be a sufficient answer. But, as I have said, the repeated speeches which have been made by the honourable gentleman, the leader of the Opposition, made it necessary for me to get up and speak. But, even then, I should not, probably, have attempted to speak if—

Mr. KERR.—You dared not have done it if it was not so far into the night.

Major ATKINSON.—No, I dared not have done it some hours earlier, because I have too much respect for the business of the country. But some honourable gentlemen opposite have taken care that no more business shall come on to-night, and therefore my tongue is loose, and I feel that our side has a right to put our side of the question into *Hansard*, and let our views be explained to the country. I was content to leave it out if we could have got on with other public business; but, as some honourable gentlemen opposite determined that no more business should be done, I thought it better, at the expense of one hour's sleep, to put this on record.

Mr. SEDDON.—We can talk yet.

Major ATKINSON.—Oh, I have no doubt of that. I have no doubt the honourable gentleman can talk to any extent, and repeat every word of what he has said to us four or five times already. No doubt he can, and will do it; but I should advise honourable members not to listen to him, but to go home to bed. I shall sit here as long as the honourable gentleman likes; but I hope the rest of the House will not submit to it, for they have had enough. Well, Sir, the honourable member for Christchurch North says there is no urgency for the Bill. There is great urgency for the Bill; and the reason is this: We want the public to understand at once and for all that the next election, whenever it takes place, will only return seventy-four members instead of ninety-five. Now, that alone is sufficient to make it urgent. The honourable gentleman says there is no marked economy in that, because it does not come into operation at once. But it does mean economy, because it says that under no circumstances shall another House be elected with a larger number than seventy-five. No one can tell when we may have another election; and I say the people of the country have spoken in no uncertain way, saying, "We will not have more than seventy members returned to the House of Representatives in future." The Government, therefore, desire to place this Bill on the Statute Book, to show that the country will not have more than seventy members. And now what does this Bill do? It simply substitutes the number seventy-four for ninety-five members now constituting this House. There are exactly



the same powers under the existing Act that are taken in this Bill. There is no difference whatever in this respect; the same power of dissolution exists there, the same power of fixing the districts. Therefore I fail to see where there is any constitutional power sought in this Bill. Some honourable gentlemen seem to think that, if a dissolution came about, we should have a tremendous power over the House, because we should get rid of twenty-one members. But is there any reason whatever to suppose that these twenty-one would all be Opposition members? What does this election teach us? It teaches us that the leading men of this House are more subject to defeat than the men of less standing. It may be the fate of the Government at the next election to lose five of its own members, instead of two, as the last Government lost. Practically, therefore, the only difference between this Bill and the Act now in existence is that it makes a House consist of seventy-four members instead of ninety-five. That is all it does; and yet there is all this constitutional talk, and this foretelling of the terrible wrongs which the country is to suffer under this measure. Sir, I did admire my honourable friend the member for Dunedin West, when I saw the earnest way in which my honourable friend protested against this unconstitutional measure. I thought to myself, What a terrible disability a legal education must place a man under! You know, Sir, when the honourable gentleman moved that amendment, and afterwards when he was defending it in such eloquent terms, honourable gentlemen would almost think that my honourable friend was heartily desirous of putting that amendment in the Bill.

Mr. KERR.—And so he was.

Major ATKINSON.—So he was! The honourable gentleman disbelieves in the reduction of members; but, unfortunately, his constituents take quite a different view. Well, there comes in the lawyer. He can get up with quite a serious face, put in the amendment that he knows will destroy the Bill, and yet at the same time he gets all credit for voting for the reduction of members. When I saw the honourable gentleman preparing this amendment I did regret that I had not the same fertile mind and legal training as he has; and I venture to think that many of us would feel a great pleasure if we could go to our constituents and say, "We have reduced the number of members to seventy, and at the same time we have prevented a tyrannical Government doing any harm to the country." It was really ingenious; and I did admire—and do admire—the honourable gentleman's earnest manner. I am very sorry that the honourable gentleman has been defeated. I want to know how it is that, notwithstanding the terrible effects of this Bill, the honourable gentleman still thought it necessary to vote for its third reading. I have done with the honourable gentleman.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—What about the honourable member for Te Aro, who first moved

the amendment which was the cause of the trouble?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; the honourable gentleman did. There was no mistaking his views. He did not appear for one side in the case now, and for the other shortly after.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—But he did not fight for his clause on the second day.

Major ATKINSON.—No; he took the constitutional course. He accepted the lesser evil. He thinks the present Government is a useful one to the country; and I agree with him that this Government is very useful to the country. Perhaps my honourable friend opposite does not agree with me in that; but the honourable member for Te Aro did, and therefore took the course he did on the second day. I was going to say, before I leave my honourable friend, that the country need not be uneasy as to the effect of the Bill, because we are quite sure that if terrible effects were likely to follow the honourable gentleman would not have been found voting for the Bill that could bring such dire calamity on the country after its adoption. Therefore honourable gentlemen can reassure themselves, if there are any honourable members on this side who still think that something terrible is going to come out of the Bill. The great constitutional leader of the House has actually voted for the Bill as it stands, and therefore it cannot be so terrible as has been attempted to be made out. I shall be very much interested, when the time comes for us to address our constituents, to receive from my honourable friend a report of his address. He is generally very kind in that respect, and sends me a copy of his address. I thank him for it, and shall be glad indeed on this occasion to receive from him—as I should be from other members if they were kind enough to send them to me—a report of his address. I shall read that address with great interest. That he will make out a good case for voting for this terrible Bill I have no doubt; but I shall be very much interested to know how he gets out of the difficulty. Lord John Russell was celebrated for the aptitude he had for getting out of difficulties, and I remember reading in a book published for private circulation only, being the private correspondence of Earl Aberdeen, an amusing account of what took place with regard to his Lordship on one occasion. There was a very difficult question coming on in the House of Commons, and Sir James Graham and others wrote to one another, asking how Lord John Russell would get out of the difficulty. They had not the slightest idea themselves how it was possible: still, every one felt confident that Lord John Russell would get out of it. I am in the same way with regard to my friend. I feel I do not know how he is going to get out of this, but I have not the slightest doubt that he will get out of it with flying colours. I am very sorry I have detained the House so long. I have a good many more notes, but my supporters are hinting that it is nearly bed-time, so I do not think I need trouble the House further. I will only say, in conclusion, that one object the Government

has in getting this Bill placed on the Statute Book—the one object, I say, and the only one—is to make it clear to the people, both at Home and in the colony, that under no circumstances shall the House of Representatives be again returned with more than seventy-four members. All the objections raised about altering the electorates and so on are entirely outside this Bill. I venture to say that every one of us who has gone through a contested election lately is prepared to say that our electoral laws must be altered. We know that the amalgamation of city electorates is exercising the minds of a large number of people. That is a matter which we should consider, and there are other matters of the same sort, but they have nothing whatever to do with this Bill. Whether this Bill becomes law or not it would be our duty to take steps in that direction, and therefore connecting this Bill with some terrible innovation by the Government is an utter mistake. I hope we shall now finish our fight, and that to-morrow we shall set steadily to work. I have submitted to several severe lectures to-night. The honourable member for the Hutt told me that I should behave better, and was not fit to sit in the House. I submitted to it all, and I have no doubt I shall profit by the advice; but I will say this: I do hope—and if I understand the Opposition aright I think there is ground for that hope—that we are now going to address ourselves to business. Let us debate everything fairly and fully. I need not tell the House that the Government have no wish whatever to press or rush business forward. We wish everything to be fairly considered; but we have only a limited time at our disposal. Honourable gentlemen should remember that there are ninety-four members in this House who may have a few words to say on each measure, and that if two or three members persist in taking up all the time there will be little chance of our getting on. Honourable gentlemen should, I think, help each other in this respect, so that we can have a reasonable discussion. I hope to-morrow we shall start with that idea. I apologize for troubling the House at this late hour; but on our side very little was said on this Bill. I felt bound to make this speech in answer to the many speeches which have been made on the other side.

Mr. KERR.—I wish to disabuse the Premier's mind of the idea that the leader of the Opposition has had anything to do with the course I have taken in this matter.

Major ATKINSON.—I quite understand that.

Mr. KERR.—I can safely say this: that if the Premier had done his talking in the same tone as he has spoken during the last half-hour it would have been a great advantage to the House.

Major ATKINSON.—That is the way I always talk.

Mr. KERR.—When it suits yourself.

Major ATKINSON.—I am much obliged to the honourable gentleman, and will try to be better for the future.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—The Premier has

*Major Atkinson*

stated that I said he was not fit to sit in the House. I never made use of any such expression, and should be very sorry to do so. What I said was that the Premier had shown a great want of courtesy to the House, and that if he had not been so discourteous he would not have had so much trouble. I also said that we must look to the Premier for the tone of the House, and if he did not give it a good tone it might become degraded into a bear-garden. I should be very sorry to see the Premier out of the House. We should always retain him not only for his political ability, but for the bravery he displayed in the earlier days when he was fighting against the Maoris, who were doing great harm to the colony. I have the highest respect for the honourable gentleman, and I never said anything of the kind he thought I did; but I do say again, as the honourable member for Motueka says, that if the Premier had treated the House in the conciliatory manner he has done during the last half-hour this trouble, possibly, would not have occurred. I spoke not in any way as an Oppositionist, but because I thought that he was not doing right in regard to this Bill.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—I, too, wish to say a word or two in personal explanation. An honourable member charged me this evening with doing a thing which, if it could be accurately charged against me, would show that I had been guilty of a most ungentlemanly action. He said that, though I had said that I was most anxious to expedite matters so as to get the Bill through by twelve o'clock, yet I had tried to block it. Now, if I had been guilty of that, I should have been doing a most ungentlemanly action, and I wish to assure the honourable member on my honour that I did not try to block other business coming, but that, on the contrary, I did my best to prevent the discussion going beyond twelve o'clock.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I should like to say a few words in explanation. The Premier has charged me with trying to obstruct the passage of this Bill. Now, I wish to state the facts, to show how entirely mistaken the honourable gentleman was. When the second reading of the Bill was moved I spoke very briefly, and said that I should not oppose the second reading. I did not obstruct the Bill going into Committee, and when the Bill was in Committee I took no part in the discussion, and left the House at an early hour. It is true that I left a pair; but the honourable gentleman chooses to attach a significance to a general pair never before, so far as I am aware, attached to it. Yesterday I offered the honourable gentleman, if he would adjourn the matter until the evening, to endeavour, by means of using what influence I had, to save time; and this afternoon, Sir, I made a similar offer to the honourable gentleman, which would, had he accepted it, lead, as I believe, to a considerable saving of time. At any rate, I may say this: that I was engaged during the whole of the afternoon—and I am sure honourable members will bear me out in saying this—in doing what I could to hurry on the business, because, as I said to

honourable members, and as I feel to be really the case, we want the Public Works Statement, and other business of an urgent character that must be disposed of, to be brought before us, and it was our proper course to assist the honourable gentleman to carry the Imprest Supply Bill through all stages this evening, so that we might get at other business as soon as possible. And I may say this: that I have never known, on any previous occasion, the leader of the Opposition to take this course without the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill making his acknowledgments to his opponent for allowing such a thing to be done. As to this Bill, I then endeavoured to get the discussion ended by half-past twelve, so that we might go on with other business. I made a short speech this evening, protesting against the Bill, but I did what I could to get the measure through quickly; and the honourable gentleman, in charging me with delaying the progress of the Bill, is entirely mistaken. But I say now, as I have said previously, I cannot hope to control honourable members on this side of the House if the honourable gentleman will throw out such accusations as he does. The honourable gentleman will, I am sure, help business forward if he will be less free in his accusations against members on this side of the House. Certainly it is a very unfair accusation to make against me that I have been obstructing the Bill, when, as honourable members know, I have taken considerable trouble during the whole of the week to endeavour to get the business through, and have made special efforts to assist the honourable gentleman with reference to this particular Bill. And I am sorry the honourable gentleman should have made these remarks, when, as he thought, I should have no opportunity of rebutting them.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—The Premier has twice said that I refused to believe his word. I can assure him that it is not my intention to dispute his word at all. What I said was that I had my doubts, not as to the honourable gentleman's statement, but as to his ability to carry out his assurance. I never doubted his word: that no one in the colony would doubt for a moment; and I am sorry that he should have twice made use of the remark that I refused to believe his word.

Major ATKINSON.—I am obliged to the honourable gentleman for that assurance. I certainly understood him to doubt my word.

Mr. WHYTE.—After listening to the very earnest tones of the honourable member for St. Albans, disclaiming all intention of obstructing this measure, I feel convinced that I was wrong in saying what I did about him, and I have great pleasure in being able to say so. My only regret is that I cannot say the same as regards the other honourable members to whom I have referred.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I should like to say this: The honourable member for Waikato directly charged me by name as one of those who obstructed the Bill. Now, I say that I refrained from speaking the whole evening; I refrained from speaking on the committing of

the Bill, and I refrained from speaking in Committee. I moved one or two amendments; it is true, without making any long speeches; and if it is obstruction to move an amendment and to vote in a certain direction—of course my opinions are against the Bill—then I have been guilty of obstruction; but I venture to say that that is a misuse of the term. Certainly I have not done anything in any way to obstruct the progress of business.

Major ATKINSON.—I am very much surprised at what has fallen from the honourable member for Christchurch North, because I did not know that there was anything unusual in the leader of the Opposition giving the fullest facilities to the Government to enable them to get a Supply Bill through. I should have thought that the honourable gentleman would have recognised it simply as his duty to the public to assist in a matter of that sort. However, if the honourable gentleman expected acknowledgments, I am sorry that I did not give them to him, and I tender them to him now. The honourable gentleman, I may say, never thanked me for such action when I was in his present position, and I am sure that I never looked for thanks; but I do at once thank the honourable gentleman if I am indebted to him. But I apply to him the treatment I should expect to have applied to me. I take it that I did my duty, and I take it that the honourable gentleman has done his duty. As to assisting me in regard to other business, I am very much obliged to the honourable gentleman if he has been endeavouring to do that, and I am bound to believe him when he says that he has done so. I can only say that I wish he had better control over his party, for the course of events—not unnaturally, I think—led me to believe that there was some sort of collusion about the obstruction that has taken place. However, I receive his positive assurance that he has been endeavouring to assist me; I have to thank the honourable gentleman, and I hope that tomorrow we shall come to an understanding and get on with the necessary business.

Mr. SEDDON.—I would simply say this: that the tone of the latter part of the Hon. the Premier's address somewhat prevents me from referring, as I intended to refer, to the first and somewhat objectionable part of his speech. As to a great many of the honourable gentlemen to whom he has referred, I would merely say it is what they might have expected, and that it serves them right. I only wish he had given it to them a little more warmly; because, if they had done their duty as an Opposition, we should have been in a better position now. As for myself, I am perfectly satisfied with what I have done. I do not regret having obstructed the Bill.

Major ATKINSON.—You had better take it out of the Opposition, by way of a change.

Mr. SEDDON.—No; I will not retaliate on my friends, although they deserted me: it is quite bad enough to have to deal with the Premier. Now, I am quite prepared to take the whole of the blame for what has occurred to-night, and I do not wish to see him blame

others. The Premier knows very well that I was out of the chamber nearly the whole of the evening. I came back at twelve o'clock, when the motion for the third reading was about being put. It was just the last stage of the Bill, and I was determined to have my say. I can only say now that I regret that my efforts have not been more successful. If the Opposition had worked with me, instead of the Premier crowing—if I may use that term—about having carried the Bill successfully, the position would have been reversed. To that extent I say that the honourable gentlemen on the Opposition side who have been referred to by the Premier fully deserved all they got.

Major STEWARD.—It is only fair to the leader of the Opposition that I should say, from my own knowledge, that he has this evening been making every effort towards enabling the Government to go on with the business. I may say that we, all of us, on this side of the House who had desired that other business should go on, sincerely hoped that the discussion would end by twelve o'clock; and certainly it is no fault of the leader of the Opposition that circumstances developed themselves in a different way. I have no doubt that honourable gentlemen opposite will bear testimony to this fact: that I myself went up to one speaker who was addressing the House, and tried to induce him to sit down. I know the honourable member for Ashburton went to another, with the same object; and it is not the fault of the Opposition as a party that we were not successful in securing the opportunity of proceeding further with business to-night. I thought it right to say this to clear the leader of the Opposition from the blame which has been cast upon him.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—As this is a sort of general washing-up and wiping-away of bad feeling, I should just like to say that if the Premier had adopted during the last few days the more conciliatory tone he has displayed during the last half-hour he would have got on much better with the business of the country than he has done. This evening we have seen a great change in him. He came in like a lion, and I felt myself squirming in my seat when he was speaking in the manner in which he commenced. But he went out like a lamb, and I could not help entertaining a kindly feeling towards him during the latter part of his speech. I hope the honourable gentleman will add to his experience by the course of events during the last few days, and that he will find it desirable to adopt a more conciliatory tone towards members of this House. If he does that, I can promise him this: that he will find the thinking members of the Opposition, of whom I claim to be one, very glad to support him in pushing on the public business as rapidly as possible.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I do not wish to say that it is the duty of the Government to employ any effusive expressions of gratitude to me for what I may have done, but it is usual for Ministers to acknowledge the services which one renders to them in the public interest in carrying on

*Mr. Seddon*

the business of this House. I am quite sure that whenever the honourable gentleman has given me assistance in passing a measure through I have always acknowledged his services. In this particular instance I had great trouble over this Bill. In fact, I have had great trouble during the whole of the session in assisting the honourable gentleman; and during the rest of the session I shall do what I can to assist him. I cannot profess that I am acting in the honourable gentleman's interest. What I do profess is this: that I want to see the business of the country proceed, because, as I have said to many of my followers, "Every minute you spend upon this Bill is robbing us of opportunities of criticizing other Government measures which the Government are trying to carry through this session." That is the line I have taken up, and that is the line of conduct which the honourable gentleman, if he had a spark of gratitude, would have recognised and acknowledged. It is very difficult to help the honourable gentleman, because he cannot restrain his temper and be conciliatory. For instance, if the honourable gentleman had used the smallest amount of conciliation with the honourable member for Auckland Central this evening we should not have had the delay that took place in passing through the Supply Bill. I have been accustomed to look upon the honourable gentleman's colleague, the Minister of Education, as being inclined to be rough, and that sort of thing, but I cannot help thinking that by comparison he is not rough, and that if the Minister of Education were in charge of business we should see that what I am apt to look upon as roughness on his part was mildness itself as compared with what we have had to put up with from the Premier himself during the last few days. I cannot understand why the honourable gentleman should find it necessary to be so bellicose—if such a term is not unparliamentary. In order to expedite business honourable members were urged by several on this side to put a restraint on themselves, and for this the honourable gentleman is ungrateful. The goddess who presided over the honourable gentleman's birth I believe gave him every good quality under the sun except one—that was gratitude.

Major ATKINSON.—I do not know how the honourable gentleman, after announcing that he was working not for me, but for himself, ought to expect any gratitude from me.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at thirteen minutes to three o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Friday, 9th December, 1887.*

First Readings—Second Reading—Third Readings—  
Dairy Produce—Municipal Corporations Bill—  
Parliamentary Honorary and Privileges Bill—  
Irrigation and Water-supply Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

## FIRST READINGS.

Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3), Representation Bill.

## SECOND READING.

Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3).

## THIRD READINGS.

Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3), Governor's Salary and Allowances Bill, Ministers' Salaries and Allowances Bill, Akaroa Borough Council Reserves Vesting and Reclamation Bill.

## DAIRY PRODUCE.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES, in moving the motion standing in his name, said,—Attention has been drawn already to the subject of dairy-farming in this country, and the subject is of such great importance as to have induced the Council to appoint a Committee to inquire into the matter and ascertain whether anything could be done to give any relief to a class which is in an especial manner suffering very seriously from the general depression that prevails, and from the low prices of all kinds of agricultural produce. The Committee found that a great deal of information was available on the subject, and selected extracts from various works which are to be found in the General Assembly Library, in order that they might form part of the Appendices. These afford a great amount of information respecting dairy-farming, and if issued in pamphlet form and circulated would accomplish much good. It is with this object I move the motion. As I have stated, the subject is one of large importance for the colony, because the industry is eminently suitable to New Zealand, inasmuch as the colony is peculiarly favoured in climate, in excellence of soil, and in all the other causes that conduce to the establishment of a prosperous industry of this character. The subject has attracted attention in various parts of the colony during the last two or three years. Factories have sprung up for the manufacture of cheese. They are finding, however, that that product is glutting the market, and many of these factories are turning their attention to the production of butter, and if milk could be prepared in other ways a ready market would be found for the same, provided it could be turned out of only the best quality. We should find a ready market in England especially for butter, cheese, and milk, either in the form of condensed milk or as Swiss milk, which is a new preparation. The statistics relating to dairy produce in the United Kingdom show us that in the year 1884—and this I quote on high authority—the amount of butter imported into the United Kingdom was of the value of £13,000,000; five million pounds' worth being from America, and a little more than that from Holland. The total quantity of dairy produce, in the form of milk, butter, and cheese, consumed in the United Kingdom was worth about £62,000,000. Now, seeing that the imports amount to as much as £13,000,000, it is clear enough there is a large field for this colony, if it could only produce goods of the best quality. I see no reason to doubt that it

can; and, as one of those steps which can help our producers to produce the best quality, we should lay before them all the best information. We find, from the information obtained, that this subject has attracted the attention of various European Governments, and that the State fosters the industries. I believe Denmark has obtained a high reputation for its butter. The butter supplied from Denmark brings the highest price in the market in London. The importance which is attached at Home to this industry may be inferred from the fact that the leading quarterly magazine in Great Britain, the *Quarterly Review*, has thought it worth an article in the last number. Now that industry is at present struggling, I think this Parliament should show its sympathies with the efforts of the sufferers. I believe it will be found that some assistance in the way of starting a school of technical instruction would be found necessary. At present, however, all I ask of the Council is to agree to the printing of the report of the Committee in the Appendices, in order that it may be circulated and convey a great mass of information to the settlers.

Motion made, and question proposed, "*That the report of the Dairy Produce Committee, and the attached appendix, be printed.*"—(Hon. Mr. MENZIES.)

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—Before the question is put, I wish to say I was under the impression that my honourable friend was going to bring up this subject in a different form—That the Council agree with the recommendations of the Committee; because one of the recommendations of the Committee is that the report—in fact, all these papers referred to—should be printed in book-form, with a view to their being sold to the public at a very low price—6d. per copy to the public, with a discount of 50 per cent. to any booksellers who would purchase them in quantities and sell them to the public. It appears to me it would be better if my honourable friend would agree to alter the form of the resolution so as to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee in that respect; otherwise double expense will be gone to. These papers will appear in the parliamentary records in a printed form. That is one expense. Then, the same expense will have to be gone to in order to give effect to the recommendation of the Committee; and that would be very undesirable, and, in fact, useless, because several copies of the work can be kept in the General Assembly Library, if necessary, so as to answer the purpose of reference by honourable members. I would suggest that words of this kind might answer the purpose of everybody: to add to the motion the words "in book-form, so that the recommendation of the Committee, that the same be printed and sold to the public, should be given effect to." I understand that that is quite in conformity with the views of the Committee, and I hope my honourable friend will accept it.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I would accept it if my honourable friend would add some fur-

ther words—namely, “at cost price.” I think we should endeavour to assist settlers to obtain information. If this course is adopted the expense will be recouped to the Assembly. I thought information should be provided gratis; but, if my honourable friend desires that it should not be provided in that form, I have no objection to accept the additional words, if others were added that it should be provided at cost price.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I prefer it in this form, in order that the views of the Committee may be entirely given effect to. It was the desire of the Committee that these books should be sold at 6d. per copy, and I understood my honourable friend concurred in that view.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—As a member of the Committee, I may say that I moved substantially what has fallen from the Hon. Mr. Stevens, the intention being to allow the wholesale purchaser to take these works at cost price, and sell them to the public at a price not exceeding 6d. The cost price is estimated at 8d. per copy; and if these books were sold wholesale at 6d. per copy, with a discount of 50 per cent., that would bring it to the cost price, an agreement being made with the purchaser to sell to the public at not more than 6d. If you give away books of that sort they are much less appreciated than if they were bought at a very small sum; and no one at all interested in the subject will be unwilling to pay 6d., and if he pays that amount he takes care to read the work. I hope the honourable gentleman will accept the proposal of the Government.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—I move that the papers be published in book-form, so that the recommendation of the Committee may be given effect to. It was intended that the pamphlet should be published at 6d., but that the booksellers should pay 8d. I think it is well worth 6d. Its compilation engaged the attention of the Committee for many days, and the Hon. Mr. Menzies has spent a good deal of valuable time over it—in fact, it is his work almost altogether—and I think it would be a very good bargain to acquire information of this sort for the money. It contains an account of most of the discoveries in the manufacture of butter and cheese for the last half-century. I beg to move the addition to the motion of the words, “in book-form, for sale to the public.”

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I wish to say I desire to add to that that it should be sold at the cost price. I do not think the Government should try to make a profit out of it. My own idea, as I have said, is that the pamphlet should be distributed gratis; but that was not the view of the Committee, and I so far concur with the view of the Committee as to support the books being sold at the cost of production. I do not know that I can move an amendment to my own motion, but perhaps some other honourable gentleman would do so.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK.—The only means of circulating these books is through the booksellers, who will only sell at a profit. If the

books were sold to booksellers as proposed, the pamphlets would find their way all over the colony; but, if they could only be procured from the Government Printing Office in Wellington, they would not.

Words added.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

# MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS BILL.

## IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Amendment of Act.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS moved to strike out subsections (1), (2), and (3).

The Committee divided on the question, “That the words be retained.”

## AYES, 6.

Barnicoat	Pharazyn	Stevens
Peter	Shephard	Whitaker.

## NOES, 26.

Acland	Kenny	Pollen
Bonar	Lahmann	Reynolds
Brett	Mantell	Richmond
Buckley	Martin	Scotland
Dignan	McLean	Shrimski
Fraser	Menzies	Swanson
Hart	Miller	Wahawaha
Holmes	Oliver	Waterhouse.
Johnson	Peacock	

Majority against, 20.

Amendment carried.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3.—Certain expenditure authorised.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS moved to strike out subsection (4), enabling Borough Councils to contribute to athensæums, &c.

The Committee divided on the question, “That the subsection be retained.”

## AYES, 18.

Acland	Lahmann	Miller
Barnicoat	Mantell	Richmond
Bonar	McLean	Stevens
Grace	Menzies	Whitaker.
Hart		

## NOES, 19.

Brett	Martin	Scotland
Buckley	Oliver	Shephard
Dignan	Peacock	Shrimski
Fraser	Pharazyn	Swanson
Holmes	Pollen	Wahawaha
Johnson	Reynolds	Waterhouse.
Kenny		

Majority against, 6.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4.—Special expenditure on vote of majority of Council for retiring-allowances or in relief of sufferers.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI moved to strike out the clause.

The Committee divided on the question, “That the clause be retained.”

## AYES, 10.

Bonar	Mantell	Shephard
Hart	Menzies	Stevens
Kenny	Richmond	Whitaker.
Lahmann		

*Hon. Mr. Menzies*

## NOES, 23.

Acland	Johnson	Pollen
Barnicoat	Martin	Reynolds
Brett	McLean	Scotland
Buckley	Miller	Shrimski
Dignan	Oliver	Swanson
Fraser	Peacock	Wahawaha
Grace	Peter	Waterhouse.
Holmes	Pharazyn	

Majority for, 13.

Clause struck out.

Bill reported.

## PARLIAMENTARY HONORARIUM AND PRIVILEGES BILL.

On the order of the day for the committal of this Bill being called on,

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said,—Sir, before you leave the chair in order that the Council may go into Committee on this Bill, I desire, if I may be permitted to do so, to call the attention of the House to a question of privilege which, without attempting to traverse the motion, applies to it, as I think honourable gentlemen will admit. Yesterday, when it was a question of the adjournment of the debate, I asked you to be good enough to say what your view was as to the character of the Bill then before the Council. You said, Sir, I think, that it was a money Bill, in your view; but you also said—you will correct me if I misapprehend what you said—that of itself and by itself it might not be strictly considered to be a money Bill, but that, regarding it as a portion of the financial policy of the Government, you were constrained to decide that it was a money Bill, and of a character which, under the rules by which we are at present guided, it was not competent for the Council to touch. While your mind is still, as I hope, not absolutely pronounced upon that subject, I would like to call your attention and the attention of the Council to the fact that, although we have submitted, rather than perhaps agreed, to be guided in the conduct of our business by regulations which we have not ourselves had a hand in making, the old statutory power which was given to this Council has not been abrogated, and it still remains in its full force. The relations between the two Houses have been settled by the Constitution Act. The power of either House with respect to money Bills, and to all other Bills, was and is, according to statute, absolutely equal, with this exception: that Bills purporting to appropriate money must be originated in another place and upon a message from His Excellency the Governor. We are governed very much by precedent in these matters. We have a reverence, and a proper one, for the wisdom of our ancestors, and when we are at a loss to find our way in a difficulty we search for precedents. I am about to show that this Council has made for itself a precedent for its action in dealing with money Bills. It has dealt in that way without hesitation with an Appropriation Act; and, having taken, so to say, the bull by the horns, *a fortiori* this right exists to deal with any Bill which has less certain

pretension to be called a money Bill than the Appropriation Act itself. So long ago as the year 1854 this particular question of the right of the Council to deal with money Bills was raised in the Council itself, which was then sitting in Auckland. The Appropriation Bill of that session was introduced at a very late period, and considerable dissatisfaction was expressed by members of the Council, not only as to the fact of the lateness at which the Bill was introduced, but as to the character of the Bill itself, and as to the manner in which certain appropriations were made *in globo* instead of being set out in detail. I hold in my hand the Journals of the Legislative Council of Friday, the 15th September, 1854, and I will read the entry made in the Journals. The Appropriation Act had been read a second time, and it was then in Committee of the Whole:—

“Mr. Whitaker moved, That the following words, after ‘out of the,’ in the first line, be erased: ‘revenue arising from taxes, duties, and imports levied within the said colony, and which are hereby declared to be raised under an Act of the General Assembly, except such portion thereof as shall by an Act of the General Assembly be declared to be otherwise applicable.’”

This was an amendment upon the Appropriation Bill, and a very important amendment. The motion was seconded by the Hon. Mr. Salmon, and agreed to. There was afterwards the usual Conference between the two Houses upon this Bill, an agreement was come to, the amendments were accepted, and the whole question was settled in the usual course. No question was then raised as between the two Houses as to the right of the Legislative Council to exercise its statutory power in dealing with money Bills. On the same day the Hon. Mr. Whitaker moved a series of resolutions, among which was this one:—

“That, in consenting to pass the Appropriation Bill for 1854–55 without alteration of any of the sums voted by the House of Representatives, the Legislative Council have regard solely to the maintenance of the Civil establishments of the colony, and desire in no way to prejudice any right to alter or amend the annual Appropriation Bill, or any other measure for raising or disposing of the public revenues.”

In moving these resolutions, the Hon. Mr. Whitaker—I am quoting from the *Hansard* report, compiled from authentic sources, of the debates of that period—said,—

“Looking to the British Constitution and judging from analogy they were not enabled to make amendments in money Bills; but it must be recollected that this had become so settled in England from usage founded on resolutions of the House of Commons of long standing. The Constitution of New Zealand rested entirely on the Act of Parliament granting representative institutions. The 54th clause of that Act merely enacted that ‘It shall not be lawful for the House of Representatives or the Legislative Council or for the Governor to assent to any Bill appropriating,’ &c.

Nothing was said as to the power or the duty of the Legislative Council in respect to such Bills. The power of the Council as a branch of the Legislature was not restricted. . . . Strong opinions were held by some eminent men that in this respect the two branches of the Legislature should be upon an equality. Lord Brougham especially spoke very decidedly in favour of this view. . . . On the other hand, if the Constitution really not only gave the Council power but imposed it on them as a duty to deal with money Bills as with other Bills, it would be wrong, in this first session, to abandon that right and neglect that duty, and thus set a precedent for future sessions."

It is true that upon that occasion, and subsequently when disputes arose regarding the powers of the two Chambers, we had recourse, as of old, to an outside tribunal for guidance and instruction in the matter. We, as was done of old, consulted the Delphic oracle, and, after the usual *ἐγκοίμησις*, the words of wisdom were delivered by the high priest. That was an oracle, like all oracles, that was difficult of understanding; its utterances were so abstruse, its rules so founded upon circumstances the memory of which had long since died out, that it, not unnaturally, became a subject utterly beyond the capacity of οἱ πολλοί to understand; and the consequence has been that we have been obliged to establish a hierarchy for purposes of expounding and interpreting these oracles. Rules which are for the conduct of public business ought not to be complicated: they ought to be in the most simple and easily-intelligible form. There is an old Roman story which comes to my mind, of one who had betrayed the Capitol, and who, asking for the reward of her treachery, was instantly crushed to death under the shields of the intruding barbarians. It has appeared to me that, having, on our side, betrayed, so to say, the privileges and rights which were intrusted to this Council, we have, like the betrayer of old, been simply overwhelmed with the bucklers constructed in old times to guard the privileges of the House of Commons against dangers which then threatened them, but which no longer exist there, and cannot by any possibility occur on this side of the globe. Sir, it would be extremely convenient in every respect, and might save a good deal of difficulty, if you could see your way now, having still the doubts which you were pleased to express yesterday, to permit this Bill to be committed, not as a money Bill in the strict sense, but so as to allow the Committee, if a majority of members so desire it, to deal with the Bill in the terms of the resolution moved by myself, and which was carried by a considerable majority yesterday. The other alternative, however, is one which I think none of us would desire to contemplate—that we should refuse to pass the Bill altogether. I think it would be very much better to act in the way I have suggested, seeing that in doing so we should in no sense be travelling beyond what I insist upon now, and have always insisted

*Hon. Dr. Pollen*

upon, as being the statutory authority of this Council. I have no desire to oppose the passing of the Bill into Committee; but it would be a very great relief to me and to other honourable gentlemen, I am sure, whose convictions have urged them in the direction of opposing this Bill, to be spared the necessity of rejecting it altogether if we cannot alter it in Committee. I await, Sir, your decision with much anxiety.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I ask permission of the Council for a few words before you, Sir, give your ruling on the question, as to whether we have a right to alter an appropriation or any other money Bill. That is a matter that has been definitely settled more than once—on at least two occasions. It was settled by Sir Erskine May at the time it was referred to him, and it was also settled by the opinions of the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General in England; and, I believe, it has been entirely laid at rest for many years. I do not propose to renew the matter, because, as I say, it has been definitely and conclusively settled; and the only thing I rose for is to say this: that my honourable friend has not quite fairly quoted from *Hansard*. The circumstances—and I have refreshed my memory by these reports—were these: When the Constitution Act was brought into operation I noticed that there was no provision as to whether the Council could deal with money Bills. The power seemed to be given to the Legislature generally, and there did not seem to be any limits to the Council dealing with them. I had misgivings whether that would be a correct view or not, and I thought, under the circumstances, that the Council should exercise that right, as I thought, or, rather, what was supposed to be its right, in connection with a money Bill then before it, and this would raise the question whether or not the Council had a right to alter money Bills. I proposed an amendment to the Bill under these circumstances. There was an egregious error in the Bill. I recollect that it was due to an oversight altogether on the part of the House of Representatives. They had done something that certainly they did not intend to do, and which, if not rectified, would have created a great deal of mischief. I proposed an amendment in the Bill, which was sent back to the House of Representatives with the amendment. They objected to our action altogether. It was quite clear, however, that the Bill would have to be altered. The position of the Council not being definitely settled, it was agreed that the matter should stand over, without prejudice to the question in any way. That is what appeared in *Hansard*. There was a Conference on the subject, which reported afterwards to the House, and also to the Council, and the report was concurred in by both, but it was decided that this should not be treated as a precedent. My honourable friend has read the first resolution.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—The second one.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—But there were four resolutions, as follow:—

"1. That, as the Bill for appropriating the



public revenues was not introduced into the Legislative Council until the 15th instant, and as the Assembly is to be prorogued on the 16th instant, this Council has no alternative but either wholly to reject the Bill or to agree to it in the form in which it has been transmitted to them by the House of Representatives.

"2. That, in consenting to pass the Appropriation Bill for 1854-55 without alteration of any of the sums voted by the House of Representatives, the Legislative Council have regard solely to the maintenance of the Civil establishments of the colony, and desire in no way to prejudice any right to alter or amend the annual Appropriation Bill, or any other measure for raising or disposing of the public revenues.

"3. That, although the Act for granting a representative Constitution to the Colony of New Zealand contains no provision for limiting or restricting the power of the Legislative Council to alter or amend any legislative measure whatever which may be submitted for their consideration, the question has, nevertheless, been raised whether the Legislative Council would be justified in making any alteration in a measure of supply, or whether, by analogy to the British Constitution, the Legislative Council of New Zealand must not either wholly accept or wholly reject every such measure.

"4. That, in order to avoid the evils which would result from any conflict of opinion between two of the branches of the General Assembly as to the nature and extent of their respective constitutional rights, all doubt upon the subject should be at once and authoritatively set at rest; and that, with a view to that object, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government be respectfully moved to bring the question under the consideration of Her Majesty's Imperial Government."

These resolutions, I should say, were proposed by myself, and they were carried without any dissentient in the Council. According to the best of my recollection, the subject was brought under the consideration of Her Majesty's Imperial Government—I am speaking entirely from recollection. I have not had an opportunity of looking up the question, but my recollection is that Her Majesty's Imperial Government pointed out to us that, as a Legislative Council, we had nothing to do with the appropriation of money. Since that, as you are aware, Sir, the question has been raised more than once; but it was raised most strongly when the question of privilege was raised by the Hon. Mr. Menzies, and the question was referred to Sir Erskine May, and the decision has invariably been that we had no right to alter or amend money Bills. I have no doubt whatever, myself, that we are precluded from dealing with these Bills in any way whatever; and as for this decision in 1854 being a precedent for this, if honourable members will read it through they will see that it leads the other way. I thought at the commencement of the first session of the Assembly that there were doubts about it, and there was an opportunity of altering a Bill which contained clauses

which everybody knew could not stand; and we thought it proper to raise the question, and it was raised and discussed, and decided that it should not be a precedent on either the one side or the other, but that both branches of the Legislature should remain in the position that they were in before the question was raised. I thought I ought to make this explanation because my honourable friend did not give us altogether a very correct view of what was really done on that occasion, and I thought it was desirable that I should put the Council in possession of what the facts were. It is entirely now for your decision, Sir. I will not argue the question further, because it appears to me that it has been so conclusively settled that it would only be a waste of time to discuss it over again.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I have the greatest possible respect for the arguments brought forward by the Hon. Dr. Pollen, as this Council always has with regard to his opinion on constitutional questions. But when he appeals to me to rule to the effect of giving permission—I think those were his words—that the Council, in regard to the Honorarium Bill, should have the power of amending it, he is asking me to do that which I find it impossible to comply with. Nor would he think I was acting consistently with my position as Speaker of this Council if I were to give such a ready assent. I have no doubt whatever, myself, without entering into a long argument upon the question, which the Council would not expect me to do—though, if it be the desire of the Council that I should do it, I shall obey their will, and produce them a careful opinion on the subject, supported by references; but I think the Council will not require that from me. If it did it would have to give me time to do that till the next sitting-day. But I say, without hesitation, that, in my opinion, the Council cannot deal with money Bills; and that this is essentially a money Bill. There might perhaps be a question if this Bill stood alone; but it forms an integral part of the financial proposals of the Government, and, as such, it is quite impossible for me to look upon it in any other light than that of a money Bill. Therefore it is impossible for me, by any ruling of mine, to give the Council permission to alter it. I say, with every possible respect, and with a determination to protect the privileges of the Council so far as my experience and ability go, and with a determination to do my duty towards the Council, which I shall always be prepared to do, yet, having these opinions, I should fail in my duty if I did not on this occasion assure the Council that I think I should take up a position and occupy ground which would not be tenable if I were to rule that the Council could alter this Bill. I hope I have expressed myself clearly, and that the Council will pardon me for presuming to advise it in all seriousness to abandon all idea of altering money Bills.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—May I request, Sir, if it is competent for me to move, *That your ruling be entered in the Journals?*

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The question is, That the ruling of the Speaker be entered in the Journals.

Motion agreed to.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

#### AYES, 14.

Brett	Mantell	Scotland
Buckley	Martin	Shephard
Hart	Menzies	Shrimski
Holmes	Pollen	Wahawaha.
Lahmann	Reynolds	

#### NOES, 14.

Acland	Kenny	Stevens
Barnicoat	McLean	Swanson
Bonar	Miller	Waterhouse
Dignan	Pharazyn	Whitaker.
Grace	Richmond	

The Hon. the CHAIRMAN gave his casting-vote with the "Noes."

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the Chairman report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The Committee divided.

#### AYES, 13.

Brett	Martin	Scotland
Buckley	Menzies	Shephard
Hart	Pollen	Shrimski
Holmes	Reynolds	Wahawaha.
Lahmann		

#### NOES, 15.

Acland	Kenny	Richmond
Barnicoat	Mantell	Stevens
Bonar	McLean	Swanson
Dignan	Miller	Waterhouse
Grace	Pharazyn	Whitaker.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

### IRRIGATION AND WATER-SUPPLY BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said its object would be found in clauses 2 and 14. It was simply to enable those districts in which the Counties Act was not in operation to have the benefit of irrigation-works and water-supply. Clause 2 provided that the Governor in Council should proclaim districts. In clause 14 it was provided that the Boards should have the powers a County Council have as to irrigation and water-supply. The rest of the Bill was simply the machinery laid down in the Counties Act. If any alterations were suggested, he would be happy to consider them in Committee.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE confessed he would like a little more information as to the purport of the Bill than that which was afforded by the Hon. Mr. Bonar. He would like to know what was the object of the Bill. It was introduced by his honourable friend from the West Coast, and apparently for the purpose of promoting irrigation; but he thought that a

country which had an annual rainfall of from 120in. to 160in. could not require a water-supply. He would suggest to his honourable friend that he should not go on with the Bill this session. It was a very imperfect measure indeed. He had devoted a whole evening to the consideration of it, and he found it took him all that time to master it. The impression that was created in his mind was a desire to know who was the drafter of the Bill, and he came to the conclusion that it had been drawn by the village blacksmith, it had been drawn in such a clumsy manner. They would be parting with their functions as a Legislature by adopting the last clause of the Bill, for it handed over full and complete power to the Governor to remedy defects. He noticed that there was no power in the Bill to make by-laws. There was no sufficient provision in regard to the appointment of officers. Very great power in this respect was given to the Commissioners under the Counties Act. Nor was there sufficient provision as regarded the accounts and mode of auditing. There was no provision for offences—a provision absolutely necessary; and, with regard to expenditure, the powers under the 19th clause were of too ample a character. They simply provided that all the moneys raised should be at the disposal of the Board, to be applied by them as they thought fit; and, under that clause they might send members to see the Government, as was proposed in the Municipal Corporations Bill, and which was, in his opinion, very properly thrown out. He referred to these as being some of the great defects in the measure. It was proposed by this Bill that trustees should be appointed, and be elected triennially. He trusted his honourable friend would content himself with the second reading of the measure this year, and allow it to drop for the present. At this stage of the session, moreover, it was scarcely likely that it would find its way through the other branch of the Legislature. The Bill required much further consideration, and he was satisfied it ought to be delayed for some months, in order that these defects might be remedied.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR said that perhaps he had been too curt in his remarks in moving the second reading of the Bill; but had he thought it necessary he could have easily amplified them. He ought to have stated that this measure had nothing to do with goldfields. It related to a portion of the east coast of the South Island; that was, where the Counties Act was not in operation—in the County of Ashley—and it was to enable the plains there to be supplied with water. With regard to the appointment of officers, the 12th clause provided for the appointment of a Chairman and Treasurer, and such officers, as collector of rates, or in other capacities, as were thought necessary. Then, with regard to the application of moneys, the 19th clause provided for this; the 20th, for the keeping of accounts, and the regular publication of accounts; and the 21st clause provided for auditing of accounts by an auditor to be appointed by the

Governor, and for the accounts to be properly published. The power to make by-laws was contained in section 14, which re-enacted all the provisions in the Counties Act bearing on the subject. These provided for making, altering, and repealing by-laws for a number of purposes, as contained in the nine subsections. He was afraid, as had been suggested, that there was no prospect of getting this Bill through the other branch of the Legislature at this late period of the session; but if the Council would grant him the second reading, and perhaps, a committal, he should be very glad. He had a hope that the Bill might become law, as it was very much wanted, and would prove a great boon to the district. As to rating, there were the same powers as contained in the Counties Act.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON asked whether this was not a local Bill, as it was intended to apply to one district only.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR said it was intended to apply to all parts of the colony where the Counties Act was not in operation, and was to give them the right to carry out works for irrigation and water-supply.

Bill read a second time.

The Council adjourned at twenty minutes past ten o'clock p.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

*Friday, 9th December, 1887.*

Leith Valley-Blueskin Road—Tobacco License—*Maori Hansard*—Hohepa Karetai and Others—Horomona Fatu and Others—Canada Tariff Treaties—Australasian Tariff Treaties—Mines and Geological Departments—Immigrants—Government Loans to Local Bodies—"The Unemployed and the Remedy"—Tax on Absentees—"Araetaki Post-office—Glenham Tunnel Accident—Waimate, Oamaru, and Timaru Freights—Foreign Vessels in Coastal Trade—Rabbit Nuisance—Act—Seab—Matheson Brothers—Kaiapara Firewood Freight—Kaiapara Steam-tug—Obscene Language—Brunnerton Borough Endowment—Brunnerton Courthouse—Greymouth—Brunnerton Fares—Ararua River—Teremakau River—Addington Workshops Manager—Maketu Township—Otago Central Railway—Hillsdale Workshops—"Hinemoa" and "Stella"—Parua—Whangarei Telephone—Government Printing-office—Wairarapa Timber-freights—Payments for Land—Military Training-school—J. Hudson—Rotorua Township—Despatch of Business—Distilleries—Whalers—Walton Park Coal—Normal and Training Schools—Waitotara Election—Rates on Land—Engine-drivers on Wellington Railway—Shannon Mails—Wellington—Pitone Railway-fence—Eketahuna and Richmond Line—Burnham, Norwood, and Selwyn Railway Traffic—Government Business—Land Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at twelve o'clock noon.

PRAYERS.

### LEITH VALLEY-BLUESKIN ROAD.

Mr. W. D. STEWART asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will cause a sum to be placed on the estimates to complete the formation of the road from Leith Valley to Blueskin? This was a road that had been

under the consideration of the House in former years, and a sum of money was on one occasion placed upon the estimates for the purpose of forming the road. He was not sure whether any portion of that money had been expended; but he believed, at any rate, that a large portion of it had not. He had received by the mail that morning a letter from a gentleman, stating that the unmetalled portion of the road was in a very bad condition; and, having ridden over it about eight weeks ago, he could say that it must now be in a very deplorable state. He believed it would pay the country to have the road properly formed.

Mr. MITCHELSON said it was quite true that a large sum of money had been spent upon this road by the Government in former years, the amount expended being £3,257. In the year 1883, the last year upon which a vote was asked for, a sum of money was placed on the estimates for this particular road, and the balance of the money unexpended was handed over to the local body, which at the same time took over the road. The road having been placed under the control of the County Council, the Government considered their liability for it ceased, and therefore could not agree to place any further sums upon the estimates for the purpose mentioned in the question.

### TOBACCO LICENSE.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES asked the Government, If it is their intention to introduce a Bill this session for the purpose of imposing a license-fee on tobaccoists, in accordance with several petitions presented to this House by the dealers in tobacco and cigars in the colony? He asked this question at the request of a number of patriotic tobaccoists, who were anxious to be taxed, and to contribute to the revenue for the privilege of selling tobacco and cigars.

Mr. FISHER replied that numbers of petitions had been presented not only to this but to preceding Parliaments on this question. There was, however, a little difficulty in the way of issuing licenses, because of the difficulty experienced in making the Act general, so that it might apply to the country districts. He hoped it would be satisfactory to the honourable gentleman when he said that he did not think it possible, in the crowded state of the business, to introduce a Bill this session, but that the matter should be taken into consideration during the recess.

### MAORI HANSARD.

Mr. TAIPUA asked the Government, If they will direct that the *Maori Hansard* shall be issued at the end of each session, and not be kept back for many months after the session has terminated, as has been the case heretofore? He would like to be informed how it was that there was such delay in the issue of the *Maori Hansard*. For some years past it had never been circulated until three or four months after the termination of the session. The constituents of the Maori members were constantly

sending letters inquiring when these papers would be issued, and when they would have an opportunity of knowing the proceedings of Parliament. As there was a new Government in, he thought there would be a new departure in the method of issuing the Maori *Hansard*. At the commencement of the present session he found that the Maori *Hansard* for the previous session was just about to be issued. He could not understand this delay, as the translation of the Maori *Hansard* was always completed at the end of each session. He hoped the Government would be able to make some arrangement by which this delay would be obviated.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had caused inquiries to be made, and had ascertained that the reason for the delay was that the printing of the English *Hansard* took up so much time that the Printing-office was not able to take up the printing of the Maori *Hansard* till the session was over. He would make further inquiries, and do all in his power in the direction of having the Maori *Hansard* issued more speedily.

#### HOHEPA KARETAI AND OTHERS.

Mr. PARATA asked the Minister of Native Affairs, What the Government intend to do with regard to the petition of Hohepa Karetai and others, reported on recently by the Native Affairs Committee?

Mr. MITCHELSON said the Government had expended in former years a sum of £880 upon the road which was the subject of the petition, and the information he had been able to gather was to the effect that the road was a very good one at the present time. The Government, therefore, could not see their way to do anything more in the matter.

#### HOROMONA PATU AND OTHERS.

Mr. TAIWHANGA asked the Government, Whether they will place a sufficient sum on the supplementary estimates to cover Horomona Patu's expenses in negotiating the settlement of his claims for land in the South Island? His reason for asking this question was that Horomona had come here for the purpose of getting his privileges, but he had obtained nothing at all, though he had lost about £1,000 in money in coming to Wellington for the purpose. He hoped the Government would look at the matter favourably.

Mr. MITCHELSON said he regretted very much that Horomona had been put to such heavy expense in coming to Wellington in order to substantiate the claim he had made. At the same time, he could not recognise that Horomona had any claim on the Government for personal expenses incurred while in Wellington, seeing that he came upon his own business, without having consulted the Government; and therefore he (Mr. Mitchelson) could not agree that a sum should be placed on the supplementary estimates for the purpose mentioned in the question.

#### CANADA TARIFF TREATIES.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Government, If they will, during the recess, communicate with the

*Mr. Taipua*

Government of the Dominion of Canada, asking if any reciprocal tariff treaties, and the details thereof, have been proposed or entered into between Canada and the United States of America? It would be remembered that at the commencement of the session and on subsequent occasions he had been dealing with this and kindred subjects by notices of motion and otherwise. He found that a few days ago a Government supporter had been following up his suggestions, and had put a question touching reciprocity with Australia. It seemed to him that it would be well if the Government could get information, between the present time and next session, as to what Canada was doing in regard to treaties with the United States. The reply from Canada might be of practical use when dealing with the New Zealand tariff next year, so that when we were endeavouring to foster local industries we should be warned how we treated New South Wales, whose markets might be of great wealth to the farmers and other colonists of New Zealand. He believed that our own Agent-General had been in treaty with France, and he thought that all information we could get from foreign sources in the way of finding out markets for the natural products of the colony would be a great benefit to every man, woman, and child in the colony.

Major ATKINSON said he could not make any pledge upon this question, but he would consider it, and if there was no great difficulty in obtaining information it should be obtained.

#### AUSTRALASIAN TARIFF TREATIES.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Government, If there have been any communications, during the past three years, between this colony and any one or more of the colonies of Australasia suggesting reciprocal tariff treaties; and, if not, will the Government, during the recess, open up a correspondence with those colonies advocating such proposals? He believed there was very great necessity that reciprocal treaties should be entered into between New South Wales and New Zealand. He believed that, consequent upon a motion for putting a duty on coals from New South Wales in New Zealand, action was taken by the Government of New South Wales, who imposed additional duties on products that came from New Zealand; and he had no doubt that the result would be that New Zealand would suffer. He thought that some action should be taken, if it were possible, to have treaties entered into whereby our products would have a good market in that colony, for this would be of great benefit to this colony.

Major ATKINSON replied that no correspondence had taken place, and he was not able to promise the honourable gentleman that there would be any. If the Government thought it possible to effect such an arrangement there would, of course, be communication on the subject; but there was no use in entering into a correspondence that would only be thrown into the waste-paper basket.

# MINES AND GEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Mines, If it is the intention of the Government to have the Mines and Geological Departments worked together, and placed in charge of Sir James Hector, Director of the Geological Department? At an earlier period of the session it was announced by the Hon. the Minister of Mines to be the intention of the Government to work the Mines and Lands Departments together. Now there was a rumour current that the Government intended to work the Geological and Mines Departments together; and that Sir James Hector, Director of the Geological Department, was to be at the head of both departments, and that the Inspectors of Mines would, hereafter, be under the control of Sir James Hector. He wished to set the matter at rest, by asking whether there were any changes contemplated in the direction indicated in the question.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON might inform the honourable gentleman that the Government had no intention to work the Mines and Geological Departments together, under the control of Sir James Hector. There was a rumour current to that effect, but it had no foundation.

# IMMIGRANTS.

Mr. VALENTINE asked the Minister of Immigration, If, in view of promoting the immigration of desirable settlers and their families, he will take measures to insure, as far as possible, their arrival at their intended destination in the country by permitting them to travel on their passage-tickets to the nearest railway-station to where they intend to settle, instead of simply allowing them to look after themselves immediately they leave the vessel at the port of arrival, and so, in many cases, only swelling the ranks of the unemployed in the large towns?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said nominated immigrants were always sent free by steamer or rail from the port of arrival to their friends. If any private passengers sought assistance from the Immigration Department to enable them to get out into the country, it was invariably granted. The Immigration Officer at Wellington made a practice of going on board all steamers which arrived direct from England, in order to make himself acquainted with the second- and third-class passengers and their wants.

# GOVERNMENT LOANS TO LOCAL BODIES.

Mr. SMITH asked the Colonial Treasurer, When the amounts becoming payable to local bodies for their second year's loans, authorised under section 13 of the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act, will be available for payment? The reason he put this question on the Order Paper was that a great many of the local bodies were anxious to know when the second year's payment would be received, as many of them were letting contracts on the strength of

this money, and they would therefore like to know when it would become payable.

Major ATKINSON replied that he had not had time to look into this matter. He understood that the interpretation put upon the Act by the Audit and the Treasury was, that the year ran from March to March; but he would endeavour to relieve the local bodies, especially if they got work done in the summer season.

# "THE UNEMPLOYED, AND THE REMEDY."

Mr. STUART-MENTEATH asked the Minister of Lands, If it is true that the entire issue of a pamphlet entitled "The Unemployed, and the Remedy," by Gavin M. Park, published by Smith and Hogg, of Masterton, has been purchased by the late Government? If so, from whom and at what price has it been purchased, and under what head of the public expenditure has the price been debited; also, what has been done with this public acquisition?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON replied that 1,500 copies of the pamphlet were purchased on the 12th November, 1886, from Mr. T. E. Price, of Masterton, at a cost of £18 15s. They were charged to "State Forest and Agricultural Department: Contingencies, Vote 70, Item 20." They were distributed to nearly all newspapers, all public libraries, and officers of the department. A considerable number still remained on hand.

# TAX ON ABSENTEES.

Mr. TURNBULL asked the Colonial Treasurer, Whether, having in view the large amount of real and personal property held by absentees—nearly one-tenth of the whole taxable property of New Zealand—he will make such provision in the Property-tax Bill about to be submitted, or by other means, that absentees shall be made to contribute a proportionate share of the burdens of the colony?

Major ATKINSON said the question raised was no doubt one of very considerable importance, and would be considered by the Government; but, as the honourable gentleman knew, there were very great difficulties surrounding the question. He thought, however, from some remarks made the other day, that the honourable gentleman was under a misapprehension. Nearly the whole of this five millions was money lent on mortgage, and it was very difficult to make out the amount that was not in that form, but half a million would cover such amount. The rest was all money lent.

# MARAETAI POST-OFFICE.

Mr. LAWRY asked the Postmaster-General, If he will, at an early date, cause a post-office to be opened at Maraetai, in the County of Manukau?

Major ATKINSON was afraid the Government would not be able to do what the honourable gentleman wanted. The Government would hardly be justified in spending so large an amount as would be required for the purpose; but, if it could be shown that a more reasonable sum would suffice than he had been led to

understand, he should be very glad to reconsider the matter.

#### GLENHAM TUNNEL ACCIDENT.

Mr. FELDWICK asked the Minister for Public Works, If he has received any official report regarding the causes that led to the late fatal accident at the Glenham tunnel, on the Edendale-Fortrose line; and, if not, will he cause inquiry to be made? He had put the question on the Order Paper in consequence of a letter he had received from Southland, in which the writer expressed an opinion that an adequate inquiry was not made into the cause of the accident, which led to two men losing their lives and others being injured.

Mr. MITCHELSON said no official report had been received with reference to the accident; but he understood that an inquest had been held. He should cause inquiries to be made, as he thought it was the duty of the Government to see that all works that were carried on under its supervision should be carried on in such a manner that men's lives should not be endangered through neglect on the part of the contractor or overseer.

#### WAIMATE, OAMARU, AND TIMARU FREIGHTS.

Major STEWARD asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he has considered the representations submitted to him as to the expediency of reducing the railway-freight charges for firewood between Waimate and Oamaru and Waimate and Timaru, and whether he will be prepared to give effect thereto? Also, whether, in view of the fact that the railway-freight charges for general merchandise, as between Oamaru and Waimate, a distance of thirty miles, are double the freight charges by steamer from Dunedin to Oamaru, a distance of ninety miles, he will take steps to remedy so anomalous a state of things? He hoped to hear from the Minister that he would be prepared to revise the rates with a view to their reduction.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the firewood-rate question was one that was giving the department a good deal of worry, as reductions in freight charges were continually being asked for. The whole question was now under consideration. With reference to the merchandise rates between Oamaru and Waimate, they were exactly the same as those charged in other parts of the colony for similar distances; and, with reference to the latter part of the question, he might say that he was aware that the freights by steamer were much lower than those charged on the railway, but they could never hope to compete with the sea unless they were prepared to sacrifice a large amount of revenue.

Major STEWARD.—Then I understand that the question of reducing the firewood rates will be favourably considered.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—Yes.

#### FOREIGN VESSELS IN COASTAL TRADE.

Mr. T. THOMPSON asked the Government,

*Major Atkinson*

If their attention has been drawn to the fact that the coastal trade of our local shipowners is being seriously interfered with by foreign vessels; and, if so, is it the intention of Government to take the matter into consideration with a view to granting them relief? He had been induced to ask this question by those engaged in the coastal shipping trade, who complained that the trade was very seriously interfered with by foreign vessels trading on the coast. For instance, a foreign vessel arriving at Otago discharged her cargo there, and then came up the coast to load at Auckland, taking in cargo at the various ports on the way. The vessel's hands did the work; and there was an interference with the shipping trade of the colony, which was alleged to be very injurious. He wished, therefore, to know whether the Government intended to consider the matter.

Mr. FISHER replied that so long as foreign vessels complied with the regulations there could be no ground for interference on the part of the Government. On the English coast foreign vessels were allowed to trade in just the same way as English vessels, and the law of New Zealand on the subject was exactly similar to the law of England in that respect.

#### RABBIT NUISANCE ACT.

Mr. PYKE asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the Government will take into consideration the advisability of amending the Rabbit Nuisance Act, so as to invest Magistrates hearing cases laid under such Act for breaches of its provisions with discretionary powers when dealing therewith? He might explain that this question had reference to section 10 of the Act. Under that section it was provided that if, in the opinion of the Inspector, rabbits were on the land the Magistrate must inflict a fine, no matter whether or not it was shown that every effort had been made to destroy them. Cases had occurred in which it was clearly shown that the parties summoned had done all that was possible to extirpate the rabbits; but the Magistrate was compelled to inflict fines because, "in the opinion of the Inspector, it had not been sufficiently done." What he wanted was that a discretionary power should be given to Magistrates in these cases.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said, as the honourable gentleman had pointed out, it would require an amendment of the Rabbit Act before effect could be given in the direction he desired; and the honourable gentleman must be equally aware that it was quite out of the question to carry any such measure this session; but the Government would, in the meantime, consider the matter.

#### SCAB.

Mr. LANCE asked the Government, Whether their attention has been directed to the case tried at Blenheim in respect to the manager of several station properties, said to have concealed for some months the existence of scab; and whether full inquiry will be instituted,

and information afforded to the House thereon?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said copies of all correspondence in connection with the Court cases under section 24 of "The Sheep Act, 1878," against the manager of Tophouse and Mount Patriarch Runs for concealment of scab would be included in the Return No. 78—on motion of Mr. Buchanan for copies of all correspondence relating to the presence of scab on the Greenhills and Mount Patriarch Runs—now ready for the House.

#### MATHESON BROTHERS.

Mr. FISH asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether the Government will give effect to the recommendation of the Public Petitions Committee in the case of Matheson Brothers, of Dunedin? It was only necessary to say that he was thoroughly convinced, from a statement of facts made to him, that a great wrong had been done to these individuals; and they now asked simply for power to right that wrong by means of the law-courts. He need not point out to the Minister the very serious responsibility the petitioners would undertake in bringing a lawsuit against the Crown, which would be exceedingly expensive, and unless they were thoroughly convinced of the right of their case they would not take it into Court. But, if they had a good case, he felt sure the honourable gentleman would not interpose technicalities to prevent them from obtaining justice in the matter.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the Government had no objection to the report of the Public Petitions Committee; and if Messrs. Matheson Brothers would agree to pay into Court the costs that would be incurred, or guarantee them, the Government would not object to the case being taken into Court; but, before consenting to do so, it would be necessary that the award paid to the contractor should be refunded, and it should also be borne in mind that the reopening of the case would mean the reopening of the whole question, including the penalties.

#### KAIPARA FIREWOOD FREIGHT.

Mr. MONK asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will reduce the rate now charged for firewood-trucks on the Kaipara line? There were large quantities of firewood on this line, but the rate of freight prevented its being sent to a market. If a reduction were made, it would enable wood to be sent to a market, and enable the settlers along the line to increase their means of livelihood. There were some anomalies in the rates on that line. A horse-truck, for instance, from Helensville to Auckland was taken for 16s. the same distance that a truck of firewood was charged £1 9s. for. He (Mr. Monk) had no desire that the cost of a horse-truck should be increased—just the reverse;—but he saw no reason why there should be such a great difference between the two. A load of firewood, being taken to be sold, did far more good to the needy than the carrying of a horse from one place to another,

especially in times like these, when employment was so scarce and the getting of a livelihood often so difficult.

Mr. MITCHELSON said this question was under consideration, and an effort would be made to remove some anomalies in the freights.

Mr. MONK begged to thank the honourable gentleman for his answer.

#### KAIPARA STEAM-TUG.

Mr. MONK asked the Government, Whether, in the interests of economy, they will arrange for the steam tug-boat on the Kaipara to do the work for which the Government now employ a steam-launch? He had been asked to bring this matter under the attention of the Government. There was a steam-tug there, which towed out fifty-six vessels last year, and twenty-six others went out exempt from pilotage-dues, so that there was not much work for the launch to do. The proposition of those who asked him to move in the matter was that the tug should be allowed to do the work now done by the steam-launch, which, he was assured, would result in a considerable saving. Of course, in that case the services of a launch would not be necessary, and those connected with the tug could do all such work as cleaning buoys, &c., at a low charge. He was informed, and believed, that if the suggestion were adopted it would result in a considerable saving to the Government.

Mr. FISHER said the honourable gentleman did not say how much it would cost to employ the steam-tug. The steam-launch was placed there at the request of the people of the port, and it was a very great convenience to the port. It had to cover about forty miles of pilotage waters, and the only cost to the Government of the launch was the wages of the engineer, the coals, and stores. The launch having been put there at the request of the people of the place, there was no intention of acting in the way suggested by the honourable gentleman. The owners of the tug-boat had never offered to do this service for any specific sum, so that he was unable to say as to whether any economy would result from carrying out the proposed arrangement. As a matter of fact, he doubted whether they would do the service for any less sum than it now cost the Government; and it would have to be done for a very great deal less to make it worth while to try the experiment, as he had grave doubts as to whether the plan would work.

#### OBSCENE LANGUAGE.

Mr. IZARD asked the Government,—(1.) Whether it is their opinion that, in charges before a Resident Magistrate or Justice of the Peace for using obscene language, it is necessary the exact words charged should be publicly stated in open Court, or whether the same may not be written and handed up to the Court? (2.) If the Government think it necessary that the words should be publicly stated, whether they will next session introduce a short Act to render unnecessary the public statement of such obscene language? Some Magistrates insisted on obscene words that had been used being re-

peated aloud in open Court, no matter how filthy they were; while others spared the feelings of witnesses and hearers somewhat by allowing them to be written and handed in. He hoped the Government would see their way to effect some change in this respect.

Mr. FERGUS said the Government were entirely in accord with the honourable gentleman, and, if effect could not be given to his suggestion in any other way, they would be prepared next session to take some action in the matter.

#### BRUNNERTON BOROUGH ENDOWMENT.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the Government will reserve three thousand acres of land as an endowment for the Borough of Brunnerton?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said the Government had no power to grant to boroughs endowments of land outside those boroughs, though unsold lands within boroughs might be so granted. The law was specific on the point.

#### BRUNNERTON COURTHOUSE.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Minister of Justice, Whether the Government will place a sufficient sum of money on the estimates to erect a Courthouse at Brunnerton?

Mr. FERGUS said the Government regretted very much that, owing to the state of the finances, they would be unable to do this at the present time.

#### GREYMOUTH-BRUNNERTON FARES.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will take steps to alter the passenger fares charged on the Greymouth-Brunnerton Railway, so as to reduce the fares to the same rates as those charged on the Dunedin-Port Chalmers and Christchurch-Lyttelton lines? The great bulk of the passengers on the first-named line were miners, who were not generally wealthy people, and therefore their request to be allowed to travel at the same rates as people on other lines was a reasonable one, and he hoped it would be complied with.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the Government would consider the question of reducing the passenger fares on this line; but it must be borne in mind that, if such was done, the loss of revenue would be considerable, and, as the whole of the revenue obtained from this line was handed over to the Greymouth Harbour Board, any reductions that might be made would be depriving this Board of a good portion of their revenue.

#### ARAHURA RIVER.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Mines, Whether the Government have definitely decided to issue, as soon as the law will permit, a Proclamation in terms of section 154 of "The Mines Act, 1886," declaring the Arahura River a river or stream into which tailings and mining *débris* may be deposited? There was a great deal of uncertainty in the minds of the people

Mr. Izard

there as to whether, if objections were lodged, the river would not be declared, or if fair compensation would be paid to those objecting, and the river be declared. The present uncertainty as to what would be done was very unsatisfactory to the miners, and one company in particular, he believed, was prepared to expend about £20,000 to £30,000 on their property if they could be assured that the river would be declared; and, if the Government would say the river should be proclaimed, he believed they would go on with their works at once.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said he thought the Government had shown their intention by issuing the usual notification. They were proceeding in the way prescribed by law, by giving the statutory ninety days' notice. Whether at the end of that time the river would be actually proclaimed would depend on the number of objections lodged; and he might say that already objections were being sent in.

#### TEREMAKAU RIVER.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Mines, Whether the Government have definitely decided to issue, as soon as the law will permit, a Proclamation in terms of section 154 of "The Mines Act, 1886," declaring the Teremakau River a river or stream into which tailings and mining *débris* may be deposited? The answer given to the last question was somewhat indefinite—that the proclaiming or not proclaiming would depend on the number of objections lodged. But in this case, as far as the river was concerned, the Government knew the exact extent of the liabilities of the colony. The Government were very largely interested themselves in this matter, because, unless the river was proclaimed, it would mean a stoppage of £12,000 of revenue to the colony yearly, and the stopping of the whole mining community from working. He hoped the honourable gentleman would be able to give a completely satisfactory answer in this respect.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON would have thought that his last answer would cover this question. It might be that in the one case fewer objections would be sent in than in the other; but in this case, unless the objections were more than were anticipated by the Government, the Proclamation would be carried out.

#### ADDINGTON WORKSHOPS MANAGER.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he is aware that the manager of the Addington Workshops—Mr. Scott—is engaged as a lecturer on engineering at the School of Arts, Christchurch, at a salary of £150 per annum, he still retaining his position as manager of the workshops? He hoped the answer that would be given now would not be the stereotyped one that used to be given by the late Minister for Public Works, because if so he should have to ask and ask until he got something like a fair and satisfactory answer. He had put the question at the request of professional gentlemen who could scarcely obtain a livelihood, while a Government official



in a permanent position, and receiving a large salary, was depriving them of private work which they ought to have. He was desirous of placing the matter fairly before the Minister for Public Works. He had a great amount of confidence in that honourable gentleman, and trusted he would not be led away by interested persons in this matter, but would deal fairly and honestly with it. That was all he asked him to do.

Mr. MITCHELSON had made inquiries into this, and found that Mr. Scott was engaged on Government work, and that the work which he performed for the Canterbury College was done after hours. It was a matter for the consideration of the Board of Governors. If, as the honourable gentleman stated, there were professional men in Christchurch able to undertake the work, it was their duty to interview the Board of Governors on the subject, and then for the Board of Governors to see what ought to be done. He really thought that the Government could not interfere in the matter.

Mr. TAYLOR said he might explain that the position was this: Last year it was put on the ground that there were no other gentlemen in Canterbury able to carry out the duties to which this gentleman was appointed. That was now shown to be incorrect, and he thought it was an unfair thing to allow a person in Government employ to compete with persons who had not that advantage. He would like to say, in further explanation, that the result of the question put upon the Order Paper the session before last was this: They could not deny that diagrams had been used for the purposes of these lectures which had been prepared at the expense of the people; and he (Mr. Taylor) trusted there would be no more of that kind of thing.

#### MAKETU TOWNSHIP.

Mr. KELLY asked the Government, if they will consider the advisability of purchasing a portion of the Maketu Settlement, in the Bay of Plenty, so that a Government township might be laid off near the mouth of the harbour, on the Kaituna River?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said the Government would cause inquiries to be made as to what portion of the land had passed through the Court, and, having obtained that information, if it were found that the Natives would dispose of the land at a reasonable price, there would be no objection to the course suggested by the honourable gentleman.

#### OTAGO CENTRAL RAILWAY.

Mr. FISH asked the Minister for Public Works,—(1.) If he can explain the reason which induced the department to inflict a fine for overtime in the contracts for work on the Otago Central Railway performed by Messrs. Matheson Brothers and J. Black and Co., such fines amounting to £100 and £200 respectively, whilst no fines were inflicted upon two other contractors—namely, Messrs. Gore Brothers and R. Meikle and Co.? (2.) Will he, in order that equal justice may be meted to all, return the fines imposed upon the two firms referred

to? He wished to point out that in those two cases the contractors had been fined; while Messrs. Gore had incurred penalties in one case to the amount of £800, and in the other case to the amount of £300 or £400, but in neither of these cases was the fine inflicted. It seemed to be unjust that two firms should be fined, while others should get off. He thought he could give a reason, but not a good reason, why the fines in the other cases were not inflicted. He had no doubt that the Minister would know the reason for it without his mentioning it to the House. He might mention that he understood, with regard to the case of Messrs. Matheson, that it was the intention of the Government to remit the fine.

Mr. MITCHELSON said this question was connected with one that he had already replied to, and had reference to the same subject. If the honourable member would inquire of Messrs. Matheson Brothers whether they would accept the remission of the fine imposed upon them in preference to taking the case into Court, he would be prepared to meet them in this way if acceptable to them, as he had a desire to see the question definitely settled.

#### HILLSIDE WORKSHOPS.

Mr. BARRON asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether the management of the railway workshops at Hillside is controlled by an officer stationed at Addington, and, if so, why; and whether he will give such instructions as will release the workshops at Hillside from a subordinate position such as, in consideration of their location in connection with the railway system of the Middle Island, they should not continue to occupy; and, further, whether he will endeavour to adhere to the understanding formerly arrived at in connection with the allocation of work to such workshops?

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that it was true that the Hillside workshops were controlled by an officer stationed at Addington, where he had his office; but a competent manager presided over each shop, one at Addington and the other at Hillside. This practice was adopted seven years ago, and it appeared to have acted very well indeed. It would be too costly to have an Inspector for each shop. With reference to the latter part of the question, he had already said, in reply to a similar question, that he would issue instructions that in future all stock required should be manufactured in the workshops within the district where such stock was required, provided, of course, that the machinery available was sufficient to enable such work to be carried out. Although so much had been said about this matter, there was not such a great difference in the number of men employed in each shop. The numbers were, at Addington 261, and at Hillside 195. He trusted that they would, under the new arrangement, get rid of further complaints.

Mr. FISH said this matter referred intimately to a question which he had placed upon the Order Paper; and he must detain the House for a few minutes to refer to the matter a little more fully, and therefore he would

move the adjournment of the House. The return which was laid on the table, on the motion of the honourable member for Auckland West, showed distinctly that there had been great unfairness in connection with this expenditure in the workshops. The expenditure at Addington had amounted to the enormous sum of £45,000 in two years, whilst in other shops there had scarcely been anything expended in the same direction; and he had no doubt that the Hillside workshops would have been entitled, under ordinary circumstances, to an expenditure of at least half the sum which had been expended at Addington. In view of the information given by that return, he was not surprised at the great number of empty houses now to be found in the district where the Hillside workshops were situated, because, so much work having been done at Addington which ought to have been done at Hillside, it had necessarily withdrawn the population from the neighbourhood of the latter workshop. He could only say that, had he known that any member of the late Government had been guilty of diverting work from one district to another in the way which had been done, he should not have found it within his duty to make as many eulogistic remarks in reference to the administration of the late Government as he had made at various times. He thought it was his duty to call attention to this matter on this occasion. He was quite willing to believe that the late Ministry, as a whole, did not know what was being done in the department of the Minister for Public Works, but it seemed to him that that honourable gentleman had been favouring the particular district in which he lived, and which he represented, at the expense of other districts. That was exceedingly unfair, and, whether it had been done by the late Government or any other Government, he should still say that a more glaring piece of injustice could not have been perpetrated. And, while on the subject, he might call attention to another piece of injustice which had been perpetrated by the same honourable gentleman. He referred to the expenditure of a sum of £20,000 that was voted by the House during the last Parliament in aid of the unemployed. Out of that sum, Dunedin received £6,000, while £13,000 was expended at Hagley Park and in the neighbourhood of Christchurch City. In fact, the vote, which was made for the unemployed in the South Island, was expended in the neighbourhood of the district in which the Minister for Public Works lived, and which he represented. No Government was justified in showing such undue favouritism to one part of the colony because the Minister who had charge of the expenditure happened to be resident in or represented that place.

Mr. BARRON might say that he cordially agreed with what the honourable member for Dunedin South had said on this subject. He could only hope that they had now taken a new departure in these matters, and that they would not see a continuance or repetition of the partiality and injustice suffered under the past administration.

*Mr. Fish*

Mr. MITCHELSON said honourable members must bear in mind that a very large amount of money had been expended in supplying the various parts of the colony with machinery and appliances for constructing and manufacturing railway stock, and if the work needed in each district were to be absolutely restricted to that district it meant that sometimes a large number of men would be left idle, and that expensive machinery would also be kept idle. This would necessarily be the case owing to the large expenditure which had been made—improperly made, as he thought. However, he had already given a pledge that the work should be fairly distributed over the country, and that pledge would be carried out, although he must point out that it would frequently happen that money expended in purchasing this machinery would not be earning interest.

Mr. FISH at once admitted that the expenditure of the money could not be divided with mathematical precision—that there must be work done at one place which would be useful for another place. All that he asked was that there should be a fair endeavour to give each place its proper proportion of expenditure.

Mr. GUINNESS wished to call attention to circumstances which showed improper action at Addington. He did not say who was to blame—it might be that the permanent head of the department was at fault; but the fact was this: that some time ago the Greymouth Harbour Board had to obtain a hundred iron trucks for the purpose of carrying coals from the mine to the port. The Government were asked to make them, and they said they would make them at these Addington workshops, and that they would cost £120 each. When the Board discovered this they made inquiries, and found that the trucks could be made at the local foundry for £10 less than at Addington. But, notwithstanding that fact—which was represented to the department—the Government insisted upon having the work done at Addington, and charged the higher price. Such administration as that was scandalous; and he hoped the Minister for Public Works would give him an assurance that if trucks were required in future the Government would not perpetrate such a monopoly as that to which he had called attention.

Mr. MARCHANT hoped that the Minister would not lose sight of the interests of the smaller workshops. Some time ago there was a workshop in full swing at Sentry Hill, which did very good work and turned out the work at a cheap rate, as he believed. But the late Government removed the whole of the works to Wanganui, and for no very good reason, so far as he could understand, because, as he had said, the work was done well at Sentry Hill, and it was done economically. He hoped that the Minister would give attention to the small workshops as well as the large ones.

Motion for adjournment of the House negatived.

“HINEMOA” AND “STELLA.”

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Marine,

—(1.) Is it the intention of the Government to have the new boilers now being made placed in the steamship "Hinemoa" at an early date? (2.) Is it the intention of the Government to sell the steamship "Stella," and to place the "Hinemoa" again in commission? (3.) Is it the intention of the Government to dispose of the steamship "Hinemoa" after the vessel has been fitted with new boilers? (4.) Is it true that the main front plate in the new boiler-frame intended for the steamship "Hinemoa" was discovered, some time after arrival, and after being paid for, to be cracked and useless? The reason he asked this question was this: that he believed that Captain Fairchild, who had charge of the "Stella," said he could make a considerable saving to the colony if the "Hinemoa" were placed in commission and the "Stella" disposed of. If the Government were not going to dispose of the "Stella," would they dispose of the "Hinemoa"? As regarded the latter part of the question, he might say that it was clear to him that there had been gross carelessness or gross incompetence, because any man who knew anything of his business could not but see the flaw which existed, and it was one of so serious a character that had the boiler been placed in position a very serious loss of life might have ensued, through an accident caused by this flaw. He thought there had been gross neglect or incompetence, or perhaps both, and he wished to know whether the Government would take steps in regard to the matter.

Mr. FISHER said the new boilers were here, but there was no great hurry about putting them into the vessel. There was no intention on the part of the Government to dispose of these two vessels, for the reason that they were not adapted to mercantile purposes, and only a very small price could be obtained for them. It was quite true that a flaw had been found in the boiler-plate, and the Government had sent to the manufacturers in England asking them to substitute another plate at their own expense. The plate was "passed" in England, and inquiries would be made as to how it came to be passed.

#### PARUA-WHANGAREI TELEPHONE.

Mr. R. THOMPSON asked the Minister for Public Works, if it is the intention of the Government to extend telephonic communication to Parua Bay and Whangarei Heads?

Major ATKINSON thought this could be done, but he had not full information on the subject yet, and would like to consult with the honourable gentleman on the subject.

#### GOVERNMENT PRINTING-OFFICE.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Colonial Secretary, if it is the intention of the Government at an early date to procure an engine and the necessary machinery for the new Printing-office at Wellington?

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that tenders had been called for the construction of a boiler and engine for the Printing-office. The tenders had been received, and the lowest had been in his

hands for some considerable time; but he did not feel himself justified in accepting such tender until the House had an opportunity of passing the amount which he had put upon the estimates for the completion of the Printing-office.

#### WAIRARAPA TIMBER FREIGHTS.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked the Minister for Public Works, whether he will consider the question of reducing the railway freight on timber from the Wairarapa district?

Mr. MITCHELSON said the matter was under the consideration of the Government.

#### PAYMENTS FOR LAND.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked the Government, whether they will take steps to arrange that the periodical payments under our several systems of land-tenure can be made through the Post Office? The House last year was led to expect that action would be taken in this direction, and he wished to know whether anything had been done?

Major ATKINSON was sorry to say he had no information on the matter. A great deal of consideration had been given to it by the last Government, and some difficulties which he had not yet had time to look into had been found. He would look into the matter during the recess, and if effect could be given to the arrangement—and he believed it could—it would be done.

#### MILITARY TRAINING-SCHOOL.

Mr. WARD asked the Minister of Defence, if he considers that the services rendered to the colony by the Military Training-school at Wellington are sufficient to justify the continuance of the expenditure incurred for its maintenance?

Mr. FERGUS replied that the Government did not think that the services rendered by this Military Training-school justified the expenditure on it, and they intended to do away with it.

#### J. HUDSON.

Mr. CADMAN asked the Premier, if, in accordance with the recommendation of the Public Petitions Committee, he will make provision on the supplementary estimates to refund John Hudson, of Parawai, Thames, the amount of property-tax paid by him in error? It appeared that Mr. Hudson had paid some £10 or £15 property-tax in error, but the Commissioner said that he had no power to refund it. Mr. Hudson had consequently petitioned the House, and the Petitions Committee recommended that the amount should be refunded.

Major ATKINSON would make further inquiries into the matter, and if those inquiries showed that this was property-tax for the year before last the Government, on the general principle, could not refund it. Each year's transactions must be closed with the end of the year; and, if they were to open up matters connected with previous years, there was no saying where it would end. This arose entirely

out of Mr. Hudson's own fault. No explanation was given in the statement, and no reduction was made; but next year—1886-87—when Mr. Hudson made an amended statement, the extra tax was refunded to him. It was impossible to go back beyond the current year.

#### ROTORUA TOWNSHIP.

Mr. CARROLL asked the Minister of Lands, What amount of rent-money for the Rotorua Township is in the hands of the Government, and when the said amount is to be paid to the Native owners?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON replied that there was a sum of £233 18s. 4d. in the Treasury to credit of the account. Of this amount, £120 had been expended by Mr. Tole, on the authority of the late Native Minister, as an advance to certain Natives who wanted to visit the Hokianga district. The Audit Department had refused to grant credit for the £120, and that department would not authorise any further payments on account of rents until a list of the names of the individual Natives who were to participate in the rents was supplied. Mr. Clarke was appointed some time ago to ascertain the names of the Natives interested in the rents, and the share of each; but he had not yet reported. Until Mr. Clarke's report had been received the balance of the amount to credit of the rent account—namely, £113 18s. 4d.—could not be paid to the Natives.

#### DESPATCH OF BUSINESS.

Mr. TAIWHANGA asked the Government, Whether they will propose alterations of the Standing Orders of the House so as to facilitate the despatch of business, and providing that, if the House is counted three times during the speech of an honourable member, his remarks shall be deemed to have terminated?

Major ATKINSON thought the suggestion was a very good one. There was no doubt that the Government must take into consideration the whole question of the Standing Orders, and this seemed a practical suggestion, and the Government would give it careful consideration during the recess.

#### DISTILLERIES.

Mr. VALENTINE asked the Commissioner of Customs, If he will take steps to amend the Excise Duties Act, so as to encourage the re-establishment of distilleries in the colony, with the view of helping to remove the depression which exists in the farming industry of the country? This was a very important matter to the farming industry of the colony. No doubt the distilleries had been abolished because the Government of the day wished for an increase in the Customs revenue; but, now that so much was said about encouraging local industries, he thought if there was any industry requiring encouragement it was the farming industry, because there was no doubt it was the backbone of the country. In Victoria there were several distilleries, distributing a large amount of money amongst the farmers; and so it would be here if distilleries were

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established again. There would be an extended local market for farmers' barley and wheat; and that description of wheat known as damaged, which was at present only used for fowl-food, could be utilised in a better way. He hoped the Government would give the matter their serious consideration.

Mr. FISHER said, whatever the desire of the Government in the matter might be, the honourable gentleman must see that it would be quite impossible to deal with a large question of policy such as this at this period of the session. The honourable gentleman was aware that some ten years ago it cost the colony £27,000 to buy up the distilleries because they materially affected the revenue. The question was a very serious one, and he could give the honourable gentleman the assurance that it would receive the consideration of the Government before next session.

#### WHALERS.

Mr. HOBBS asked the Government, Whether they are aware that whaling ships are now subject to light-dues, from which they were formerly exempt; and that, as a consequence, whalers are deterred from calling at the Bay of Islands and other New Zealand ports to refit and get supplies, thereby causing considerable loss to the traders and settlers who were in the habit of supplying these vessels?

Mr. FISHER said that, in passing the last Merchant Shipping and Seamen's Act, through some mistake the exemption which formerly applied to whalers was not included. It was not intended that whalers should be subject to these dues, and the honourable gentleman could accept the assurance that an exemption would be made in their favour.

#### WALTON PARK COAL.

Dr. FITCHETT asked the Government, Have they promised to use the Walton Park coal on any of the southern lines, and, if so, are they aware that, when it was used before, engine-drivers, in running through the Chain Hill Tunnel, have been rendered absolutely insensible through the sulphurous and other fumes given off?

Mr. MITCHELSON said the Government had called for tenders for the supply of coal to the Railway Department, and the Walton Park Company, amongst others, tendered; but, as the tender of the Walton Park Company was in excess of the others, it was not accepted: consequently their coal was not to be used. With reference to the latter part of the question, although the fumes from the coal were rather overpowering when used in passing through the tunnels, yet they were not in any way so dangerous as stated by the honourable gentleman.

Dr. FITCHETT would suggest that the Government should make further inquiry in the matter, as he knew positively that engine-drivers had been found insensible after coming out of tunnels when this coal was used.

### NORMAL AND TRAINING SCHOOLS.

Dr. FITCHETT asked the Minister of Education, Whether the Government intend to abolish any, and, if so, which, of the existing normal schools and training colleges?

Mr. FISHER replied that the Government had intimated to the various Education Boards that it was not their intention to propose the vote for £8,000 for the normal and training schools. The whole subject would, of course, come under discussion when the education vote was before the House, and it would be for the House then to say whether it would agree to the proposition to abolish these training schools.

### WAITOTARA ELECTION.

Mr. SEDDON.—I desire to make a statement to the House, because it affects the honour of an honourable gentleman who has a seat in this House. I have received a telegram from Wanganui, stating that the honourable member for Waitotara retains his seat, the petitioner having signally failed to prove the allegations in his petition.

### RATES ON LAND.

Mr. MARCHANT asked the Premier, Whether he will bring down a Bill this session to fix the minimum amount of rates payable on any section of land? He asked this question because in the scattered parts of this district there were many little township-sections of such small value that the rates only amounted to 2d. or 3d. The collection of these rates cost the local bodies a great deal of trouble and expense, and it would be very desirable to have a minimum amount of rates fixed.

Major ATKINSON thought the suggestion a very good one; but he regretted to say it would be impossible to deal with it this session.

### ENGINE-DRIVERS ON WELLINGTON RAILWAY.

Mr. FITZHERBERT asked the Minister for Public Works, If it is true that a railway labourer named Kirby, who has lately been sent to Wellington from Christchurch, has been made an engine-driver on the Wellington-Masterton Railway-line, to the exclusion of several firemen on the same line?

Mr. MITCHELSON said it was perfectly true that a man named Kirby had been appointed temporarily as an engine-driver. He had been occupying a similar position in the South Island; but since being in Wellington he had occupied the position of a labourer. He (Mr. Mitchelson) was making inquiries as to whether Kirby had been appointed over the heads of those more entitled to the position. If by seniority Kirby was entitled to hold his present position, nothing more could be said; but he would see that justice was done.

### SHANNON MAILS.

Mr. WILSON asked the Postmaster-General, If, on the three days a week on which the mail does not reach Foxton until seven p.m., he will make arrangements to have the mails carried

to and from Shannon, a distance of twelve miles?

Major ATKINSON was unable to give the honourable gentleman a decided answer. The Post Office officials were making inquiries into the matter. It was considered desirable that it should be done if it could be done at a reasonable rate; but the amount demanded was more than the Post Office felt justified in giving. Further inquiries would be made, and if it could be done at a reasonable rate it should be done.

### WELLINGTON-PITONE RAILWAY-FENCE.

On the motion of Mr. HAMLIN, it was ordered, That a return be laid before the House showing the cost of removing the four-rail-and-post fence on the Wellington and Pitone line of railway and replacing the same with a seven-wire-and-iron-post fence.

### EKETAHUNA AND RICHMOND LINE.

On the motion of Dr. NEWMAN, a return was ordered showing—(1) the number of chains between Eketahuna and Richmond; (2) the estimated cost of constructing the railway-line from Eketahuna to Richmond, including the cost of a flag-station at the latter place.

### BURNHAM, NORWOOD, AND SELWYN RAILWAY TRAFFIC.

On the motion of Sir J. HALL, it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a return showing the comparative amount of goods-traffic at the Burnham, Norwood, and Selwyn stations during the last two years.

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

Major ATKINSON.—Before the orders of the day are called on, with the permission of the House I will make the statement which I yesterday undertook to make. The Government propose that the Public Works Statement should be delivered at half-past seven on Monday evening. We hope to be able to resume the financial debate on Wednesday, and to proceed with the estimates. The four Bills which may be considered policy Bills, and which the Government consider essential, are the Land Bill, the Government Railways Bill, the Crown and Native Lands Rating Bill, and the Australian Naval Defence Bill. These Bills will probably all of them take more or less time. Then, there are these others, which the Government think necessary for the general government of the country: Bills to relieve persons who are suffering under certain grievances. No less than four of them have already passed this House, some of them more than once. There is the Naval and Military Settlers Bill, giving power to issue Crown grants to persons declared to be entitled to them. Then there is the Civil Service Reform Bill. That is a Bill not of any importance, but it is a Bill to remedy defects which exist in the present Act. At the present time it is impossible to appoint a cadet at all, whether he has passed the best Civil Service examination or not; and we cannot,

under any circumstances, appoint a temporary clerk. The consequence has been that we have not been able to reappoint policemen as clerks to Courts to which they have hitherto been acting as clerks. If policemen are removed from one place to another they cannot be appointed clerks to the Courts in the districts to which they have been removed. It is to remedy defects of that kind that the Bill has been introduced. The Wellington Girls' High School Bill we propose to drop, also the Auckland Girls' High School Bill and the High Schools and Colleges Rating Exemption Bill. Then, there are the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill and the Loans to Local Bodies Bill. These Bills passed this House last year. They are of great importance to the local bodies, and therefore I hope to be able to pass them. The Public Reserves Sale Bill we propose to abandon; also the Industrial Schools Bill. Then we come to two very important Bills, also to do justice to localities: they are the West Coast Settlement Reserves Bill and the South Island Native Reserves Bill. These Bills both passed the House during last session. Many tenants are suffering very considerably under the present state of the law. I hope the House will see its way to pass these Bills. The Coroners Act Amendment Bill we propose to abandon. The District Railways Purchasing Act Amendment Bill we wish to pass if possible. There seems room to fear that we may lose the power to collect not only the rates for this year, but also the arrears. If that is so, then it may be a serious matter, and it may be necessary to ask the House to pass that Bill. The Municipal Corporations Bill (No. 2) we propose to strike out. That is a Bill coming to us from another place, and we hope there may be time to pass some necessary amendments contained in that Bill. We are disposed to abandon any provision of importance in the Bill that is likely to receive much opposition; but there are some amendments which ought to be passed. We propose to abandon the District Courts Bill. The Public Bodies' Leaseholds Bill is a necessary measure. It gives relief to local bodies that have land to let. The present Act is not workable in a satisfactory way, and we propose to remedy the defect and grant relief to a large number of tenants of local bodies. We propose to abandon the Coal-mines Bill and the Coroners' Juries Bill. The Public Works Bill we hope to get through, if possible; if we find it is impossible in the time, of course we shall have to abandon it. The Christchurch Hospital Bill is on the second list. We shall get it through if we can. We hope there will be time to get through the Slaughterhouses Bill. I do not look on the Bills in the second list as absolutely necessary, although it is very desirable that they should be passed. Although it looks rather a formidable list, really the only Bills which are likely to take time are the Bills which I first mentioned. The Pharmacy Bill will be in the second category. Bills have to come down from another place relating to Native lands; but they are practically machinery Bills, with the exception of a provision

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to repeal the Native Lands Administration Act. The Natives universally wish, as far as we understand, to see the provisions of the Act repealed.

Sir G. GREY.—Not in the form in which it is proposed to be done, I think.

Major ATKINSON.—I think the honourable gentleman will find that the proposals are such as to meet the approval of the House and the Natives.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the Pharmacy Bill?

Major ATKINSON.—The Pharmacy Bill we also hope to be able to pass. It cannot be described as a policy Bill. There is no principle in it, except that of doing justice to individuals. That is the general course of business which the Government hope to follow.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I understood the Premier to say that he would take the four policy Bills first.

Major ATKINSON.—I am not quite sure that I should do that. I shall probably ask the House to agree to the reading of some others about which there is not likely to be much discussion. I should like to get them advanced a stage, so as to send them to another place. I shall propose, if we get on with these Bills, to continue the financial debate and the estimates; and, if we make considerable progress with them, I shall interrupt them occasionally, if we have not got through those Bills. I wish to say also that the Government hope that, if we go on as I trust we shall do, we may be in a position to finish our business by Tuesday week, so as to give honourable members plenty of time to be home by Christmas.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Am I to understand that the Loan Bill has been abandoned?

Major ATKINSON.—No; that has not been abandoned.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Then, one question has escaped attention—the cable question. The position of the matter is this: The late Government declined to propose any fresh subsidy; but the Agent-General arranged that the question should remain *in statu quo* until Parliament had an opportunity of discussing it. We could not give Parliament that opportunity last session; but the same state of things exists now with regard to this Parliament. The honourable gentleman will, I think, require to give the House an opportunity of discussing it.

Major ATKINSON.—I am much obliged to the honourable gentleman for mentioning it. I had quite forgotten that we propose, if possible, to bring that in at the end of the week, together with a motion about the San Francisco service.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The Westport Harbour question has fallen out altogether.

Major ATKINSON.—I do not know; but the Government are waiting for the report of the Committee to come up. Then we shall make proposals. We shall also see how the business progresses.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I should like to ask the honourable gentleman if he will bring down, in order to facilitate the discussion on the Naval

Defence Bill, a statement as to how the calculation is arrived at that it would only cost £20,000. My impression is that it would cost somewhere about £25,000. I would point out that there is an omission to provide in the Bill that the remaining colonies shall not be liable for any colony or colonies which may withdraw, as was stipulated should be insisted upon when the subject was under consideration.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes, Sir; I shall be glad to see to that.

Sir J. VOGEL.—If the honourable gentleman would bring down the calculations, I think it would save a great deal of discussion.

Major ATKINSON.—The cost, according to the calculations of the Government, is between £21,000 and £22,000. But I can lay the calculations on the table.

Sir J. VOGEL.—There is only one other question, and that is as to an opportunity for discussing the alterations in the education vote.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; I look upon that as part of the estimates.

Mr. SMITH.—The Premier does not mention anything about the Property-tax Bill. Is the House to understand that he does not intend to bring in one? I hope he will not.

Major ATKINSON.—I omitted that; but I think the House can have no doubt about it. The Financial Statement says what we shall require to a penny. I shall have to ask the House, most certainly, to impose that tax.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I should like to ask the Premier if he will try to find time to pass the Wellington College and Girls' High School Bill. It does not affect any other place whatever; it has not the remotest connection with the Addington workshops or anything in the South Island. It affects Wellington and Wellington only. I believe there would be no stonewalling of the Bill, and that it would run through very quickly. I would point out that it is of very great importance that the Government should get this Bill through, because arrangements have been made which require it, to enable the contractor to be paid. If the Bill is not passed the College Governors will be unable to raise the money to pay the contractor; and not only is it a question of getting the capital under this Bill, but the Bill would provide an easier method of arranging for the payment of interest. I think there would be no discussion on the subject, and that the Bill would pass in twenty minutes.

Mr. PEACOCK.—I hope the Premier, if he answers that favourably, will give a similar reply in regard to the Auckland Girls' High School. The Bills are in the same position. The Board is unable to complete the necessary school-accommodation without having the Bill passed.

Mr. IZARD.—With regard to the Wellington school, I would say that the building has been constructed on the written promise of the late Minister of Education that a Bill similar to the present would be introduced. At the present time there are no funds to pay with, and there will not be any if this Bill is not passed.

The Board already have borrowing powers, but they cannot put them in force. The building is already up, and the Board of Governors want to pay for it. The building was erected by the contractor on the faith of the Minister's promise. The Bill is a simple one, and does not contain any fresh legislation. It merely enables the Board to carry out what it was previously authorised by Act to do. I cannot conceive that there would be any obstruction to the Bill.

Mr. GOLDIE.—I think the Auckland Bill is of very much more importance than the Wellington one. The Wellington Girls' High School is already constructed, but the lease of the Girls' High School at Auckland terminates during next year, and unless this Bill is passed the Board will be compelled to take a new lease of the building. If the Wellington Bill is important, I think the Auckland one is much more so.

Major STEWARD.—Before the Premier answers, I would like to say that, very naturally, every honourable member considers his own Bill the most important matter. Now, I say that to the district I represent the Hospital and Charitable Aid Bill is of first importance, and it strikes me very forcibly that, if anything is done giving the honourable member for Thorndon special facilities for his Bill, there will probably be a long discussion.

Major ATKINSON.—I am very sorry if anybody suffers inconvenience; but, of course, our time is very short. By the permission of the House I will make a statement of the business the Government is going to do. There is no question, I understand, before the House, and I am giving honourable members information, so far as I am able to do so, as to the reasons for the action the Government propose. I was not aware that anybody would suffer inconvenience in consequence of the Wellington College and Girls' High School Bill not being gone on with. I understand that an arrangement was made to put up the building; but, if anybody will still suffer inconvenience, the Bill should be dealt with, and we will certainly endeavour to deal with it this session. But I cannot make an absolute promise. There is a good deal of difference between the two schools, because in one case the school-building is up, I understand, and the objection that the honourable member for Thorndon makes to dropping the Bill is that certain engagements have been entered into with a contractor, who has spent his money, and who will seriously suffer if he cannot get his money. Of course, if that is so, the House should look favourably upon relieving anybody who has got into difficulties under a promise from the Government. As to all these measures, the Government would only be too delighted, if we got through the business, to pass them.

Mr. PEACOCK.—I merely wish to say that, if the Wellington Bill goes on, the Auckland Bill should also go on; because the reasons that apply to the one apply to the other also.

Major ATKINSON.—No, they do not at all. I have explained the difference. The Well-

ton College is built, and there is the liability to the contractor, who has spent his money upon the faith of the Government getting this Bill through.

Mr. PEACOCK.—I wish to express the opinion—with all deference to the Premier—that, if there is any difference, it is in favour of the Auckland one, because the Board there have not a building, and, in order to provide one, must be enabled to use the endowment.

Major ATKINSON.—I see a very great difference between a pledge on the part of the Government to enable a Board to pay a man a certain sum of money, and the carrying-out of a measure to enable the Board to use endowments: the former is simply an act of justice. As I have said, the Government is only too anxious to get all through, if possible; but I think honourable gentlemen will agree with me that a contractor ought not to be ruined or put to enormous inconvenience because he has relied upon the pledge of the Government.

Sir G. GREY.—I venture to ask this question: Does the Premier think it right that a vast number of girls should have their prospects in life injured for want of proper education, because they have no building to be educated in? It appears to me that that is infinitely the most important case. They can both be attended to, but surely the education of the girls is a much more serious thing than the other question. They are both great questions, and, I submit, both Bills ought to go on.

Major ATKINSON.—Well, of course there is no doubt I do not consider it desirable that a number of young girls should be ruined for want of education. I think just the other way. But, Sir, the Auckland Board of Governors could do just as the Wellington Board of Governors have done. I have no doubt there is a contractor there who would be willing to build the school on the same terms as the contractor here accepted, so that the work could go on in that way. But, as I have said, this is a very different affair. I did not compare the questions, they are both important questions, and I cannot admit that there is any justification for the honourable gentleman implying that I thought nothing of the girls not being educated. I said that was a matter of great importance, and that I would do my utmost to get both Bills through.

Mr. SEDDON.—The honourable member for Motueka and myself have been moving in the direction of giving effect to the recommendation of a Royal Commission which was appointed with reference to the South Island Native reserves. I submitted a question the other day to the Premier, and he promised to ask the Public Trustee whether there would be any objection to carry out the recommendation of the Commissioner in giving the right of renewal to the tenants on the Motueka and Arapura reserves, and the readjustment of the rents under the existing leases, as promised by Mr. Commissioner Mackay. I ask whether these two points will be taken into consideration.

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Major ATKINSON.—They are both in the Bill.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I wish to ask the Premier a question. I am in the unfortunate position of having no Bill of my own to say anything about; but I notice on the Order Paper one Bill that partakes very much of the nature of a question of public policy—the Fair Rent Bill. Would it not be wise, in view of the importance of the subject, to have that Bill brought up? The subject is exceedingly important, and there are floods of petitions coming in on the question.

Major ATKINSON.—The Bill is of very great importance. The Government regret that they do not see their way to proceed with the Bill. They do not consider it is a workable Bill, and have not had time to consider a question of so large importance. I myself am of opinion that we shall have to establish a Court, but I think it would probably have to take wider scope than the honourable gentleman gives it. Looking at the importance of the measure, we should make a great mistake if such a Bill as this were not fully considered, and, in view of the lateness of the session, the Government consider it would be wiser to wait till next session. In the meantime, we propose to have a clause inserted in our Land Bill to provide that none of the present tenants should be unduly harassed. We propose to give the local bodies power to deal with other cases. We have made all the provision that it is possible to make in our Land Bill on this subject. We should have been glad to take up the Bill if it were a workable measure; but, after careful consideration, we find that it is not at all workable. We were told that the matter was to be introduced into another place,—that this Bill was to be abandoned, then introduced in another place, and brought down here. When I heard that stated I said I should be glad to take it up if it could be got into a workable shape. But the Government have not time to deal with it this session in a way that would satisfy the country.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I should like to make a few remarks on the statement made by the honourable gentleman. I understand that he proposes to conclude the financial debate, and then to deal with the whole of the estimates, including the supplementary estimates. It appears to me that in order to get through these estimates we should require to go into Committee of Supply several times. We have then the Public Works Statement, which is to be made on Monday, and which will include questions relating to the loan. It may or may not propose to provide further funds for the Westport and Greymouth harbours; and that question must be considered this session, as the money is running out. Then, we have the debate on the Public Works Statement, which could hardly come on until two or three days after it is delivered; and the Bills to be indicated by the Statement—Loan Bills, if any—will have to be considered. The honourable gentleman wishes us to carry the Land Bill; but we are not aware whether he accepts the amendments which have been made by the



Waste Lands Committee. Then, there are the Naval Defences Bill, the Railway Bill, the Crown and Native Lands Rating Bill. Then, there is the discussion on the education question; and there are, I understand, a number of other Bills which the honourable gentleman wants carried, and which will involve great consideration. I agree that the Native reserves, both in the North and South Islands, need to be dealt with. Then, there is the question relating to municipal expenditure, and as to whether Mayors shall be elected in a different way from what they are at present. Then, there is the discussion on the San Francisco service; and two measures of great importance are to come before us from the Legislative Council, relating to Native lands. These are the heads of the questions we have to consider, and how the honourable gentleman thinks it possible to deal with those matters between this and Tuesday week I am at a loss to understand. Without any obstruction whatever, and with the most limited discussion that we can give them, it appears to me impossible for honourable members who think strongly on the questions raised by these various measures to abstain from expressing their opinions on them. In fact, we are asked to do in ten days a volume of work which would be very heavy work for a whole session. I shall be glad to assist the Government to the utmost to push on business; but I cannot accede to accepting important measures which are not properly discussed or considered. As the honourable member said of the measure of the honourable member for Auckland Central, that it was an important measure and required consideration, so also with regard to nearly all of the measures to which I have referred. And, as regards the estimates, it must be borne in mind that the whole question of retrenchment, about which we have heard so much in the House and in the country, practically remains to be discussed; for, excepting the Governor's Salary Bill, the Honorarium Bill, and the Ministers' Salaries Bill, the question of retrenchment has practically not yet received any consideration from the House. I have every disposition to hasten the business; but I fear it would be impossible, consistently with the duty of honourable members, to carry out the whole of this business by Tuesday week.

#### LAND BILL.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—Sir, I beg to move, That you do leave the chair presently, in order to go into Committee on the Land Bill.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I hope the Minister of Lands will not push this measure on to-night, and that the House will see its way to postpone it until Monday. The Land Bill was only reported yesterday from the Waste Lands Committee, and was only circulated this morning, and, seeing that honourable members have been in the House until after three o'clock this morning, back to Committees at eleven, and to the House again at twelve, they have not had time to study the amendments. For my own part I know the purport of those amendments;

but honourable members should have an opportunity of considering the effect of the amendments in connection with the Bill as originally brought down and as amended by the Waste Lands Committee. I think the honourable gentleman would do well to postpone going into Committee on this Bill until Monday, so that honourable members may have an opportunity of knowing what the amendments really are. I am sure such a course will facilitate the passing of the Bill.

Mr. KERR.—I hope the House will go on with this Land Bill. It is one of the necessary works of the session. It will really be for the benefit of the colony at large if this Bill is put through the House as soon as possible.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—I simply wish to say that, far from wishing to press the Bill on the House, I would ask honourable members in Committee to carefully consider and discuss every point of the measure. With regard to the amendments referred to, the honourable member for Waihemo knows what they are; and if other honourable members did not know what they are they would say so. The amendments are of a very simple character, and we have plenty of time to consider them to-night, taking the Bill clause by clause.

The House divided.

#### AYES, 58.

Anderson	Hobbs	Reeves, R. H. J.
Atkinson	Hodgkinson	Rhodes
Barron	Izard	Richardson, E.
Blake	Jackson	Richardson, G.
Bruce	Jones	Ross
Buchanan	Joyce	Steward, W. J.
Buxton	Larnach	S.-Menteath
Cowan	Lawry	Taiwhanga
Dodson	Loughrey	Tanner
Feldwick	Mackenzie, M.	Thompson, R.
Fergus	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson, T.
Fisher	Marchant	Turnbull
Fitchett	Mitchelson	Valentine
Fitzherbert	Monk	Vogel
Fraser	Newman	Walker
Goldie	O'Connor	Withy.
Graham	Ormond	
Grimmond	Peacock	
Hamlin	Pearson	
Hislop	Pyke	

#### Tellers.

Allen  
Kerr.

#### NOES, 5.

Fish		Tellers.
Grey		Levestam
Smith.		McKenzie, J.

#### PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Taylor	Beetham
Ward	Seddon
Wilson.	Duncan.

#### Majority for, 53.

Motion agreed to.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Governor, by notification in *Gazette*, may decide all rural lands open for selection for cash.

Sir G. GREY moved, That the words "Parts

V. or VII." be struck out, with a view to inserting in lieu thereof, "under the provisions for special settlements, village settlements, or small grazing-runs."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

#### AYES, 41.

Allen	Jones	Ross
Anderson	Lawry	Russell
Atkinson	Macarthur	Seymour
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Steward, W. J.
Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	S.-Menteath
Cowan	Marchant	Taiwhanga
Fergus	Mills	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Newman	Turnbull
Fitchett	Ormond	Walker
Fulton	Peacock	Whyte
Graham	Pearson	Wilson.
Guinness	Pyke	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Rhodes	Kerr
Hobbs	Richardson, G.	Valentine.

#### NOES, 21.

Beetham	Kelly	Smith
Blake	Levestam	Taylor
Fraser	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, T.
Goldie	Parata	Vogel.
Grey	Perceval	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Richardson, E.	Izard
Hodgkinson	Seddon	Reeves, W. P.
Joyce		

Majority for, 20.

Amendment negatived.

The Committee divided on the question, "That clause 2 stand part of the Bill."

#### AYES, 49.

Allen	Kerr	Richardson, G.
Anderson	Lawry	Ross
Atkinson	Levestam	Russell
Barron	Macarthur	Seymour
Beetham	Mackenzie, M.	Steward, W. J.
Bruce	Mackenzie, T.	S.-Menteath
Cowan	Marchant	Taiwhanga
Dodson	McGregor	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Mills	Turnbull
Fitzherbert	Moat	Walker
Fulton	Monk	Ward
Graham	Newman	Whyte
Hislop	O'Connor	Wilson.
Hobbs	Ormond	
Hodgkinson	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Izard	Pyke	Buchanan
Jones	Rhodes	Valentine.

#### NOES, 18.

Buxton	Kelly	Thompson, T.
Feldwick	Moss	Vogel
Fitchett	Perceval	Withy.
Fraser	Smith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Goldie	Stewart, W. D.	Blake
Grey	Taylor	McKenzie, J.
Joyce		

Majority for, 31.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 3.—Price of land to be stated in notification: Ordinary land, 20s. per acre; second-class land, 10s. per acre; third-class land, 5s. per acre.

*Sir G. Grey*

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained providing that land may be sold at less than the foregoing prices in districts where the minimum fixed by the Act of 1885 is below prices herein fixed."

#### AYES, 37.

Allen	Izard	Perceval
Barron	Jones	Smith
Bruce	Joyce	Stewart, W. D.
Buxton	Larnach	S.-Menteath
Feldwick	Lawry	Thompson, T.
Fisher	Mackenzie, M.	Turnbull
Fish	Marchant	Ward
Fraser	McKenzie, J.	Wilson
Fulton	Moat	Withy.
Goldie	Monk	
Graham	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grey	Parata	Buchanan
Hislop	Peacock	Fitchett.

#### NOES, 28.

Anderson	Kerr	Russell
Beetham	Levestam	Seymour
Blake	Macarthur	Steward, W. J.
Cadman	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson, R.
Cowan	O'Connor	Valentine
Dodson	Ormond	Whyte.
Fitzherbert	Pearson	
Hobbs	Pyke	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hodgkinson	Richardson, G.	Duncan
Kelly	Ross	McGregor.

Majority for, 9.

Words retained.

Mr. SEYMOUR moved, That in the Counties of Marlborough, Nelson, and Wellington the price of second-class land may be fixed at any price not less than 5s. per acre.

The Committee divided.

#### AYES, 39.

Anderson	Levestam	Richardson, G.
Beetham	Macarthur	Ross
Blake	Mackenzie, M.	Russell
Bruce	Marchant	Steward, W. J.
Cadman	McGregor	S.-Menteath
Cowan	Moat	Tanner
Dodson	Monk	Thompson, R.
Fergus	O'Connor	Valentine
Fisher	Ormond	Whyte
Fitzherbert	Parata	Wilson.
Guinness	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hobbs	Pearson	Buchanan
Hodgkinson	Pyke	Seymour.
Kerr		

#### NOES, 25.

Allen	Grey	Richardson, E.
Barron	Hislop	Stewart, W. D.
Buxton	Joyce	Thompson, T.
Duncan	Kelly	Turnbull
Feldwick	Lawry	Ward.
Fish	Mackenzie, T.	
Fitchett	Mills	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fulton	Mitchelson	McKenzie, J.
Goldie	Newman	Reeves, W. P.

Majority for, 14.

Words inserted.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE moved, That the clause be erased.

The Committee divided on the question,  
"That the clause be retained."

## AYES, 43.

Allen	Hobbs	Richardson, G.
Barron	Hodgkinson	Ross
Beetham	Jones	Russell
Blake	Kelly	Seymour
Bruce	Kerr	Steward, W. J.
Buchanan	Lawry	S.-Menteath
Cadman	Levestam	Thompson, R.
Cowan	Macarthur	Thompson, T.
Dodson	Mackenzie, T.	Valentine
Fisher	McGregor	Whyte
Fitchett	Mitchelson	Wilson.
Fitzherbert	Moat	
Fulton	Monk	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Ormond	Anderson
Hislop	Peacock	Ward.

## NOES, 10.

Buxton	Joyce	<i>Tellers.</i>
Feldwick	Parata	Duncan
Goldie	Smith	McKenzie, J.
Grey	Withy.	

Majority for, 33.

Clause retained.

Clause 5.—Applicant for land to have choice of tenure.

Mr. J. McKENZIE moved, That only one-third of available lands be open for sale for cash.

The Committee divided.

## AYES, 20.

Buxton	Guinness	Smith
Duncan	Hutchison	Thompson, T.
Feldwick	Jones	Wilson
Fitchett	Kelly	Withy.
Fitzherbert	Mackenzie, T.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Goldie	Newman	McKenzie, J.
Grey	Parata	Reeves, W. P.

## NOES, 34.

Anderson	Kerr	Steward, W. J.
Beetham	Lawry	Stewart, W. D.
Blake	Levestam	S.-Menteath
Buchanan	Macarthur	Tanner
Cadman	McGregor	Thompson, R.
Cowan	Mitchelson	Valentine
Dodson	Moat	Ward
Fisher	Ormond	Whyte.
Fulton	Richardson, G.	
Hislop	Ross	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hobbs	Russell	Barron
Hodgkinson	Seymour	Peacock.

Majority against, 14.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. JONES moved, That only two-thirds be saleable for cash.

The Committee divided.

## AYES, 15.

Allen	Hutchison	Smith
Buxton	Moss	Thompson, T.
Duncan	Perceval	<i>Tellers.</i>
Feldwick	Reeves, W. P.	Jones
Fraser	Seddon	McKenzie, J.
Grey		

## NOES, 43.

Anderson	Izard	Parata
Barron	Jackson	Peacock
Beetham	Kelly	Pearson
Blake	Kerr	Richardson, G.
Bruce	Larnach	Ross
Buchanan	Lawry	Seymour
Cadman	Levestam	Tanner
Cowan	Mackenzie, M.	Thompson, R.
Dodson	Mackenzie, T.	Valentine
Fisher	Marchant	Ward
Fitzherbert	McGregor	Wilson.
Fulton	Moat	
Grimmond	Monk	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hobbs	Newman	Graham
Hodgkinson	Ormond	Macarthur.

Majority against, 28.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. J. McKENZIE moved, That clause 5 be erased.

The Committee divided on the question,  
"That the clause be retained."

## AYES, 42.

Anderson	Hobbs	Parata
Barron	Hodgkinson	Peacock
Beetham	Izard	Pearson
Blake	Jones	Richardson, G.
Bruce	Kelly	Ross
Buchanan	Larnach	Seymour
Cadman	Lawry	Thompson, R.
Cowan	Levestam	Thompson, T.
Dodson	Macarthur	Valentine
Feldwick	Mackenzie, T.	Ward
Fisher	McGregor	Wilson.
Fitzherbert	Moat	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fulton	Monk	Graham
Grimmond	Newman	Tanner.
Hislop		

## NOES, 7.

Buxton	Hutchison	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duncan	Smith.	McKenzie, J.
Grey		Reeves, W. P.

Majority for, 35.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 7.—Definition of "simultaneous application" for surveyed land.

Mr. J. McKENZIE moved the insertion of the words "and unsurveyed."

The Committee divided.

## AYES, 10.

Buxton	Mackenzie, T.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duncan	Reeves, W. P.	Hutchison
Grey	Smith	McKenzie, J.
Kelly	Thompson, T.	

## NOES, 37.

Anderson	Fitzherbert	Levestam
Barron	Fulton	Marchant
Blake	Graham	McGregor
Bruce	Grimmond	Moat
Buchanan	Hislop	Monk
Cadman	Hobbs	Parata
Cowan	Hodgkinson	Peacock
Dodson	Izard	Pearson
Feldwick	Jones	Richardson, G.
Fisher	Lawry	Ross

Seymour	Ward	<i>Tellers.</i>
Tanner	Wilson.	Allen
Valentine		Thompson, R.

Majority against, 27.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 10.—Limitation of cash purchases. No person to select more than 640 acres of first-class land and 2,000 acres of second-class land in any land district.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE moved, That the words "six hundred and forty" be struck out, with a view of inserting "five hundred" in lieu thereof.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

AYES, 27.

Anderson	Hobbs	Ross
Barron	Jackson	Seymour
Beetham	Lawry	Tanner
Blake	Levestam	Thompson, R.
Buchanan	McGregor	Valentine
Dodson	Moat	Wilson.
Fisher	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fulton	Pearson	Buxton
Graham	Richardson, G.	Cowan.
Hislop		

NOES, 21.

Allen	Hutchison	Parata
Bruce	Izard	Reeves, W. P.
Cadman	Jones	Smith
Duncan	Kelly	Ward.
Feldwick	Marchant	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	McKenzie, J.	Fitzherbert
Grimmond	Monk	Mackenzie, T.
Hodgkinson		

Majority for, 6.

Words retained.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 36.

Allen	Graham	Moat
Anderson	Grimmond	Parata
Barron	Hislop	Peacock
Blake	Hobbs	Pearson
Bruce	Hodgkinson	Richardson, G.
Buchanan	Izard	Ross
Cadman	Jones	Seymour
Cowan	Kelly	Tanner
Dodson	Lawry	Wilson.
Feldwick	Levestam	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fisher	Mackenzie, T.	Valentine
Fitzherbert	McGregor	Ward.
Fulton		

NOES, 5.

Buxton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison	Duncan
Reeves, W. P.	McKenzie, J.

Majority for, 31.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 27.—Waste Lands Boards abolished.

Mr. WARD moved, That the clause be postponed.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 17.

Beetham	Bruce	Cadman
Blake	Buchanan	Duncan

Feldwick
Fitzherbert
Jones
Kelly

Mackenzie, T.	Richardson, G.
McKenzie, J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Moat	Smith
Reeves, W. P.	Ward.

NOES, 20.

Allen	Grimmond	Seymour
Anderson	Hislop	Tanner
Dodson	Jackson	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Lawry	Wilson.
Fraser	Marchant	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fulton	McGregor	Hobbs
Graham	Monk	Valentine.

Majority against, 3.

Motion negatived.

Mr. W. P. REEVES moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 20.

Beetham	Fraser	McKenzie, J.
Blake	Fulton	Moat
Buchanan	Graham	Smith
Cadman	Jones	Ward.
Duncan	Lawry	<i>Tellers.</i>
Feldwick	Mackenzie, T.	Kelly
Fitzherbert	Marchant	Reeves, W. P.

NOES, 15.

Allen	Jackson	Valentine
Anderson	Monk	Wilson.
Fisher	Richardson, G.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Seymour	McGregor
Hislop	Tanner	Thompson, R.
Hobbs		

Majority for, 5.

Progress reported.

On the motion, That the House do now adjourn,

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said,—I wish to take this opportunity of stating my opinion of the action of the Government during the night that has just passed,—for now we have it broad daylight. This Bill, which we have been discussing all night, was reported from the Waste Lands Committee at three o'clock on Thursday afternoon. The House, at its rising on Thursday, adjourned till eleven o'clock on Friday morning, this Bill was put into Committee at half-past two o'clock, and here we have been ever since discussing it. That is the way that the Bill has been forced through, although it has only been distributed after being reprinted an hour or two before we went into Committee on it.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman must not refer to past debates on the motion for adjourning the House.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I want to refer to matters which took place in Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman will not be in order in doing that at the present time, but will be when the Land Bill is further considered.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Well, I will confine myself to the question of the adjournment of the House, and I mean to take action which will show the people of the colony how many of the members whom they send here stick to

their duty in the House. We have been discussing a question of the most vital importance to the colony, and it is only right that the people of the colony should know who are here on this occasion. Therefore I shall call for a division, so that it may be shown who are here.

Mr. MONK.—I wish to call the attention of the House and the country to the fact that some honourable gentlemen have been strenuously exerting themselves during the night upon matters in which they are personally interested—striving to preserve institutions from which they derive large fees, and for which the country is of opinion that it has received no adequate compensation.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—And I should like to remark that, had it not been for the opposition of honourable members who are members of Land Boards, the business of the Committee could have been got through long before this.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member is out of order, in discussing the question of the adjournment of the House, to allude to matters which have occurred in Committee on the Land Bill.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—I think I am in order in placing on record the reasons why we have been kept here.

Mr. SPEAKER.—No; you are referring to matters with which we have nothing to do now, when the business is the adjournment of the House. On Monday, when the Bill comes up again, will be the proper time for such observations as you are now making.

Mr. WARD.—I think it is much to be regretted that the honourable member for Waitemata should have made the general allusions of the kind he has thought proper to make, and which are calculated to do a great deal of harm. I think the honourable gentleman should have stated to whom he was referring. I have taken part in the debate in Committee, and I desire to say that I am not connected with a Waste Lands Board, and never have been.

Mr. MONK.—I did not allude to the honourable member for Awarua.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—I, like the honourable member for Awarua, regret the remark which was made by the honourable member for Waitemata; but I trust that the honourable member for Waihemo will push this matter to a division, so that we may express our opinion on the state of the House. There can be no doubt that this is by far the most important measure of this session, and that it is being considered in a House such as I now see before me shows that honourable members are not attending to their duty in the matter. No measure of policy which has been brought down this session—

Mr. SPEAKER.—I hope the honourable gentleman will not proceed in his references to the Bill. An order has been made as to when the Bill shall come on again for consideration, and I cannot permit the Bill to be discussed now.

Mr. HOBBS.—I wish to say that it is well

known that, although many members are away, they paired on the Bill, or on particular clauses of the Bill, and so have expressed their opinion. I do not see why there should be a complaint about the condition of the House. Honourable gentlemen have paired, and the pairs will be recorded in *Hansard*.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I hope we shall not continue this debate, and I can see no reason why reflections should be cast upon members who have been present here attending to their duties all night.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I should like to call your attention, Sir, to an expression used by the honourable member for Waitemata. I think it must have escaped your attention at the time, or you would have checked him.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I did not hear what the honourable gentleman said.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I am not going to repeat what he said, if he will re-state it himself. I would prefer that he should say again what he said previously, and then he could not accuse me of misquoting him.

Mr. MONK.—The impression which I wish to convey was just this: that the night has been very much occupied by honourable gentlemen debating this question while the country will regard them as being personally and pecuniarily interested in obstructing some of the provisions of this Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Honourable members have a right to discuss matters in which they may be pecuniarily interested; but they are expected to abstain from voting, or they may be subjected to having their votes disallowed, if challenged.

Mr. DUNCAN.—Well, I think the honourable member for Waitemata should have left that unsaid. He has not told us all he said previously, either. He stated before that honourable members had drawn a lot of money from the country that they had not given adequate services for.

Mr. MONK.—I admit all that. I wanted to confirm my previous remark; but I put it in another form.

Mr. DUNCAN.—As far as I am concerned, no one can accuse me of delaying the House. I do not believe that I have occupied the time five minutes all night. I would just refer to the remark made by the honourable member for the Bay of Islands. He says that honourable members are all paired; but I do not think he knows anything about it. I now ask him how many are paired, and he cannot tell me. That is just like many of the rambling statements of the honourable gentleman, for which he has no foundation in fact.

Mr. HOBBS.—If the honourable gentleman will ask the whips he will see.

Mr. VALENTINE.—I simply wish to say that I am not one of those individuals to whom the honourable member for Waitemata refers. I have sat here all night expressly for the purpose of saying a few words on this particular clause—

Mr. SPEAKER.—I hope honourable members will bear in mind the ruling I have given.

I cannot permit this matter of the proceedings in Committee on the Land Bill to be debated now on the motion for adjournment of the House.

Mr. JONES.—May I say that I think that no honourable member should make such serious reflections upon those who have taken a part in discussing this Bill? I have been taking my part in it, but certainly I do not belong to a Waste Lands Board, and I have no personal interest in the matter.

Mr. MARCHANT.—Sir, it is now five o'clock in the morning, and after sitting up all night and doing good work we should now be getting home. Perhaps in the earlier part of the evening there was some time wasted, but for several hours everything has gone very smoothly, and I hope we shall have no more of these personal reflections to disturb the good feeling that has been prevailing.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—After what the honourable member for Waitemata said, I must protest—

Mr. SPEAKER.—If I had heard the honourable member use unparliamentary language I should have called him to order, but, it having gone by, it cannot now be referred to.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Sir, I was only about to say one word, and—

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman has already spoken.

Mr. BLAKE.—Sir, I do not think we need discuss the Land Board question any more at this hour. I am not a member of a Land Board, and therefore anything that has been said does not apply to me, but I think it is high time we let the subject rest and got home to bed.

The House divided on the question, "That the House do now adjourn."

#### AYES, 14.

Blake	Hislop	Valentine
Cadman	Jackson	Ward.
Fraser	Jones	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Moat	Buchanan
Hamlin	Richardson, G.	Marchant.

#### NOES, 12.

Allen	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson, R.
Anderson	McGregor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duncan	Monk	Feldwick
Fitzherbert	Reeves, W. P.	McKenzie, J.
Hobbs		

Majority for, 2.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at five minutes past five o'clock a.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Saturday, 10th December, 1887.

Second Readings—Third Readings—Waimea Riverworks Bill—Waitotara Election—Australian Centenary—Christchurch District Drainage Bill (No. 2)—Order of Business—Otago Central Railway Extension and Construction Bill—Fair Rent

Mr. Speaker

Bill—Kaimo and Kawakawa Railways Connection and Construction Bill—Count-out.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at ten o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### SECOND READINGS.

Invercargill Waterworks Reserve Bill, Christchurch District Drainage Bill (No. 2), Nelson Foreshore Reserve Bill, Opunake Harbour Board Bill, Wairoa Harbour Endowment and Borrowing Bill, Waimea Riverworks Bill.

### THIRD READINGS.

Wairarapa North County Council Empowering Bill, Otago Harbour Board Bill, Pukekohe Borough Bill, Gisborne Harbour Board Bill, Invercargill Waterworks Reserve Bill.

### WAIMEA RIVERWORKS BILL.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Major ATKINSON moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

#### AYES, 27.

Allen	Lawry	S.-Menteath
Anderson	Mackenzie, M.	Taiwhanga
Atkinson	McGregor	Tanner
Beetham	Moat	Thompson, R.
Bruce	Monk	Thompson, T.
Cowan	Newman	Valentine.
Fergus	Ormond	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	Peacock	Barron
Hislop	Rhodes	Fulton.
Hobbs		

#### NOES, 23.

Blake	Joyce	Reeves, R. H. J.
Cadman	Kerr	Samuel
Feldwick	Lance	Steward, W. J.
Fish	Levestam	Stewart, W. D.
Grey	Marchant	Ward.
Grimmond	McKenzie, J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Mills	Fitchett
Hutchison	Moss	Seddon.

Majority for, 4.

Motion agreed to, and progress reported.

### WAITOTARA ELECTION.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have received a letter from the Chief Justice on the election petition just tried, which I will read to the House. It is as follows:—

"Judges' Chambers, Wellington,

"10th December, 1887.

"SIR,—I have the honour to forward to you the certificate of the Judges appointed to try a petition presented against the election of George Hutchison as a member of the House of Representatives for the Waitotara Electoral District.—I have, &c.,

"JAMES PRENDERGAST.

"Hon. Sir G. M. O'Rorke, Speaker of the House of Representatives."

The following is the certificate which accompanies the letter:—

"To the Hon. the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

"We, the undersigned, two of the Judges of

the Supreme Court appointed to try an election petition presented by John Bryce, David Peat, and Joe Reginald Somerville against George Hutchison, who had been elected to serve as a member of the House of Representatives for the Electoral District of Waitotara, having duly tried the said petition, do hereby certify our determination that the said George Hutchison was duly elected.

"And whereas in the said petition charges were made of divers corrupt and illegal practices alleged to have been committed at the election referred to in such petition, we do hereby report as follows, that is to say,—

"That no corrupt or illegal practice has been proved to have been committed by, or with the knowledge or consent of, the said George Hutchison :

"That the said George Hutchison has not been guilty, by his agents, of any corrupt or illegal practice in reference to such election :

"That there is no reason to believe that corrupt or illegal practices have extensively prevailed at the said election.

"In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands this tenth day of December, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven.

"JAMES PRENDERGAST.

"JOSHUA STRANGE WILLIAMS."

Major ATKINSON.—I have to move, That the certificate be entered in the Journals of the House.

Motion agreed to.

#### AUSTRALIAN CENTENARY.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have to inform the House that I have received, from the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, the following telegram :—

"The Speaker, House of Representatives,  
"Wellington.

"Have the goodness to inform honourable members of the House of Representatives of New Zealand that invitations for the State banquet to be given in this city on the 26th January next, in celebration of the first one hundred years of Australian settlement, will be sent to each of them.

"JAMES HENRY YOUNG,

"Speaker, Legislative Assembly.

"Sydney, 9th December, 1887."

Major ATKINSON.—With the permission of the House, I will move, in regard to the message just read, That Mr. Speaker be requested to convey to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales the thanks of the members of this House for his invitation to the State banquet at Sydney on the 26th January next, in celebration of the centenary of Australian settlement.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—While on that subject, as this is an event which, of course, only occurs once in one hundred years, I wish to ask if the Government will place the services of the steamer "Hinemoa" at the disposal of honourable members.

Major ATKINSON.—There are very excellent boats provided by the Union Company that go

over regularly—in fact, they are the finest in the colony; and I have no doubt that those honourable gentlemen who desire to be present—and I hope there will be many of them—will be only too delighted to go at their own cost.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I hope there will be no vote passed in the direction of assisting members to go over. They ought to be prepared to pay their way over, seeing the present state of the colony.

Motion agreed to.

#### CHRISTCHURCH DISTRICT DRAINAGE BILL (No. 2).

On the motion for the third reading of this Bill,

Mr. TAYLOR said he had had no opportunity of speaking on this Bill before, in consequence of the action of the Government; and he trusted that when the Bill reached another place that branch of the Legislature would do their duty to the country and throw it out. This was a Bill to legalise an illegal borrowing of money on the part of the Christchurch Drainage Board. He was exceedingly sorry that the Bill had been dealt with this session, because it was a very great injury to the ratepayers throughout the colony, not only on account of the vicious example which had been set by allowing the Board to get into debt and then, together with the banks, which lent the money knowing they had no authority in law to do so, to come to the House and get whitewashed; but it meant also taxing the ratepayers of the colony without their sanction. He hoped honourable gentlemen would understand that. If honourable members would look at the Act of 1875 they would find that all the necessary powers required by the Board were given there.

Mr. FISH quite agreed with every word which had fallen from the honourable member for Sydenham. He thought the Bill proposed to do a thing which was most improper and unheard-of. So far as he understood, it sought to give power to a bank to do a thing which he had never seen done by a bank or institution before. The Bill appeared to be an undesirable one, and therefore he would move, That it be read a third time that day three months. This showed the impolicy of allowing Bills to be rushed through in the hurried manner in which this one had been. If he had known the position he should have opposed the Bill in Committee. A few days ago honourable members were under the impression that these Bills had not the slightest chance of coming on again this session, and therefore they did not avail themselves of the opportunity of looking into the Bill as they would otherwise have done. This Bill proposed to give some extraordinary powers to a banking institution—powers which, in his opinion, should not be granted.

Dr. FITCHETT would second the amendment. He had no idea, when the Bill was in Committee, that it was for so extraordinary a purpose as had been stated—namely, to legalise retrospectively what originally was illegal. The Bill as originally drawn was explicitly in favour of the bank, and subsequently

there had been added the words "no other creditor." These words were superfluous, for the "creditor" must be a legal creditor; and he would have the power to appoint a "receiver" conferred by the original Act; so that this was a Bill to benefit the bank alone. It gave a sort of precedent to any banker or money-lender of influence to override the provisions of the Act—to lend moneys, and so enable a Board or other body to incur liabilities, with a sort of assurance that it could come here and legalise the thing by an Act such as this. He had supported the Bill before in utter ignorance of the real position.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said, as he happened to have special knowledge of this matter, being Chairman of the Local Bills Committee which considered this measure, he thought it only fair to the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill to state what he knew of it. Before this Bill was introduced there had been no power possessed by a creditor of the Drainage Board of appointing a receiver at all—a power which was common to municipal bodies and Road Boards. Therefore this Drainage Board could not get credit, so to speak, to the same amount as ordinary municipal bodies and Road Boards. The Drainage Board, at the instigation, probably, of some of the creditors, possibly the bank, found it necessary to apply for the ordinary powers possessed by other bodies. The Bill was introduced for that purpose; but it seemed to him to limit the right too much in favour of the bank, so the Bill was altered in order to give all creditors the same power. He understood that the bank was likely to be the only creditor, because all the other debts were floating debts, and were likely to be paid off at once. It was obvious that the bank, if it found this security taken away from it, would not advance the money which the Drainage Board required. Unless the power proposed to be given in the Bill was granted the bank would take up this position: "We are under no obligation to make advances, and we shall not make advances if we are hampered in the matter of getting security." The bank was the only creditor, so far as he could see, which would ask for the appointment of a receiver. Subsection (8) of section 2 stated, "All moneys received by the receiver shall be applied as follows;" and then part (c) of the clause said, "In payment of all debts due and payable by the Board at the date of the appointment of the receiver;" and the receiver, under section 6, was not discharged from his responsibility until he had satisfied all the debts owing by the Drainage Board. He really thought a very great injustice would be done if this Bill were not allowed to pass. He understood that the Drainage Board itself wanted an alteration of section 3, and for this reason: that they might be able to go to the bank and say, "We want an overdraft of £7,000;" and they would thus get it on better terms than they otherwise would. The honourable member for Dunedin South was probably not aware that formerly the Board had authority to obtain advances to the extent of its

*Dr. Fitchett*

current revenue—which was £20,000—and here it was limited to the amount of £7,000.

Dr. FITCHETT said it was to be regretted that the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill did not correct the statement made by the honourable member for Sydenham. His (Dr. Fitchett's) sole reason for seconding the amendment was that he understood the Bill was a Bill to legalise expenditure that was illegal. As this was not so, he would support the third reading.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be read a third time."

AYES, 30.

Allen	Hislop	Steward, W. J.
Anderson	Hobbs	Taiwhanga
Atkinson	Lance	Tanner
Barron	Lawry	Thompson, R.
Beetham	Mackenzie, M.	Valentine
Bruce	Mackenzie, T.	Vogel
Cowan	McGregor	Whyte.
Fergus	Mills	
Fitchett	Moat	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Peacock	Rhodes
Hamlin	Ross	Stewart, W. D.

NOES, 8.

Fulton	Ormond	<i>Tellers.</i>
Marchant	Richardson, G.	Fish
Newman	Ward.	Taylor.

Majority for, 22.

Bill read a third time.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Major ATKINSON.—I beg to move the motion standing in my name, and, if the House see fit to carry the motion, I will afterwards propose that the Kamo and Kawakawa Railways Connection and Construction Bill be postponed till after the consideration of the Otago Central Railway Extension and Construction Bill.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the orders of the day preceding the Kamo and Kawakawa Railways Connection and Construction Bill and the Otago Central Railway Extension and Construction Bill be postponed, in order to proceed to the consideration of those Bills."—(*Hon. Major Atkinson.*)

Mr. HOBBS.—I simply wish to say that I not only have no objection whatever to the course proposed, but, on the contrary, should be very glad to give way to the honourable gentleman in charge of the Otago Central Railway Extension and Construction Bill, so that that measure might be proceeded with first, the promoter being anxious to get the Bill through. I have therefore great pleasure in waiving my right.

Sir G. GREY.—I now beg to move the amendment to the motion of the Premier standing in my name, as follows: That Nos. 37, 39, 40, 46, on the Order Paper of the 9th December be taken into consideration at eleven o'clock this day, in the order in which they stand on the Order Paper of Friday, the 9th December. Taking to-day's Order Paper, I move the numbers 10 and 12 on the Order



Paper, the first being a Bill to provide for the acquisition of freehold tenure, and the second a Bill to provide for fixing fair rents to be paid by occupiers of public lands. I may say I have had no opportunity of bringing forward a single measure or motion this session, and I think that the House will admit that I have done nothing to forfeit a right of this kind. Great misfortunes have been entailed on those in whose favour I move the Bills, and which these measures will be the means of removing. I ask that the House should do justice to an old member. I do not think it fair that the Premier should have placed in his hands the power of inflicting a punishment of this kind upon me, and of giving a reward of the kind he is about to give to others. What I have done to deserve this punishment I cannot say; but I throw myself on the consideration of honourable members, and beg them not to treat this subject as a party question, as it is one justly for the consideration of the whole House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I understand the honourable gentleman only desires to move in reference to the two Bills he has named.

Sir G. GREY.—Yes. I purposely refrain from dealing with the others, so as to save the time of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—In that case it would be better to put the amendment in this way: That the words "Freehold Tenure Acquisition Bill" and "Fair Rent Bill" be inserted before the words "Kamo and Kawakawa Railways."

Major ATKINSON.—If the honourable gentleman wishes to do so, he could take his other Bills after these two. I should have no objection to that course. For my part, I have no objection, either; to Order No. 11—the Law Practitioners Bill—being added to the motion.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I shall have a great deal of objection.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order, order.

Sir G. GREY.—Do I understand this: that, supposing these two Bills are not disposed of to-day, the Premier will give me another day?

Major ATKINSON.—I could not make a promise of that sort, I am sorry to say.

Sir G. GREY.—Then it is impossible for me to accept this. I think the House would think that I should be degrading myself in doing so. I ask the House to do me justice. I ask no favour, and I pray the House not to be led to do an injustice to a fellow-member on an occasion like this.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The original question was, That the notice on the Order Paper be agreed to; since which it has been moved, as an amendment, That, before the words "Kamo and Kawakawa Railways Connection and Construction Bill," there be inserted the words "Freehold Tenure Acquisition Bill and Fair Rent Bill."

Mr. FISH.—I submit to the honourable member for Auckland Central that he might fairly accept the offer of the Premier in this matter. I understand the honourable member for the Bay of Islands merely wishes to get the second reading of his Bill and the Otago Central Railway Extension and Construction

Bill through; so that there is plenty of time to do that to-day.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I agree with the honourable member who last spoke. I hope the honourable member for Auckland Central will allow his Fair Rent Bills to come on after the other two. Although they are not local Bills, they are Bills which people are clamouring to have passed. I would also mention that in my case I am giving up something for the convenience of honourable members. I have a Divorce Extension Bill, a Bill of very great importance indeed, and looked forward to by thousands of people in the colony with considerable expectations; but I am willing to omit a purposeless discussion on that Bill in order to have these other important measures discussed and possibly passed.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I have been looking at the two Bills the honourable member for Auckland Central asks to have considered, and I have come to the conclusion, as regards both of them, that it is desirable they should be proceeded with; and, as regards one of them, it seems to me that the House is bound to proceed with it, unless it determines not to proceed with the West Coast Reserves Bill. The Fair Rent Bill is a Bill to enable relief to be given to those who are paying larger rents than they can afford to pay. I have over and over again asserted in this House that the time would come when application would be made to the Government for relief by a large number of tenants of the Crown and other persons under arrangements with the Government. That time has come more quickly than I anticipated. We now find that the perpetual-lease system is no more perpetual than other things which are supposed to be perpetual, and already proposals are made for exchanging perpetual leases for other tenures. The present position is this: that the Government now exercise all sorts of discretions, and are placed in a position to exercise privileges in a manner perfectly unconstitutional, and destructive of the good government of the country. It is quite true that the same state of things existed during my time, and it is equally true that I very much disapproved of it. At the present time there are thousands and thousands of pounds owing to the Government, and it entirely depends upon the action of the Government in instructing the local Boards whether the moneys are to be recovered or the persons are to remain owing the money. That is a vast discretion, and such a privilege is destructive of proper government. I do not say that this Government, any more than the late Government, will use the power in a corrupt manner; but I say that such a thing is exceedingly improper; and, as the honourable member at the head of the Government has come down with a measure for giving the people of his own district the means of reducing the demands upon them by the West Coast Reserves Bill, he has no right to deal in so partial a manner with persons under obligations to the Crown as not to allow the same thing all over the colony. Therefore I am decidedly of opinion that either we should

postpone—and I think it would be possible to postpone—giving relief to the West Coast reserves tenants, or else we should do the thing completely and apply it all over the country. I am not prepared to say that all the provisions of the honourable gentleman's Bill are judiciously framed, especially that one which selects the Judges of the Supreme Court to act in this Court, for I am afraid that the Judges have not time to devote to the duties. But that is a Committee matter. In my own opinion, if we have to spend the whole of this day up to a very late hour to find means by which persons under obligations to the Crown for their occupation of lands, whether as deferred-payment settlers, as Crown tenants, or as pastoral tenants, should be given relief, we should not grudge the sacrifice of this leisure-day. As regards the Freehold Tenure Bill, it does not appear to me to be so imperative as this other measure, especially as the Land Bill proceeds in some degree in that direction. The question now comes as to whether we should consider these Bills before the Bills for the Otago Central and Kawakawa railways. For my part, I believe those Bills are exceedingly admirable and important; and, as honourable members have agreed to sacrifice their liberty to-day to consider these measures, I think that we can consider the whole four Bills, and I should like to see them passed through. If honourable members hold to that view, I think it makes very little difference in what order they are taken. Supposing the honourable member for Auckland Central assents to his Bills being taken after the other two Bills, will the honourable member at the head of the Government undertake to keep the House?—because if he does not undertake to keep the House it is simply deceiving the honourable member for Auckland Central to propose to take his two Bills after the other two. If the Government undertake to keep a House—and I think that is a thing the Government might well undertake to do—it is of no consequence in which order the measures are taken.

Major ATKINSON.—The Government cannot pledge themselves to the honourable gentleman at all. The honourable gentleman seems to change from side to side in any way that suits him, and it is evident to the House what his object is. I cannot at all give in to him in this matter.

Mr. FULTON.—I quite approve of the principle of the Bill which the honourable member for Auckland Central has introduced, and I shall be happy to support it, if he will accept the proposal made by the Government; but, if he does not do that, and insists on taking his first, I am sorry to say I shall have to vote against him.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I think that one of the Bills that the honourable member for Auckland Central has on the Order Paper is of far more importance than the Otago Central, and that is the Fair Rent Bill. This morning I received a letter from a tenant who will be very much affected by the Bill, and he is a tenant on land where this Otago Central line would go; and to

him the question of fair rent is of far more importance than the making of the Otago Central Railway—as now proposed by the Bill of the honourable member for the Dunstan—from Taieri Lake to the interior. I do not see any reason whatever why the honourable member for Auckland Central should be treated in this manner—that his two Bills, which are before the others on the Order Paper, should be put below them. I object to this, and I shall vote with the honourable gentleman.

Mr. BARRON.—The matter could be very easily arranged. With the large number which the honourable member for Auckland Central claims to have in favour of these two Bills, he should not have any difficulty in keeping a House. The leader of the Opposition even could find him a House, if he has that influence with his party which a leader ought to have. Besides this, the honourable gentleman has a great number of friends on both sides of the House, and, if he will only accept the promise of the Premier, and let the business go on as arranged, and then try to keep a House together, his own Bills must receive consideration.

Mr. MOSS.—I intended to support the Otago Central, for one; but, if it can only be done in this way, I shall certainly oppose it. By the Government an attempt is being made to reward their supporters and punish their opponents, and it is not proper that any Government should have the power to act in this way. With one of the Bills of the honourable member for Auckland Central we must all heartily sympathize—the Fair Rent Bill. There are numbers of tenants in every part of the country, tenants of public bodies and tenants of the Public Trustee, who require this relief. We were told last session that there were two hundred tenants of the Public Trustee on the West Coast, and the most pathetic picture was drawn by the Premier himself of the condition of these tenants. We were told that they were induced, at the time of inflation, to lease Maori lands at high rates, which were now ruinous; that they were working their very hearts out to pay these high rents; and that, as there was no authority in the Public Trustee to effect a reasonable arrangement, either they must abandon everything they possessed and be utterly ruined, or relief must be given by this House. We were told that everything they had must go to the benefit of the Natives on whose behalf the Public Trustee had leased these lands, and that settlement must be ruined. Surely an important Bill like this is not going to be shelved.

Major ATKINSON.—Which Bill?

Mr. MOSS.—The Fair Rent Bill.

Major ATKINSON.—That does not touch it.

Mr. MOSS.—I understand that it does. However, it can be made to touch it. It establishes a Court, and that Court will have the authority to arrange between public bodies of all kinds; and the Public Trustee may be easily included. But whether it applies to that particular case or not is a secondary question. The Court would be created, and before

that Court cases of this kind can be brought, instead of being brought before Parliament to be settled on mere party-lines, as they otherwise might be. To propose that the other Bills should be taken first of course means that this Bill is to be shelved. It is impossible that it can be carried if it comes subsequently to the other Bills. The Otago Central Bill has many friends—the honourable gentleman in charge of it has lobbied magnificently. I myself intend to vote for it, but I think the honourable gentleman should allow the Bill of the honourable member for Auckland Central to be brought forward in a fair manner. The Bill cannot take up much time. Nobody wants to debate it very keenly. Why not let them all go in their proper order?—and the honourable member in charge of the Otago Central will find numerous friends rally round him to carry his Bill.

Major ATKINSON.—Some honourable members, I think, do not see the effect of the Bill that has elicited most expressions of support—the Fair Rent Bill. Practically, it will do very little, if anything at all; it cannot do much. A Bill of this vast importance ought to be dealt with after most careful consideration; and now the Government have more work than can be overtaken. I am surprised at the honourable member for Christchurch North, that he should deliberately propose now going on with such a measure as this, which is a measure that should not be brought on without the most careful consideration by the Government of the country. It certainly should not be rushed through at the end of a session. I say that the Bill as it stands is practically unworkable. I say there is not time to consider it. I am not prepared to submit what would be workable; I am not prepared to submit the principles upon which rents should be fairly fixed. None of these is provided here. These Courts would be absolutely unworkable. What would Resident Magistrates and Judges of the Supreme Court know about rent? Then, the tenants on the West Coast could not be relieved at all under this Bill, for they are practically the tenants of private persons, the Public Trustee merely acting for the Maori owners as an ordinary trustee, with certain legislative restrictions. He is in the position of trustee. Relief has been given to these people—not to a large extent, but still some relief—under the regulations which the late Government prepared. That relief will be extended, although it is not all that could be expected. But you cannot touch these people, because they are in the position of ordinary parties. The amendment to the West Coast Settlements Act we have before the House does not touch this question at all. Evidently the honourable gentleman has not read it. There is no clause in it relieving the tenants. It is merely a Bill for governing the lease; and it is a question of existence, and not rent. These persons are satisfied with their position. We passed a Bill last session of a nearly similar character to this with regard to these same persons, upon whose case

the honourable member for Parnell is so very eloquent. I say the Bill of the honourable member for Auckland Central, comparatively speaking, assists no one. In the Land Bill it is proposed to assist the tenants of the Crown, because authority is given to the Crown not to press where the rent is too high. Therefore in this respect it does all that this Bill could do. If the House insists upon this Bill passing before the Government has had time to carefully consider it, it will be doing a work against which I must protest as the greatest mistake that could be committed. In the meantime, the non-passage of the Bill will not affect a single tenant throughout the country; and we have to look at the larger question if we touch the West Coast leases. As I have already said, it is proposed next session to hand the land there back to the Maori owners, and to allow them to deal with it as private persons would, so that we shall not be able to interfere with them. In the meantime, all this cry of relieving persons from oppression and misery is raised under misapprehensions of the nature of the Bill. And I say the House is not justified in passing this Bill unless the Government itself says that it ought to be passed. I think the honourable gentleman should be content with my proposals. I shall be quite willing to allow the Bill to be read a second time, so as to affirm the principle; and I have gone even further than this, for I was asked the other day whether, if a Bill were introduced in another place and put into a proper shape, I would oppose it. I said, Certainly not; but, on the contrary, if it were put in a practical shape I would do all in my power to help it through. When a statement of this kind is made by the Government I do not think that the House should go on with this Bill, under the impression that it is going to do great good.

Sir G. GREY.—I wish to make an explanation as to something the Premier said. He says he has always been in favour of the Bill, but I say that I brought it forward years ago, and he opposed it most bitterly, and had it thrown out.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The Premier says that he is surprised at my action. In reply to this, I have to say to him that, when he offered to take the two Bills of the honourable member for Auckland Central after the two Bills which it has been proposed to go on with, it seemed to me that he was inviting the House to consider these Bills, and my remarks were made on this basis, and the honourable member has no reason to be surprised. It is for me to be surprised.

Colonel FRASER.—The friends of the Otago Central Railway Bill are taking an entirely wrong course in not allowing the Bill of the honourable member for Auckland Central to be proceeded with in proper order. It seems to be a matter of injustice, on the face of it, that two Bills promoted by the supporters of the Government should be taken out of the proper order, and that other Bills should not be allowed to come on. I came here ready to support the Otago Central Railway Bill; but, if these

honourable members persist in their conduct towards the honourable member for Auckland Central, I shall feel it my duty to do all I can to prevent that Bill passing, until justice has been done.

Mr. TAYLOR.—In order that the honourable member for Auckland Central may have the opportunity of speaking, I beg to move, That the House do now adjourn.

Sir G. GREY.—I desire to say, in order to give as little trouble as possible, that, if one of my Bills is allowed to be gone on with, I will drop the other until after the Bills which it was arranged to take to-day have been disposed of. I shall be contented if the Fair Rent Bill is brought on now. I desire to say, with regard to the statement of the Premier just now that he had always supported these fair-rent proposals, that I brought it forward several years ago, and upon that occasion I was accused of being a man who would not only do what was quite unfair, but encouraged my fellow-colonists to violate their engagements; and the Premier then said that the language used was justified by my proceedings; and the consequence was that the measure was thrown out. This occurred about eight years ago, I think; and, if this measure had then been adopted; an enormous amount of misery, which I foretold was about to fall on the country, would have been avoided. I have never since had a chance to bring this forward, but now I have the means of doing a vast amount of good, and I believe it is jealousy and nothing more which has prevented my seizing a just opportunity of conferring a great benefit on New Zealand. I have made this offer; and I further say, with regard to the measure for the Otago Central Railway, that I will offer no factious opposition to it: I will simply express my opinion strongly against it. But I declare that, if this injustice is done to me, I shall do my utmost to prevent that bad Bill being carried through the House at all. It is a bad measure, in my belief, and I have a right to prevent a bad measure from passing by every means in my power; and I shall certainly exert myself to carry out my impression with regard to that Bill. I still cannot think that the House will do me the injustice which is proposed to it. Why, the very colleagues of the Premier are opposed to what he has been stating to the House. He knows this perfectly well. I believe the Minister of Lands, who is the most interested in the question, thinks that it is a wrong proceeding. Did the Premier tell the House that? I think he must have led honourable members to think that there was a consensus of opinion on the part of the Ministry with himself. I do trust that this new House will not set the example of what I may call boycotting a fellow-member; because it becomes nothing less. It was with great regret I heard the honourable member for the Taieri say what he said; for he must have known that I was making a large concession on the subject. I myself have not assisted to rob any individual of his rights or do a wrong to any member of this House. I desire that all

should have their free and just privileges, and I simply stand up and pray that the same justice may be granted to me, particularly when it is remembered that the question is such a momentous one as it is, and on which the Ministry are divided. I hope the House will feel some pity for me, and determine, notwithstanding any efforts of party, that justice shall be done to myself. Sir, I offer to give up two of these measures in which I am specially interested. I have already given up one of them, because, beneficial as it is, I thought it would cause embarrassment and prolong discussion, and create opposition on the part of some honourable members. Then, I offer to give up another, because its object is partially, although insufficiently, provided for in another Bill—very insufficiently provided for; but, still, in my desire to gain something for the country, I will give it up. This is the same persecution at the hands of the Premier which he has shown throughout this question, and which has followed me for long years. His object is to prevent my doing anything. By the rules of this House, by the Standing Orders, with which I am not well acquainted and am not able to deal with them equally, or use the advantages with regard to them which he can avail himself of, he has for years pursued this course, and is pursuing it now. I hope honourable members will not lend themselves to so great a wrong as is now proposed. I have done my best to give expression not only to my own views, but to those of many others who know what will be my vote. I shall try and bear this as best I can; but, still, I trust and hope. I am under the firm belief that the House will grant me that justice which I have done nothing to forfeit. I contend that what I have offered to do to-day is more than should be expected of me, and the Premier should not have entered on the course he has done.

Mr. PYKE.—The honourable member for Auckland Central talks of "boycotting." Sir, I say there has been nothing but "boycotting" going on all the morning with reference to the Bill with which I am charged. The honourable gentleman asks us for justice to himself; but will he not do justice to others? He says he is willing to let the Otago Central Bill come on when his own has been passed through. Why should it not? If he asks why my Bill should come on and be considered before his, I will answer the question at once. Because his Bill was later in its introduction to the House. The Otago Central Railway Bill was introduced on the 14th October, and the Fair Rent Bill was introduced on the 2nd November; therefore, notwithstanding its position on the Order Paper, my Bill has preceded the Fair Rent Bill. And I have this to say, also: that my Bill has been read a second time. The principle of it has been conceded. When the honourable member for Auckland Central talks about it being a bad Bill, does he know what he is talking about? No, Sir; he is utterly ignorant of the circumstances, or he would not say that. There are hundreds of settlers whose ruin will be

Colonel Fraser

effected if this Bill is not passed; they will be driven from their homes, and they will have to join the ranks of the unemployed, and give over their holdings to the moneyed people and capitalists. The honourable member for Auckland Central does not know what he is doing. As to the people who will be affected by this Bill, there are hundreds whose desires are centred entirely on the passing of the Bill, and if it is not carried I declare, before the House and before God, that these people will be ruined—a dastardly thing! The honourable member for Auckland Central calls himself the friend of the unborn millions, and may call himself that. Let him try and do good. I cordially agree with the principle of the Fair Rent Bill, and would do my best to assist him; but I will not consent to a Bill being delayed which has been before the House for the last twelve years, and a Bill of such vast importance as that I am in charge of. I say, again, that if this Bill is not passed the centre of Otago will become a wilderness, and the people will be driven from it.

Mr. SAMUEL.—The honourable member for the Dunstan and the honourable member for Auckland Central are equally emotional, and each ought to be equally moved by the arguments of the other. One or the other ought to give way. If neither will give way, I hope the House will agree to the motion of the honourable member for Sydenham, and adjourn. There is nothing else for it. The House cannot be kept here while two sides are determined each to prevent the other from getting their Bills on.

Sir J. VOGEL.—It is a very difficult position to be placed in between the supporters of two Bills who are so opposed each to the other Bill. Now, in my opinion, in the present state of the colony, it is of great importance to pass the Otago Central Railway Bill. I will do all I can to help its being passed. With regard to the Fair Rent Bill, the arguments of the Premier have not convinced me. Since he spoke I have recollected why he is not bringing down relief in his Bill to the tenants of the West Coast reserves. The question was, whether some half-dozen or more gentlemen should be ruined or not; and I therefore did by Order in Council what was proposed to be done by the Bill last year, which passed its third reading, and then, I think, was thrown out in the Upper House. By Order in Council power is given to the Public Trustee to give relief to the tenants of the West Coast reserves. That is why the Premier does not want to bring down the provisions in this Bill, and therefore, honourable members will see, my arguments are intensified. It is not the question whether this House will give relief; but this power has been given to the Public Trustee—the power to give relief; and, if the West Coast tenants are to have such relief, why should it be withheld from other parts of the country? Although I did not know the gentlemen concerned in the matter, yet I felt that it was exceedingly inconvenient and undesirable that I should have to do with a number

of gentlemen who either had to be ruined or I should hold the hands of the Public Trustee against them. The result is that indemnification will, sooner or later, have to be given to the Public Trustee for what has been done. The question was, whether they should be ruined, or the provisions altered on which they had taken their leases. My colleague the Hon. the Minister of Lands had a great number of cases to deal with of this kind; and it is very undesirable, in my opinion, that any Minister should have to consider individual cases. This would, I believe, be a good Bill to put on the Statute Book, and it could be amended next session if necessary. It is a Bill which will carry through the country so much happiness and relief that it is not to be spoken of lightly. And, even if it is to be amended next session, it should be put in force in the meanwhile, so as to give relief to a very great number of persons. I think this Government are just the same as ours, and do not want such patronage as they now have to exercise in individual cases. It is a question whether the Government should exercise their judgment with regard to individuals, or allow those individuals to be ruined. I do hope that the honourable member for the Dunstan and the honourable member for Auckland Central will make some arrangement by which this Fair Rent Bill shall be considered during the afternoon. Would it be possible that their order of priority should be decided by ballot? However, let some understanding be come to by which both Bills can be dealt with.

Mr. SEDDON.—There can be doubt whatever that the honourable member for the Dunstan has a very large influence in this House. First of all, we have the Government consenting to his Bill. Then the leader of the Opposition, Sir Julius Vogel, consents to it, and pleads strongly in its favour. Now, I like consistency. Where was the leader of the Opposition when he was a member of the Stout-Vogel Government? Why did he not then introduce a Bill? Why is it? Sir Robert Stout still says that this is not a desirable measure. I like honourable members to be consistent. If this measure is to have the effect it is said it will have, it should have been passed last session or the session before. I want to know what assurance there is that any company will take up the construction of this railway if we pass this Bill. Has there been any assurance by the movers in this matter that there is some one behind who is willing to take up the same position as the Midland Railway Company, and do the work? The House should have some assurance on that point; otherwise we are passing legislation and trusting to some one to take it up. Are we to pass this Bill hastily? And is the time of two or three sessions to be taken up in rectifying mistakes that have been made, the same as in the case of the Midland Railway? That is the point that must be taken into consideration. Is there any objection to taking the Fair Rent Bill of the honourable member for Auckland Central and the Otago Central Bill as well? If there is any objection to that

course, if I were not incurring the ire of the honourable member for the Bay of Islands, I would suggest that these honourable members who have each a little Bill, and who each wish their little Bills to have precedence, should toss up coins as to whether they should take the Fair Rent Bill, the Kawakawa Railway Bill, or the Otago Central Bill. My honourable friend the member for the Bay of Islands has no objection to toss. If so, I hope he will be brought under the lashes of his own Act—the Gaming and Lotteries Act.

Mr. HOBBS.—I did not say so.

Mr. SEDDON.—Well, if the honourable gentleman declines to toss, let him have a “shake in the hat” or draw cuts.

Motion for adjournment of the House negatived.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Am I to understand that the honourable member for Auckland Central wishes to withdraw his motion regarding the Freehold Tenure Acquisition Bill?

Sir G. GREY.—My proposal is to withdraw two Bills, and then ask that my Fair Rent Bill should be allowed to go on in its turn. Why the Bill of the honourable member for the Bay of Islands should be put before mine I cannot conceive. There could be no excuse for that. I ask that my Bill—my Fair Rent Bill—shall come before the Otago Central Railway Bill. In that case I will do my best to get the business on. I wish to be allowed to bring the Fair Rent Bill on first.

The House divided on the question, “That the words ‘Fair Rent Bill’ be inserted before the words ‘Kamo and Kawakawa Railways Connection and Construction Bill and the Otago Central Railway Extension and Construction Bill.’”

#### AYES, 21.

Blake	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Cadman	Moat	Turnbull
Duncan	Monk	Vogel
Feldwick	Newman	Whyte.
Grey	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Reeves, W. P.	Seddon
Hodgkinson	Steward, W. J.	Thompson, T.
Hutchison		

#### NOES, 35.

Allen	Hamlin	Parata
Anderson	Hislop	Pearson
Atkinson	Hobbs	Pyke
Barron	Izard	Rhodes
Beetham	Jackson	Ross
Bruce	Joyce	Samuel
Buxton	Lance	Taiwhanga
Carroll	Levestam	Tanner
Cowan	Mackenzie, M.	Valentine.
Fergus	Mills	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fisher	O'Connor	Fish
Fulton	Ormond	McGregor.

#### PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Guinness	Buchanan
Marchant	Graham
Richardson, G. F.	Stewart, W. D.

Majority against, 15.

Amendment lost.

*Mr. Seddon*

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, I was a teller for the “Ayes.” I found in the lobby the honourable member for Parnell, and his name is not on the division-list. He did not come past the tellers, but he was in the lobby.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Will the Serjeant-at-Arms ask the honourable member for Parnell to come in and give an account of why he did not come through the lobby past the tellers?

Mr. MOSS entered the chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Was the honourable member for Parnell in the House when the question was put?

Mr. MOSS.—I was in the lobby when the division was taken, but I was not in the House when the question was put.

Mr. SPEAKER.—In that case the honourable gentleman will not be allowed to vote.

Mr. MOSS.—I was very anxious to vote on the question, and I managed to get in the lobby, but it was after the question was put. When I came to reflect that I was not in the House when the division was called for, I determined that I had no right to vote; therefore I did not vote.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member cannot vote if he was not in the House when the question was put. I have no doubt the honourable member himself will see that he has committed an impropriety in getting into the division-lobby when he was not in the House when the doors were locked; but, as the honourable gentleman made no attempt to vote, I presume that, under the circumstances, the House will pass over the offence.

*Resolved*, “That the orders of the day preceding the Kamo and Kawakawa Railways Connection and Construction Bill and the Otago Central Railway Extension and Construction Bill be postponed, in order that the House may proceed with the consideration of those Bills; and that the Fair Rent Bill be also considered after the Otago Central Railway Extension and Construction Bill.”

#### OTAGO CENTRAL RAILWAY EXTENSION AND CONSTRUCTION BILL.

Mr. PYKE.—I beg to move, Sir, That you do now leave the chair, in order that the House may go into Committee on the Otago Central Railway Extension and Construction Bill.

Sir G. GREY.—I am afraid that that will give rise to some short discussion. I wanted to say a few words, but do not wish to detain the House. But, this being a case of taking land for the purpose of constructing a railway, I simply wish to say that, if I had the power to prevent that being done, I should certainly do so. I desire to put on record my protest against the passage of this Bill.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I wish to say that I intend to move, as an amendment, That the Bill be committed this day six months; and I intend to give my reasons for so moving.

The House adjourned from one o'clock to half-past two o'clock.

#### HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past two o'clock.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Sir, I feel it my duty on the present occasion to move the amendment that I gave notice of before the House adjourned: That this Bill be committed this day six months. I entirely disapprove of this measure. I think that the honourable member for the Dunstan, who has introduced this Bill, seems to be under the impression that I am opposed to the construction of this railway. I am nothing of the sort. I am not opposed to it up to a certain point; and in my district during the election I advocated its construction—that is, from Middlemarch to the Taieri Lake or the Maniototo Plains; but I have no hesitation in saying that the railway should not go beyond that for many years to come. I am quite prepared to support the construction of the railway up to the point named; but to take it further would, in the present condition of the colony, be, in my opinion, madness. I know something about the country where this railway is to be made, and my opinion is that the railway should never have been constructed by the route it has been—that is, by the Taieri River. It should have gone through the Shag Valley to the Maniototo Plains; and the money that has been spent on it up to the present time to make the railway through the Gorge to Middlemarch would have made the line as far as the Taieri Lake. I should have no hesitation in saying, further, that, in the interests of settlers, it is necessary that the railway should be made up to that point. But the honourable member commences at the Taieri Lake, thus leaving a gap of twenty-five miles. In the first place, we are told by the Premier that the Government can only make it as far as Middlemarch, and the distance between Middlemarch and the Taieri Lake is twenty-five miles; and I suppose the honourable member for the Dunstan means to leave the Government to construct that portion themselves, because the Bill proposes to commence at the Taieri Lake and go on to Lake Wanaka, leaving a gap of twenty-five miles. That will take a considerable sum of money to make, and it will be found that the colony will have to make a line over that gap of twenty-five miles in order to connect the railway between Middlemarch and Taieri Lake; and I am sure that everybody who knows anything at all about the country will know that the railway will be of no use till this connection is made. Now, what I object to in this Bill is, first, that there is no provision made for the connection, as I have stated. Next, I object to the land-concessions to be granted under this Bill, and I ask the House to consider the responsibility that is thrown on their shoulders at the present time in supporting a Bill which is to give away so much of the Crown lands of the colony. If this concession is made the railway company would naturally take the valleys and leave the hill-tops, and those who are pastoral tenants at the present time would very likely, at the end of their leases, have to deal with one proprietor for the low-lying land and another

for the high-country land. I think that the Bill ought to have gone before the Waste Lands Committee, and that evidence should have been taken on this particular subject: how far it would affect the Crown lands in Otago, and also how far we should go in the direction of giving away a very large portion of our estate. It is not my intention to detain the House long, but I wish simply to point out that my main objection to the Bill refers to the concessions of land to be given. And, Sir, I think that every member of the House should consider that too. In the case of the Manawatu Railway the company was granted large concessions of land to construct the railway. We absolutely gave to the Manawatu Company sufficient lands and concessions to make a railway to benefit their own lands; and that is exactly what we are asked to do on the present occasion. I will just give to the House an idea of what has been done in connection with the Manawatu Railway Company. According to a return I have got, there were 210,502 acres given to the company, and that was valued at £96,571 in the contract. Let us see what the company valued that land at when they wanted to raise money in London. They stated to the persons from whom they wished to borrow money that the value of the land was £458,151. Then there was a printed circular issued to persons whom they wished to invest in their bonds in London, and in it they state that they have got land reclaimed on the beach in Wellington valued at £90,000, and other concessions, amounting to £48,000 in the way of partly-constructed railways and material, and bridges £6,000, making a total of £597,151, which they have got for the construction of the Manawatu Railway, according to their own showing. And they say there are 65,000 acres which they yet claim. In the contract that land is valued at £29,000; but in London the value is put down at £130,000. These land-concessions grew in value £100,000 between the time of leaving New Zealand and the time that they reached London. I find that the subscribed capital of the company was only half a million of money; and they have actually got, according to their own showing in their printed circular—issued by themselves to the people of England when they wanted to borrow money—concessions from the colony worth £597,151. That is a sum of money sufficient to make the railway and to leave a balance of over £97,000. Now, knowing and seeing, as we must do, that this has been done in the past, what may we not expect in the future! If we go on with this sort of thing, it simply means that we are going to ruin the colony; and I protest most strongly against land being given for the making of railways. It would be far better that the colony should borrow the money at any price, and make the railway itself, instead of giving away large tracts of land to companies in this manner. As I said before, I am not opposed to the construction of the Otago Central Railway up to the Taieri Lake, and I am quite prepared to support a vote for that at any time the Govern-

ment brings it down; but I am opposed to making a line by land-concessions. Another objection is this: The honourable gentleman has not made provision for bridging this gap of twenty-five miles. I say, if the Bill is worth anything, seeing that the support of the Government has been given to the honourable member for the Dunstan in the matter, the Government ought to take upon themselves the responsibility for the Bill. I say, Sir, it is trifling with the House when the Government allow a private member to come before the House and bring a Bill before it giving away such a large area of Crown lands. What does it mean? It means that, at some future day, when the evils arising out of this Bill are pointed out in this House, the Premier will get up and say, "I did not do it; the House did it." He wants to shirk the responsibility for this measure. I say, if the Government believe in it—and that they do believe in it is shown by the assistance they have given to the honourable member for the Dunstan—they should take the responsibility for it upon themselves and make it a Government measure. I am not going to detain the House any longer; but I intend to press my motion, That the House commit the Bill this day six months, for the reasons I have just stated, and to lodge my protest against the measure.

Mr. PYKE.—I quite concede the right of the honourable member for Waihemo to oppose this Bill; but he has uttered two or three fallacies, which I will briefly refer to. In the first place, he spoke about the gap between the Taieri Lake and Middlemarch. Well, it may be within his recollection that the late Ministry insisted upon their right to make the railway up to the Taieri Lake, and therefore it is not for me to take upon myself the responsibility of proposing that it should be made by the company any farther. I am quite willing to take it to Middlemarch; but I desired to avoid anything that was likely to create opposition. I would remind the honourable member that when the matter was first dealt with in this House a Select Committee was appointed and sat to determine between seven different routes to the interior, and the Strath-Taieri route was unanimously selected. Amongst the witnesses examined before the Committee was Sir Dillon Bell, whose property is in Shag Valley, and he strongly recommended the Strath-Taieri route as the best, much to his own detriment. There were many who thought then that the Shag Valley route would be preferable in some respects; and, so far as the construction of the first part of the line is concerned, I am pretty much of the same opinion; but he will have the goodness to remember that the point at which the line is to stop is the Taieri Lake, and that is twenty-five miles from Middlemarch. I propose to stop there, and it is possible that the honourable member for Waihemo's wishes may yet be carried into effect, and the line continued to Dunback also. I do not interfere with that, and therefore I hope to disarm all opposition.

*Mr. J. McKenzie*

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—We do not want it at Dunback.

Mr. PYKE.—Well, the honourable member has said that it ought to have been taken that way. But he will have the goodness to remember this: that it was not I who insisted that it should go by this direction, but that it was decided by a Select Committee of this House that it should go by way of Strath-Taieri, and not by way of Shag Valley. This House came to the same decision, and the Bill afterwards went to the Legislative Council. A Select Committee there considered it, and they came to the same decision also as to the route. My proposal is to take up the railway at the point where there is no opposition, and I think that should disarm my honourable friend. Now, with regard to the argument used as to giving up Crown lands, what did he say? He said that when the Manawatu lands were given up they were of very low value, but when placed on the London market their value was much increased. Is not that the necessary sequence to making the railway? Does it not show the desirability of railways? I know that this land, which at the present time is not worth £5,000 a year, will, by making the railway, become worth £50,000 a year. It is simply a case of cause and effect.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Then the colony ought to do it.

Mr. PYKE.—The colony will not do it; it is of no use talking about that. The making of the railway enhances the value of the land. That accounts for the difference between the price of the land in the London market and its value in the colony. Before the line was commenced the gap of twenty-five miles could be easily got rid of. If it is the will of the House I would agree to the amendment; but I prefer to have it to the Taieri Lake, so that it may go to Dunback or Ngapara, and so leave that open to be settled afterwards. I trust that no further opposition in the matter will be offered, and I will ask my friends not to talk, but simply to vote.

The House divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question."

AYES, 40.

Allen	Hamlin	Pyke
Atkinson	Hobbs	Reeves, W. P.
Barron	Jackson	Richardson, E.
Beetham	Jones	Ross
Blake	Kelly	Steward, W. J.
Bruce	Kerr	Tanner
Buchanan	Lance	Taylor
Buxton	Levestam	Turnbull
Cowan	Mackenzie, M.	Vogel
Dodson	Marchant	Wilson.
Feldwick	McGregor	
Fergus	Moss	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fisher	O'Connor	Anderson
Graham	Pearson	Fitchett.

NOES, 5.

Cadman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grey	Duncan
Newman.	McKenzie, J.



## PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Perceval	Thompson, T.
Seymour	Peacock
Stewart, W. D.	Richardson, G. F.
Valentine	Hislop
Ward.	Mitchelson.

Majority for, 35.

Amendment negatived, and Bill committed.

## IN COMMITTEE.

## \* New clause.

Mr. SEDDON moved the following new clause:—

"No land that shall be, in the opinion of the Governor, required for machine, business, or residence sites, or for the construction of dams or reservoirs, races thereon, or tunnels thereunder, shall be deemed to be Crown lands under this Act."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the new clause be read a second time."

## AYES, 13.

Blake	Hutchison	Rhodes.
Feldwick	McKenzie, J.	
Fitchett	Mont	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	O'Connor	Duncan
Grey	Parata	Seddon.

## NOES, 32.

Allen	Fisher	Ross
Anderson	Graham	Steward, W. J.
Atkinson	Hobbs	Taiwhanga
Beetham	Jackson	Tanner
Bruce	Kelly	Taylor
Buxton	Lance	Thompson, R.
Cadman	Larnach	Turnbull
Carroll	Mackenzie, M.	Vogel.
Cowan	McGregor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Dodson	Pyke	Barron
Fergus	Reeves, W. P.	Pearson.

Majority against, 19.

Clause negatived.

Bill reported to the House, and read a third time.

On the question, That the title be agreed to,

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said,—I exceedingly regret that you, Sir, did not consider it necessary that this Bill should be referred to the Waste Lands Committee, for at present there are very serious defects in it, and certainly clause 7 will have, in another place, to be entirely remodelled. I think, also, that a few words will have to be added to the amendment which I made in subsection (8) of section 8. The amendment then made was in these words: "or which, in the opinion of the Government, may be required for mining purposes." I think the following words ought to be added to that: "as interpreted by 'The Mines Act, 1886.'"

Mr. SPEAKER.—I intimated to the Hon. the Minister of Lands, when he drew my attention to the circumstance of the Bill not having been referred to the Waste Lands Committee, that it would be quite competent for him to

move that the Bill should be referred to the Waste Lands Committee before it was committed to a Committee of the whole House; and he declined or omitted to do so. I had no desire to keep the Bill from being referred to the Waste Lands Committee.

Mr. CADMAN.—I only desire to say that, where matters connected with the gold-mining industry crop up in Bills which come before this House, it would be well that they should be referred to the Goldfields Committee. The arguments used in the House on goldfields matters are unintelligible to almost three-fourths of the members of this House, and can scarcely be understood except by members who are connected with the mining industry, or have spent portions of their lives in mining districts. Arguments about tail-races and sludge-channels are not understood here, and ought to be brought before the Goldfields Committee, where we have more time to argue such matters in detail, and where there are many experts. I am sure if that course were pursued it would tend to much better legislation.

Mr. COWAN.—I desire to say that a Bill of a similar kind was considered by the Waste Lands Committee of last Parliament. I was a member of that Committee; and now I notice that a peculiarity in that Bill, in subsection (2) of clause 7, is still continued in this Bill, notwithstanding the very adverse evidence which the Surveyor-General gave with regard to it—that is, the peculiar shape of the blocks of land. It was in that Bill provided that each of these blocks should have a mile frontage to the railway and a depth of fifteen miles. The Surveyor-General was asked his opinion as to the shape of the blocks, and he said that the proposal was perfectly preposterous, and that if the Bill were carried at all it must be altered in this respect. I am glad the Minister of Lands has had his attention drawn to this peculiar clause, and I hope, in another place, he will have the matter rectified.

Sir G. GREY.—I wish to say, before the Bill finally quits this House, that I feel confident it will inflict a very great blow indeed on the prosperity of the colony. The honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill stated this morning that I had apparently misunderstood him, and that there was a necessity to provide labour for the people of the colony. I say that no necessity of that kind justifies a Bill of this sort; because arrangements might have been made by which the Government could have carried on the work, and have given labour to those who want it, without robbing the people of their land. I believe that all the legislation of this kind passed this session has been in a retrograde direction, and has carried us back to the point from which we thought we had finally departed. I endeavoured on several occasions, by means of divisions, to prevent the Bill from being carried on; but, of course, my efforts were of no avail, and I shall always regret that I was present at the passing of a measure which, I am satisfied, strikes a blow at the whole of

the inhabitants of Otago, and especially at the labouring-classes. I believe they are robbed of land absolutely necessary for their welfare and for the welfare of their descendants; and, if this Bill passes in another place, a very bad future lies before the people of this country and those who come after them.

Mr. SEDDON.—I desire to put on record this fact: that to-day the Otago Central Railway Bill has passed, and I will undertake to say that honourable members are fully cognisant of the fact that there are some very serious defects in it, defects just the same as those which exist in the East and West Coast Railway Act of 1884, and which led the colony into such serious difficulties. I believe that, if this Bill is passed by the other branch of the Legislature as it stands now, matters will be left in exactly the same position; and I hold the Government responsible for the consequences. The Minister of Mines himself admitted that such would be the case, for he pointed out that this Bill in no way provides for what is indispensable to the mining industry. I should have thought that the honourable member for the Dunstan, who is in charge of the Bill, would have preferred to protect the mining industry; but, instead of doing that, he hands over all this power to a company in a way which will be to the detriment of the mining industry, as he has refused to vote for a proposal to put the matter right, and which was in accordance with the advice of the Crown Law Officers. I cannot help thinking that we are doing what is not correct to those who live in that part of the colony by allowing the Bill to pass as it is, especially after the views expressed by the honourable member for Waihemo. He has told us that all the streams running through this land are auriferous, and at no distant date will give occupation to a large mining population. However, there is another place to which the Bill has to go, and I say the responsibility rests with the Government to take steps in that other place to have the defects in the Bill remedied. They may be remedied in two ways: by the Legislative Council insisting upon the amendment which has been negatived here, or by negativing the Bill altogether, which perhaps will be the most preferable course.

Major ATKINSON.—I would point out that we are not now considering the compact, but a Bill, and nothing can be clearer than the advantages laid down in the Bill. With regard to the mining industry, it must be the duty of any Government, after the experience we have had with regard to the Midland Railway contract, to make proper provision for protecting the mining industry, and the honourable gentleman may depend upon it that the Government will take great care in that matter.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I wish to enter my protest against the passing of this Bill; and I think that the amendment moved by the honourable member for Kumara was a very fair one. I know the streams that run through this land, and there is not the slightest doubt that they are more or less auriferous, and will

be wanted for tailings and so forth hereafter. I cannot help thinking that there is some secret, underhand work in connection with the passing of this Bill which is unknown to members of this House. So I wish once more to enter my protest against the Bill.

Mr. FERGUS.—I regret, in the first place, that a discussion has arisen on the title of the Bill. If honourable gentlemen had any objections to urge against the passing of this measure, they should have urged them on the second reading, and not now. In the second place, I deprecate the casting of any insinuations such as have been thrown out by the honourable member for Waihemo—that there has been underhand work in connection with the Bill. I deny such an insinuation altogether. I think that those who have supported this Bill are just as much above any underhand work as the honourable member for Waihemo himself is. I have supported the honourable member for the Dunstan in the matter, not because I altogether approve of the measure, but because I see it is the only way in which we can get a large and important work constructed in the Province of Otago. I believe this Bill will very considerably ease the burdens on the colony in future. I believe it is essential to the well-being of the whole of the interior of Otago, and especially to the mining interests, that this work should be proceeded with at an early date; and I see no prospect of the Government being able to proceed with it at an early date. I hope, therefore, that the House will give a very speedy decision on the matter. If the work is delayed much longer we shall be unable to do it at all.

Mr. DUNCAN.—It seems to me that perhaps the exigencies of the time have caused, to some extent, the passing of this Bill. I cannot help thinking that the honourable member for the Dunstan was keeping facts from the Committee which he ought to have made known as to the nature of this country through which this railway is to pass. He is as well acquainted with it as I am, and he must know that every flat and gully of it is of an auriferous character. I am well aware of this fact, through the knowledge gained by personal experience, and I have been in almost every gully and creek of this part. I cannot understand how the honourable gentleman could say that there is no gold in that country. In fact, wiser men than the honourable gentleman could not tell that. I say most certainly there is gold in every creek, and in many of the terraces and gullies. I think it is a pity that a Bill like this should be put through the House at the end of a session, when we are just on the eve of leaving for our homes. I should have a good deal to say on this Bill, but I do not wish to take up the time of the House. I am glad that we got the amendment into the Bill that we did; but I should have liked to see the Bill still further amended by more clearly defining what are "gold-workings." I think if the honourable member for Wakatipu had read the Bill he would have seen that, in its original shape,

Sir G. Grey

the mining interest was not sufficiently protected.

Mr. FERGUS.—I may say that I went through the Bill very carefully, and was quite satisfied that it provided for the protection of mining. I went through the Bill very carefully with the honourable member for the Dunstan and arranged the matter, and I was perfectly satisfied that the measure made every protection for mining, or I should have most certainly given it my most strenuous opposition.

Mr. DUNCAN.—If the honourable member takes the trouble to read the Bill he will see that, without the amendment we have put in the Bill, it would have been in the power of the railway company to shut up mining in the whole of the district—that is, if the Bill had been passed as it was brought in. I am quite sure of that. I desire, however, to record my protest against the passing of the Bill.

Title agreed to.

#### FAIR RENT BILL.

Sir G. GREY.—I have to move, That the Fair Rent Bill be now read a second time. The name of the Bill sufficiently declares its object, which is to relieve a large number of inhabitants of New Zealand from the burdens under which they are at present sinking. It provides a perfectly equitable machinery for adjusting those burdens in a fair manner. It will be inexpensive in its operation; it is perfectly simple in its form: and I do not believe it would be possible to provide any measure more likely to restore prosperity in a multitude of homes throughout the Colony of New Zealand than the measure I hold in my hand. I need not occupy the House by making any lengthy remarks on the Bill, because its provisions are so perfectly clear that any explanation of them is altogether unnecessary. One amendment is suggested to me—namely, as to the constitution of the Court which is to hear the cases on which the future of this country depends. That, Sir, may be of importance; but, nevertheless, if a Judge was available, I think it would have been much better to have a judicial decision, and in that manner to follow more closely the laws now prevailing in Great Britain, of which this is almost a copy.

Mr. COWAN.—I have much pleasure in rising to support this Bill. This is one of immense importance, and should be passed during this session of Parliament. I shall be very brief in the remarks I have to make. The principle on which this Bill is based is not a new one. It has been in existence in Scotland for hundreds of years, and it has given immense satisfaction. The machinery there is known as the Fairs Court, under which rentals of agricultural lands are fixed from time to time according to the value of produce for the time being. And I take it to be the principle at the bottom of this Bill, the necessity of which is forced upon us by the adverse circumstances through which our colony has been passing for several years now; and these circumstances will still

continue, and will increase in urgency, unless an increase of the value of our products takes place: until that increase takes place, depend upon it, the bad times we are passing through will continue. The result of these bad times is known to all private landholders in the country; and the same results which private landlords have had forced upon them are now being felt by the Crown. The other day I stated that the Crown tenants in arrear in March of this year were in arrears to the extent of £28,000 under the deferred-payment and perpetual-lease system. Now, what I wish to point out to the House is this: that it is impossible for the Crown to expect the payment of a large portion of those arrears so long as bad times continue. Moreover, there is necessity for some such Court as is provided for in this Bill, to take into consideration not only this question of arrears, but also the fixing of future rentals. I believe the only true principle of fixing these rentals is to do it upon the basis of the value of produce out of the land for the time being. My opinion is that the Court proposed to be established by this Bill is of too expensive a character; and when the Bill is in Committee I will endeavour to have this Court changed from what is proposed in this Bill to that of a Resident Magistrate and two assessors, which, I believe, will be the cheapest form of Court that we could make use of. The Resident Magistrates living in localities from one end of the colony to another will have the local information that is necessary, and these Resident Magistrates can nominate as assessors gentlemen in whom the whole locality will have confidence as to their knowledge of such matters. Another alteration which I would suggest in Committee is in regard to the clause which provides that the tenant who feels that he has a grievance in respect to his rent being excessive should be relieved. The same privilege ought to be granted to the landlord, who feels that his rent is not sufficient. I think the same privilege ought to be given to the landlord as is given to the tenant in this clause. There are a few other alterations in the Bill which I will suggest in Committee, with the view of making this Bill workable in the direction of giving relief to Crown tenants; and I trust that this House will give its unanimous assent to it.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I am astonished to see the thinness of this House when an important measure like this is under discussion, when we have been dealing all the afternoon and morning in the direction of looking not after the interests of the masses, but after the interests of the capitalists; and I should not be doing my duty, at any rate, while I have a seat in this House, if I did not speak on this subject. Although I may sometimes disagree with the honourable member for Auckland Central, I am prepared to say this: that, above all men in the House, I believe he is trying to benefit the great bulk of the people of this colony. Possibly, by-and-by I shall be dealt with in the same manner as the honourable gentleman has been dealt with because I take an interest in the people of

the colony. I want nothing. My sympathies are distinctly with the masses of the people, and during the few years I have got left I shall advocate their interests so long as I am here. I shall certainly support the honourable member for Auckland Central in every measure, especially a measure like this, calculated not only to relieve one or two individuals, but hundreds in this colony. And I cannot for one moment understand the Premier. I put a question distinctly last session when the honourable gentleman was in opposition. I asked the Premier and the late Minister of Lands a question with reference to the appointment of a Board of Reviewers. The question I put was this: "Am I to understand that the Premier and the late Minister of Lands are in favour of appointing a Board of Reviewers not only to review rents, but to review the interest paid on mortgages, and other things?" And what did the Minister say? He said, distinctly, "Yes"—he was in favour of a Board of Reviewers in that direction; and I cannot understand for my life why this Bill, which, in my opinion at any rate, will do a great deal of good to a large number of suffering people in this country—

Mr. TURNBULL.—Then let us get at it as soon as we can.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I am astonished at the honourable member for Timaru. I shall have to put him, I am sorry to say, in the category of those who are elected here to do one thing and who do another.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I will withdraw that. The honourable gentleman must know that this Bill is a most beneficent one.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I am afraid you will lose it; the time is getting short.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I do protest against this way of burking the question. What have we heard to-day? We have seen members getting up in order to burke the Bill of the honourable member for Auckland Central; but his mouth is not to be closed. He is like myself: he stands upon a sure and solid foundation—that is, the interests of the people of the colony; and so long as he stands upon that he will always have my vote and sympathy. And I will guarantee this: that when I go back to my constituents they will never complain of my supporting measures brought forward by the honourable member for Auckland Central in the interests of the people at large.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I wish to say, while supporting the Bill—and I do so very cordially—that I recognise that this is a serious step which is about to be taken. It is a Bill which should be treated very seriously, because it proposes to disturb contracts entered into between the Crown and its tenants. Under ordinary circumstances I should hesitate to support such a Bill; but I recognise that the circumstances are not of an ordinary kind. In the first place, it appears on the face of it absurd that, while all over the world landlords are reviewing the terms on which they stand with regard to their tenants, the

Crown alone should be excluded from the privilege of doing so—that the tenants of the Crown in this or in any other of the colonies should be the only persons excluded from the privilege of a review of contracts entered into under what then appeared favourable circumstances. I feel, however, that the circumstances are not ordinary, because the tenants of the Crown—and I am alluding mostly, all through, to the small tenants of the Crown—entered into contracts at a time when the conditions of trade in this country were subject to an unprecedented inflation—an inflation that arose out of circumstances that cannot possibly be expected to occur again; an inflation that was the consequence of two sources of wealth coming into this country—namely, an increase in the price of our produce in 1871–72, and the extraordinary quantity of borrowed money that, under the public-works policy, poured in at the same period. The two circumstances together caused this inflation, and the tenants took lands at prices that entailed rents quite impossible for them to pay. If I could see any other way of relieving them of their difficulties I would not support a Bill containing these provisions; but I can see no other way of doing it. The Bill appears to me to be a fair one, and so long as a fair rent is all that is wanted I think no person can possibly object to it. It may be that the composition of the Court should be altered. Perhaps the Surveyor-General and two Magistrates should constitute the Court, instead of a Judge of the Supreme Court. I think, probably, that section 8 will have to be struck out; but, beyond such alterations, I think the Bill is a reasonable and fair one; and I support it with a great deal of pleasure, believing that it will do good to the country.

Mr. MARCHANT.—I also have very great pleasure in supporting this Bill, in the interest of the tenants on Native reserves. Many of these unfortunate people are in a very sad condition indeed.

Major ATKINSON.—But this Bill will not touch that class of tenants.

Mr. MARCHANT.—I intend to get it altered in Committee so as to include them.

Major ATKINSON.—Unfortunately, I think there will be no chance of that.

Mr. MARCHANT.—If this is the ruling of the Government, I have very little more to say on the subject, except that the Bill goes partly in the direction in which I should like to see it go. I am sorry to see that there will be no time to so alter the Bill as that its provisions may apply to the class of tenants to whom I have referred.

Mr. CADMAN.—I sincerely regret the position which this Bill has been allowed to drift into this session. It appears to me to be a sort of forlorn-hope altogether, and, even though it passed its second reading now, it cannot become law this session. Last session the Premier spoke of the necessity of relieving some of the settlers in his district; but, seeing the apathy which he evinces now he is in power, I can only say that the honourable

Mr. Taylor

gentleman does not seem to me to carry out the promises he has made many times on the floor of this House. One honourable gentleman told us of tenants paying as much as 12s. and 14s. an acre as rent on land worth £20 per acre, which it was utterly impossible for them to pay in these depressed times. I may say that in a portion of my own district men are paying rent to the Crown of 1s. 6d. an acre for land which is not worth 5s. an acre for the fee-simple. It is time that the Government look'd seriously into this matter, if they wish people to remain on the land. If the Government enforce these rents, it simply means that people must leave the land. Our object is to maintain the people on the land; and in order to carry out this we must now be prepared to see the rents reduced. I hope that the Government will next session deal with the matter seriously, or else offer facilities to the honourable member for Auckland Central to do what he can for the suffering tenants.

Major ATKINSON.—I shall be very glad to support the second reading of this Bill, because I think the principle of it is a very right one. I have said that two or three times before, but, as there is a debate on the subject now, I may repeat it. The Government, as the House well knows, has so much work to do that it is impossible to turn its attention to this Bill at this period of the session and pass it in a way which they would think satisfactory. The Bill as it stands, in my opinion, is quite unworkable, and it is quite impossible to pass it. Speaking with a sense of responsibility and not with the freedom of an honourable member who has nothing to do but get political capital out of it—I am not referring to the honourable member for Auckland Central; I am referring to other honourable members—I say that you would do nothing satisfactory with this Bill; it is an utterly unworkable measure. I have given the matter some little thought, and I am not speaking egotistically, but I venture to say that I could give instructions for the drafting of a much more satisfactory Bill than this, and one which would be really workable; but it is out of my power at this period of the session. If you take the number of cases, you will see that it is simply ridiculous to talk of one Court dealing with this matter. Two Courts, at any rate, would be needed; and I doubt very much whether three could do the work. Think of the large number of tenants. What are we to do with the tenants of the lands of the Maoris? As my honourable friend has pointed out, they are *quasi*-Government tenants. If we were to propose to give these relief, we know that the Maoris would be up, and that all the friends of the Maoris would be up, and would say, "You are robbing the Maoris and favouring the Europeans." Any one who knows anything about it knows that to relieve them would be merely an act of justice; but it is quite impossible to get it. Why? Because of the strong feeling in this House with regard to this question of ownership, and also because of the resistance which would be

offered by the friends of the Natives on the ground that we should be doing an injustice to the Natives. What I want to say to the honourable gentleman is this: I shall be very glad to give him the second reading of this Bill so far as I can; it was through my action that the honourable gentleman had the chance offered him of having the Bill read a second time this day. The House was evidently not disposed to deal with it; but the Government withdrew all opposition to the Bill, and it was allowed to come in now after having been defeated by a considerable majority. The honourable gentleman is under the impression—I am sorry that he is so incapable of reading character, but the honourable gentleman is under the impression that out of jealousy I am refusing him this Bill; that I want the honour of it. I will say publicly what I am prepared to do. I am prepared to get a Bill which I think will be workable—speaking with the responsibility which I have—prepared during the recess dealing with this matter, and shall be happy to hand it over to the honourable gentleman, and will assist him to pass it through next session, so that his name will then be connected with it, and not mine. I can never consent to a Bill going through which I am certain will not effect the object in view. If the honourable gentleman likes to work the Bill himself entirely, well and good; I will not interfere: but, when it comes up next session, if I see it is not satisfactory I shall have to point this out to the House, for I can never consent to let a Bill of this kind go into Committee and trust to Committee amendments to get it put right. I shall have very great pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill, as I have already said. I would point out again, however, that the relief granted cannot be very much during the next few months. The Government have undertaken to put a clause into their Land Bill—if there is not authority to deal with the matter otherwise—providing that no person shall be pressed for his rent during the few months between this and the next session; and the House can then deal with the whole matter in a thorough way, and in such a way that it may be proud of the work when it is done. I do hope the honourable gentleman will be contented with this—that he will take the second reading; and then I shall be willing and happy to assist him in passing a fair Bill next session.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Does the honourable gentleman propose that there shall be no rent collected during the next six months?

Major ATKINSON.—All I proposed to do is that, in those cases where it is shown to the satisfaction of the Government that there is undoubted hardship, I will see that there shall not be pressure put on those persons.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I am anxious to reply to some of the statements that have been made in reference to this Bill. The Premier was good enough to state that I was indebted to him for having had an opportunity given me of bringing forward this Bill for the second reading. On that I desire to remark that I really

think the honourable gentleman tried to prevent me from having that opportunity. An examination of the Order Paper will show that his motion expressly excluded my Bill from an opportunity of getting a second reading, and it was only by an amendment of mine which the House indulged me by entertaining that I was enabled to move the second reading. The Premier also said in the course of the discussion that he had always been in favour of this measure. Now, that I deny; and I am anxious to trace the history of this Bill and show what it had its origin in. It will be found that in the year 1882 I brought forward a Bill absolutely identical in wording to this, the Deferred-payment Settlers' Relief Bill. On that occasion a very animated debate took place in this House, and very strong language was used in regard to myself for having brought such a Bill forward. The Bill came on for its second reading on the 6th of July, and this language was used in regard to my proposal:—

"It was a temptation to people to repudiate their bargains. That was the true purport of the Bill. The spirit of self-reliance was broken down amongst many of the people, and this Bill would tend to break it down still more. It would destroy all independence of character. . . . He was sorry to have to say that the Bill was totally unworthy of the high reputation of the honourable member for Auckland East. It would tempt men to become dishonest and servile. . . . The time of the House and the country should not be taken up in considering the Bill. The Government should honestly and fearlessly put their foot down and not allow it to pass."

That was the language on that occasion of one honourable member. The present Premier then said, "He was quite satisfied that the remedy contained in this Bill would not be the one the House would adopt." He agreed with the honourable member from whose remarks I have just quoted, and added that "it would sap the independence of the people, and render government impossible." The honourable gentleman also said, "He himself thought that the principles of the Bill were quite inadmissible, as far as he understood it." Well, Sir, the Premier can hardly be said, therefore, to have been always in favour of this measure. The then Minister of Lands, Mr. Rolleston, who had specially to deal with measures relating to lands, spoke as follows:—

"He would say that the proposals contained in the Bill were not at all such as it would be right for the House to enact. . . . He thought . . . that the manner in which it proposed to deal with the question would not be admissible."

I then stood in the House almost in a friendless position; but one honourable gentleman came to the rescue, whose kindly face and manner have often encouraged me when I have been greatly depressed. He used this language, some of which is exactly the same as the language that has been used to-day:—

"Some speakers have argued that the introduction of the Bill was a step which should not

have been taken by a private member; but it was pretty well known that the honourable member for Auckland East had been in the habit, for some time past, of bringing forward measures which had been generally adopted by the Government. Therefore the honourable gentleman was not in any way out of harmony with what had taken place in the past in bringing in this Bill, for as soon as he brought in a Bill it was a guarantee that the Government would take it up."

Now, that is exactly what the Premier proposes to do to-day; and I would ask, if this measure had been introduced into this country five years and a half ago, what would its effect have been? The Government then said it was necessary to introduce something of the kind, and led the House to believe that they would do it, but on a totally different principle—and what that may have been I cannot tell; but I leave it to honourable gentlemen to say, if during the past five years and a half this Fair Rent Bill had been in operation in New Zealand, what the position of this colony would be to-day compared with what its present position is.

Mr. TAYLOR.—It would have saved the country.

Sir G. GREY.—I am certain the position of thousands of families would have been absolutely different from the position they are in at this time. Now, my own language on that occasion was to this effect. I said,—

"That first directed his attention to the state of these men, and he had determined never to lay aside the thought that he might possibly, at some future day, be able to aid the deferred-payment settlers."

And I said,—

"As long as there were proprietors of large freeholds in New Zealand it was quite certain that each generation of freeholders could tax their tenants as they pleased; and if the Government did not begin by clearing out of the way the difficulty offered by these deferred-payment settlers, he did not think they could frame any general system of dealing with rents throughout New Zealand."

I pictured to the House a scene which had taken place in a previous session some years before. On one occasion several hundred persons had assembled in Dunedin at a land sale, when a comparatively very small number of sections were offered, and they consequently had had to give fabulously high prices for the land. I said I recollected an honourable gentleman rising in the House and reading a telegram he had received concerning the sale, and the vast prices which the sections reached; and the announcement was received with cheers, and I then got up and said that I was surprised at the joy exhibited, because, instead of showing a sound state of things in the colony, I considered that it foreboded great disasters. I still maintain firmly that opinion; and it was that circumstance which prevented my making this Bill a general measure, applying to private proprietors, until we had first of all dealt with the deferred-pay-

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ment settlers. Now, I can tell the House that, notwithstanding my disappointment in 1882, I have never lost sight of the subject; but I have always been baffled if I have attempted to raise a question of the kind, and what has taken place this session must show the House it is almost a miraculous event if a private member should succeed in passing a measure of the kind. A man who devotes himself to a work of that kind must live on for years, often deprived almost entirely of hope. He must be actuated by a spirit of resolute determination. He must often feel depressed in spirits and heart, and sink almost into indescribable melancholy at finding all his efforts to serve his fellow-men baffled by mere rules of parliamentary routine, by what are called "Standing Orders," by machinery which renders it possible for a Government to prevent any man, even of more than ordinary intellect, from coming forward and doing anything for the benefit of his fellow-men, unless he comes forward as their servile slave. Such is a true picture. Some honourable gentlemen may laugh, but I am sure all will feel that such is a perfectly true picture. Honourable gentlemen heard to-day the manner in which the Premier spoke of this Bill as a wholly unworkable measure; and I ask, hearing that, would it be believed that for years I have brought forward laws—laws which have been approved in different nations, laws the benefit of which has been established for years in other countries and recognised with gratitude? I believe that, perhaps, no other living man has received from so many parts of the world expressions of gratitude such as I have received for laws that I have introduced. And yet one individual and his followers can in this country for years cramp all my efforts here, preventing me from effecting anything; and such has been the course continually pursued. And what has been the general result? That all those measures I have proposed have been adopted by themselves. Let me quote some of them if I have time. Who first introduced the Bill that changed the whole system of taking oaths in the colony? And who really took it from me and tried to make it a measure of their own? The very gentlemen who are interfering with me upon this occasion. Who first endeavoured to reform the legal profession, and tried to throw it open when it was in such a dreadful state? Will any one deny that I did that? And, then, who tried to take that out of my hands? Was it not a colleague of the honourable gentleman there, who sits in the Upper House, who endeavoured to rob me of the honour—if there was any—of introducing such a measure as that? It was I who brought these measures forward first, and it was this honourable gentleman who ultimately endeavoured to take the credit for passing them. Many have been the similar instances here.

Mr. TAYLOR.—They did not want you to get the credit for it.

Sir G. GREY.—That is a matter I never troubled about. Then, it was said the other night that some intimation had been made to me with regard to a reform which I wish to see

carried out, and that, because I would not accept the intimation that was made to me, I was wanting in patriotism. Was there any want of patriotism in that—that I should avail myself of some offer they made to me to carry it as they pleased? But, in reference to that matter, I can only say this: that I had no idea that any offer was being made to me. Something was stated to me by a gentleman who, so far as I knew, had no authority to come to me at all. Something was said about a clause being put in a Government measure, instead of the Bill which I had brought forward being allowed to be carried. I was asked if I would agree to that; and I said, Certainly not. Why should I? Unless they stated what was going to be done in reference to the matter, how could I know that I should have been right in adopting such a course? That is the only intimation I ever received. No proper intimation was ever made to me—no proper proposal of any kind. Now, why should I accept this proposal which has been made to me to-night? If it is desirable to carry this Bill, why should it not be done at once? Why not by myself now, if it is to be done at all? It is the same in this as in other cases: they have first objected to and spoken harshly of proposals which they have afterwards been glad to see accomplished. I wish so far to defend myself in this matter as to declare that this Bill which I have introduced into the House is sufficient for the commencement of a totally new system by the Government. It is perfectly easy for a Minister sitting upon those benches with a haughty air to say, "With a sense of responsibility upon me, I cannot bring myself to introduce a measure of this kind. It is ill thought out; it is not sufficient for the purpose." That is the way in which it is sought to crush this measure. How do I know that I may have an opportunity of bringing it on again? Why have so many laws which I have succeeded in passing, after discouragement and delays of this kind, elicited the greatest gratitude? The laws have been approved by the people. And how sad that here, in the atmosphere of this House, everything not brought forward by the Ministers is said to be bad and worthless! and yet it has ultimately to be brought forward by the men who have found fault with it in that way. Then, I say this: that in this particular instance I have been working since 1882. In the meantime the tenants of the Crown—the tenants of New Zealand—whom I would then have relieved of their misfortunes, have been subjected to disasters which they ought never to have known; and had they been dealt with, as I understood would be the case, immediately after the session of 1882, after the Bill I had introduced had been rejected, the aspect of New Zealand at the present time would have been totally different from what it is. Immense misery would have been saved, thousands of men would have been spared anxious minds, if the Government who sat upon those benches had only done their duty and had not thrown out a most beneficial measure. Well,

I ask the House to-night to pass this Bill. I stand here again, after five years of expectation, anxiety, and trembling hope, to ask that such a Bill as this may be carried; and I ask honourable members, ought I to be put off in the manner which the Premier proposes—that the Bill should be simply read a second time, and relegated to the waste-paper basket? I say that is a hardship to the people of New Zealand. I ask that it may be passed at once; I do not ask that from want of patriotism, or from the desire to achieve anything for myself. I now offer to hand the Bill over to the Government. I will do so with pleasure; I will help them: I will allow them in any way they like to subject it to any criticism, to any alteration which may improve it. But I do ask, on behalf of the Crown tenants of New Zealand, that there should be no delay in dealing with a measure which will benefit them to an almost incalculable degree. I ask that. There is a "House" here present; there will be no difficulty in assenting to my request: let there be no more delay in the consideration of this measure. They say that they approve of the principle of that which they called by such sad names previously. Let them adopt that principle; let them pass the measure. They could easily do it in a couple of days or less. I am sure that a single day would be sufficient to do this, and that other business might be accomplished at the same time. Let this Parliament separate now, at the end of its first session, with the consciousness that it has done one great and good thing. There is a special necessity for [this being done, because hitherto the aim of this Parliament has been to create great landowners not only in New Zealand, but owners of land in New Zealand who may reside where they please. That has been the one thing to which this present Parliament has devoted itself. One great measure for this purpose has been passed earlier in the session, another has been passed to-day, and a third is to be passed to-night, if possible; and let us meet this great and growing evil by providing a remedy of the kind this Bill applies. Let honourable gentlemen, while, on the one hand, they are indefensibly creating these large estates and these great absentee landholders, give the tenants who are to be plunged into misery the means of extricating themselves from the difficulties into which this House is plunging them. The lands have been taken from the people themselves; those who ought to have been proprietors are becoming, and must become, tenants, probably to be rack-rented by people in distant countries. Let us therefore be able to say, also, that we have provided remedies for the evils which we admit we have called into existence to a greater degree than was ever previously done. That is all I ask. Either let me have the pleasure of carrying this Bill through, or let the Government determine to take it up and carry it through during the present session. I am sure that honourable members will help them; and I shall forget the misery of past delays, the inaction forced upon me, I shall forget all my

*Sir G. Grey*

mental suffering, if they will only join with me in getting passed a measure which, I am sure, will be of great benefit to the whole community.

Bill read a second time.

Sir G. GREY.—I move, That this Bill be committed presently.

Major ATKINSON.—I am sorry that I cannot agree to this Bill being committed, and I am sorry that the honourable gentleman, as it seems to me, is unreasonable. I have no wish to say hard things of him, although I could say some hard things and some just things in regard to the honourable gentleman; but I have said all I wish to say. It is quite unreasonable to expect that a Government pressed with public work as we are could make the Bill workable this session. I say that to the House with a sense of responsibility, and I ask the House not to agree to this Bill being committed. I move, as an amendment, That the Bill be committed next week.

Dr. FITCHETT.—On the understanding that you will fix a day for considering it?

Major ATKINSON.—No; on the distinct understanding that it is not to come on again.

Dr. FITCHETT.—Then why fix for next week?

Major ATKINSON.—I do not wish to express my opinion that the principle of the Bill is not a proper one; but it is quite unworkable as it stands, and it is impossible that Parliament can make it into a workable Bill this session.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is not customary to make such a motion as that at this stage. The amendment should come on the motion that I do leave the chair.

Mr. SEDDON.—I would suggest that the Premier should move that the Bill be committed next sitting-day; and it might be arranged for it to come on with local Bills that we expect to reach. In the meantime the defects may be considered, and there may be some means found of amending them.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I would call attention to the following passage from May upon this point:—

"When a Bill has been read a second time, a question is put, 'That this Bill be committed,' which is rarely opposed, being a mere formal sequel to the second reading, not admitting of any discussion of the merits of the Bill itself."

When the motion is made that I do leave the chair, then the Premier's amendment will be in order.

Major ATKINSON.—I do not wish to move any amendment. I can avoid it. We may negative this motion. What would be the effect of that? Will the Bill be lost?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Yes. The House will have refused to allow the Bill to proceed to the stage of being committed.

Major ATKINSON.—Then we had better take that course; or I am willing to make it next sitting-day.

Sir G. GREY.—Are you willing to have it committed for the next sitting-day?

Major ATKINSON.—I say I am willing to



withdraw my amendment, and let the honourable gentleman have the order for next sitting-day.

Sir G. GREY.—Am I allowed to speak, Sir, on this point?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have ruled that there should be no debate at this stage; but, should a motion be made that I do leave the chair in order that the House may go into Committee on the Bill, an opportunity to speak would be given to the honourable gentleman.

Sir G. GREY.—I do not wish to debate at all, but I wish to make an explanation. The Premier says that this Bill is absolutely unworkable. I have as great a knowledge of the Bill as the honourable gentleman has as to its working in different countries and places; and I know that his idea that this is an utterly unworkable Bill is an entire mistake. If I am defeated, it will be a defeat in the death-struggle for the liberties of the settlers of New Zealand. But I am not the person who destroys their hopes: it is those who would profit from doing this act. I move, That you do leave the chair.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be committed presently."

#### AYES, 23.

Blake	Hutchison	Taiwhanga
Buxton	Joyce	Taylor
Cadman	Mackenzie, M.	Vogel
Feldwick	McKenzie, J.	Walker.
Fitchett	Parata	
Grey	Seddon	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Steward, W. J.	Fraser
Guinness	Stewart, W. D.	Moss.

#### NOES, 26.

Anderson	Hodgkinson	Moat
Atkinson	Izard	Monk
Bruce	Jackson	Pyke
Cowan	Lance	Samuel
Fergus	Lawry	Thompson, R.
Fulton	Mackenzie, T.	Whyte.
Hamlin	McGregor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Mills	Barron
Hobbs	Mitchelson	Tanner.

#### PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Duncan	Rhodes
Larnach	Allen
Reeves, R. H. J.	Newman
Thompson, T.	Pearson
Turnbull.	Ross.

Majority against, 3.

Motion negatived.

#### KAMO AND KAWAKAWA RAILWAYS CONNECTION AND CONSTRUCTION BILL.

Mr. HOBBS.—Sir, in moving the second reading of this Bill, I just wish to remind honourable members that, though I desire to push this matter through the House, I to-day waived my right to precedence on the Order Paper in favour of the Otago Central Railway Bill and the Fair Rent Bill, to oblige the gentle-

men in charge of these Bills. In explaining this Bill, I do not intend to keep the House longer than I can possibly help; but I am bound to explain a few of the facts connected with the measure, in order that honourable members may understand it properly. This is not the first time that the Bill has been before the House. It has been before the House for the last ten years, in one way or another; and now it is time that something should be done in the way of providing the railway asked for. I may say that this railway is intended to connect two Government lines, one the Whangarei-Kamo Railway, which has cost the country £60,000; and the other the Kawakawa Railway, which is partly constructed, and has cost £100,000; and it will require a sum of £210,000 to complete and connect these two railways. I may explain that it is intended to carry out the object of this Bill on the land-grant principle, because we have looked in vain to the Government of the day to help us in the matter. And, as the House has recognised that principle in the cases of the Midland Railway, the Manawatu Railway, and the Otago Central Railway Bill which we passed to-day, I feel certain the House will not ignore this measure, especially when I say that when it comes from the Committee I am prepared to let the matter stand on its merits. One great object we have in view is to develop the coalfields about Hikurangi. The reports that are published of former surveys show that the coal is cropping up all along the line of railway, where there are good seams, which Sir James Hector's department and practical men in the district and in Wellington who have tested the coal have pronounced to be of first-rate quality. But this is absolutely useless to us unless we can utilise it by connecting these two railways. There is also a valuable bush close to this railway-line, having an area of seventeen thousand acres. This is not all covered with kauri; but, still, it is a valuable bush, and it cost the Government the sum of £12,000 some four years ago. It will be valued by the Government valuers in connection with this railway, so that there is not the slightest fear of its being undervalued. I mention this because honourable members have spoken about this bush being of such great value, and it would appear that I had some object in moving in this matter other than the good of my district and of the colony at large. But I may say I have never been connected with any company up to the present time; I have always kept aloof. And, while this matter is under discussion, I may say, further, that when this was purchased, four years ago, by the Government there were private parties in treaty to purchase this bush from the Natives, who offered, if I used my influence to effect a purchase for them, that I should have a share; but I treated the offer with scorn, and said I would be no party to it. I wish to see the land utilised for the good of the country, because, however valuable that bush may be, and however valuable the coalfields may be, unless they are utilised they are absolutely valueless. One other point I wish to

mention. We are desirous of settling and developing the land in the North; and I cannot understand some persons' objection to this land-grant principle of making railways, because it must be admitted that if a company take this up, if they secure this land, they cannot hold it, or take it out of the colony, or eat it, but they must settle it and put people on the land; and this is what we have to consider. Now, I can easily understand the opposition offered to this proposal by the honourable member for Auckland Central. He is opposed to it on principle. He opposed the Midland Railway Bill, the Manawatu Bill, and the Otago Central. All those he opposed on principle, and therefore I can appreciate his opposition to this Bill; but when honourable members who have voted for the other measures oppose this, without coming to me for information, and who admit that they know nothing about it, I think they are acting very inconsistently. I have all the information at my disposal, and I am willing to give that information. I hope honourable members will not be prejudiced by any one whispering to them that this bush is of fabulous value, and that I have a desire to secure it for a syndicate, or anything of that kind. I have never been guilty of anything of that sort; I would not do it; and I think I am sufficiently well known in Auckland for it to be known there that I should not be likely to do anything of the sort. Then, after the Bill is passed, there is all the trouble to come about floating a company at Home and getting the matter taken up. If I do succeed it is a question whether we shall be able to get a company to take it up and carry it through. I would be the last one to part with the land of the colony, or the forests of the colony, or anything of that kind to strangers, to foreigners or aliens. But I do want to see the country settled. We are talking about the settlement of the land, and this is the way to get the land settled. I am quite sure, if the House will give this measure the consideration which it deserves, as has been done to other measures of a similar kind, the House will agree to the second reading to-night. If it is read a second time to-night, and referred to the Waste Lands Committee, then next session I shall be able to introduce it, and honourable members will know more about it: for they will be able to make inquiries to satisfy themselves as to its *bona fides*. I can assure the House I have no object in view but the good of the district and the colony at large. I will not detain the House, as it is anxious to get through the business; but, if there is any other information that is desired, I shall be happy to give it. I beg to move the second reading.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I will second the motion *pro forma*. The latter remarks of the honourable gentleman certainly incline me to vote in favour of the Bill, because I can conceive it possible that between this session and the next session a flood of light may be thrown upon the question; and the honourable member for the Bay of Islands is not inclined to force the measure through now. The Government

Mr. Hobbs

possibly will kindly accept his views, and not make this another Government measure for to-night. I was gratified to hear the honourable member take such a liberal view. I never thought for a moment that he would be interested in or use his position in this House to float a thing that he did not believe would be for the benefit of the country. And, when he says that he is prepared to take the second reading and let the question stand over till next session, I do trust that at any rate the Government will not oppose that proposal. I may say I am sorry for the Government. I am exceedingly sorry for the Government. They are not only wasting our time, day after day, but they will not take a proper stand upon this question. I am not going to complain about anything affecting myself individually; but what do we find? We find the Government supporters being assisted in order to get their Bills through. Now, although I am opposed to the Government, I have a right to be dealt with fairly by the Government; and the Government will have to deal fairly by me, whether they like it or not. I am not going to either close my mouth or be dealt with offensively by any member of the Government. I want nothing from the Government, but I have a right to defend the people who send me here. I do hope that measures will not be got rid of by side-winds and quibbles. I have listened to the honourable member for Dunedin Central this afternoon, asking whether this means that, and the other means the other thing; and I do trust that the people of this colony will begin to learn, by-and-by, not to send gentlemen here to quibble about words, but to try and apply any ability which they may have for the benefit of the people at large. The honourable member for the Bay of Islands admits that he is simply going to move the second reading this session. I suppose that he wants it for no other purpose than a political purpose. I say that I do not object to the land-grant principle, but I am glad the honourable gentleman is going to give us time to consider it. I would also say this: that I do not think the honourable member for Auckland Central has been fairly dealt with to-night, and I hope he will make another protest against this Bill. I only wish to see us get on with the business. If the Government had taken a proper stand they would not have introduced these Bills by a side-wind, as they have done. There have been a number of Bills passed to-day by what I call a fluke, and I shall do my best to get them put out in another place. Although I disagree, possibly, with the Upper Chamber, there are times, Sir, when they do their duty by throwing out ill-considered and quickly-passed measures, which the Government, in my opinion, has had no right to pass.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I just wish to make one remark to try to remove an impression from the mind of the honourable member for the Bay of Islands. He stated that one of the great advantages of constructing railways by giving land to companies was this: that the land could not go away from the colony—that it was

there; and he went on to say that you could not eat it. Well, now, all these discoveries are perfectly true. But what he overlooked is this: that you will have a large absent proprietary. Already that proprietary is large in number, but, unfortunately, its property grows larger in extent, and the property and rentals are immense that it carries away from these Islands. The fact of the matter, therefore, is this: that these people will eat up the substance that comes from the land, carrying away and consuming almost the whole of it, and continually diminishing the quantity which they leave for the tenants who work that land for them. Therefore what you do is this: You change your population from being a small-farm proprietary into a population of tenants, who will gradually sink lower and lower into the depths of poverty. Every year, through long centuries probably, they will fall lower and lower in the scale of civilisation, and their misfortunes will be greater and their difficulties more considerable. Such must be the inevitable result, and in New Zealand it will have a very evil effect indeed from the isolated position of this country. They cannot escape except with difficulty, and you will have here an Ireland reproduced, but in a much worse and more wretched form than Ireland ever presented. If the honourable gentleman would only reflect, I am perfectly sure that he would see that such things as I depict must inevitably take place, and that to answer me that the land is there, and it cannot be eaten, or that the people cannot eat it, is no reply at all to the truth which is terrible to contemplate, and which is certain to come. Therefore I would gladly convert him to the view that I hold: that it is best for us to raise the money upon the land ourselves, instead of disposing of the land to foreigners in the way that he proposes to dispose of it; to create a proprietary of our own in this country, and not to rob the people, as we are virtually doing, of the inheritance which Great Britain gave them. I believe that the work of this session—the work that has been carried on of disinheriting a large portion of the population of New Zealand of lands of the utmost value to them—I believe that that work which we have accomplished will leave its impress upon this country for many years to come; that this is the black session of New Zealand, which has greatly increased its misfortunes instead of benefiting it—a session the memory of which will long live in men's minds, the evil effects of which none of us will live to see die out in this colony. I do hope the honourable gentleman will change his views, and will, during the recess, carefully consider this question. I will give him a list of works which I am satisfied will bring him to the views I have expressed, if he will only consider them; and I hope yet he will come back a benefactor to his country, declaring he will not press this Bill, from the conviction he feels that he ought not to do it, and that he will strive with us to prevent great evils of this kind falling upon the country, which is already pressed upon by so many.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—I wish to state that I intend to vote against this Bill. I have always been opposed to alienating large blocks of land for the construction of railways. I believe that the principle is bad, and that, sooner or later, the effect will be that the Government will have to purchase these railways at a price which will leave considerable loss to the colony. I simply say these few words as entering my protest against this Bill being read a second time.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I shall move, That this debate be adjourned; because the honourable gentleman has said that the Bill which he seeks to pass has already been some ten or twelve years before the public, and has not yet been passed. The honourable gentleman stated as fairly as he could the position of affairs; but it must be evident that no one in this House except the northern members can know anything about the position of this line, or what advantage it will be to the colony. I think the honourable gentleman, having attracted the attention of the House to the subject, has gone as far as he should go this session with his measure, because, if it passes to the Waste Lands Committee, it will involve the expenditure of a great deal of time. It may go safely through that Committee; but then the House afterwards would require to be satisfied that all the statistics are correct, and that a benefit was likely to accrue to the country from the construction of the line.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I wish to point out to the honourable gentleman that an honourable member, in moving the adjournment of the debate, cannot speak on the general question, but must confine himself to the question of adjournment. If the honourable gentleman wishes to speak to the main question I will consider that he has not moved the adjournment, and will repropose that question.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Then, Sir, I will move, That the House do now adjourn. I do not want to vote against the Bill, because that would rather be to injure the whole affair. I should prefer that the honourable gentleman should withdraw his Bill, having attracted attention to it. I think myself that altogether we have been very lax with regard to these railways, and that the information regarding them which we ought to have had has not been laid before the House. Of course that is not the case in regard to the Bill which we passed this afternoon, because that subject has been before the country for some years. I would also point out that, if we pass the second reading of this Bill, that pledges us to the principle, and it will be used as an argument afterwards, if this measure is brought forward again, that it has already been before the House, and that the House has agreed to its principle.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I second the motion for adjournment, and do so not because I am opposed to the second reading, but because I look upon this as simply a complimentary second reading. We have not gone sufficiently into the matter to vote for the second reading if to do so means to affirm the principle; and,

under these circumstances, it would not be right for the House to agree to the second reading.

Mr. MOAT.—Sir, I really think the best thing the honourable member for the Bay of Islands could do would be to drop the Bill. The Waste Lands Committee would certainly not have time to go into it and take the necessary evidence this session, and the whole thing would have to be gone into again next session. The honourable gentleman has stated that it has been before the country for ten years in one way and another. It is quite true it has. It came before the country in this way: that it was proposed to make a railway-line to connect the Kawakawa coal-mine with the port, and it was stated that that could be made part of the North of Auckland Trunk-line. Some time afterwards a coal-mine was opened at Kamo, near Whangarei: parties interested in that coal-mine also said that a line from there to the port could be made part of the North of Auckland Trunk-line. Accordingly the railway was made, and nothing more was heard in connection with it until the session of 1884. The honourable member for the Bay of Islands got the then Premier to consent to the introduction of a clause in the East and West Coast Middle Island Railway Bill, authorising a syndicate to construct a line on similar terms between these two coal-lines, as part of the North of Auckland main line. I may say that the attempt to introduce this clause took us quite by surprise, as no notice had been given to us of it before it was introduced in the House. I then told the House what I knew of the matter, and the honourable member for Auckland Central afterwards came in and assisted me. Hearing what we said, the Premier, Sir Robert Stout, declined to allow the proposal to go any further that session, but promised to make some inquiries during the recess. The argument I then used was that the route by which this line was supposed to go would never form part of the North of Auckland main line, seeing that it would run through a part of the country which was quite unfit for settlement, while there was an immense quantity of good country in another direction. Accordingly, during the recess an engineer was sent up by the Government to examine the country and report upon it. He did so, and his report corresponded with the statement which I had made, and the Premier and the Minister for Public Works declined altogether to go on with the line as part of the North of Auckland Trunk line; and nothing was heard of the line from that day to the present, when this Bill has been introduced by the honourable member. I am not going to discuss the question of whether it is proper or not to give tracts of land to construct railways. The House has already decided on that point, and I am not going to waste the time of the House in disputing its decision. But I say the matter should be very carefully considered before an immense amount of money is spent on the construction of this line, which I believe would be almost useless except to get out the timber from this bush

Mr. Samuel

which it is proposed to give to the company—a bush which, I believe, is far the most valuable in New Zealand. It consists of about seventeen thousand acres, and it is valued at present by the authorities of the Forest Department at £13 an acre, or about £220,000. I think it would be a great pity that that money should be spent rashly, and without knowing what benefit is likely to arise from the expenditure. It is quite true, as the honourable gentleman has stated, that coal is cropping out in portions of this country; that it has been tested and has been stated to be of good quality. I have very grave doubts as to whether the quality is such as is stated. It may be so, or it may not, but there is no proof of it; and I do not even know that the coal which was tested actually came from that place. Prospects of coal were got there some time ago, and when they were examined it was found that they were not so good as had been stated. As far as the ordinary coal is concerned, there is no doubt that the coal now being procured at Kamo and another mine nearer Whangarei is not of such quality as to cause any great demand for it; and that the mines at present open can produce more coal of that quality than will be required for many years to come. Therefore the railway, as far as I can see, would be of no use whatever for the purpose of opening up coalfields. I might also say, in connection with this matter, that the present Minister for Public Works—who represented the District of Marsden at the time I speak of, three years ago—declined to be a party to encouraging this line, although his constituents strongly urged him to do so; but he said he would not support it. I believe he is still of the same opinion. I have been inclined to believe that the idea of making this railway is to get in the thin end of the wedge to make it a portion of the North Island Trunk-line. That is my opinion. If this were made it would then be said that the House should never make two lines running parallel with each other; and I think it would be a very wrong thing to do. These are my principal reasons for objecting to the Bill. The statement by the honourable member for the Bay of Islands that he does not intend to push the Bill through this session materially alters the previous state of things. It would be very wrong indeed if it were pushed forward this session, as I was led to believe was intended. I think the best thing to do would be to allow it to stand over.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—I am not surprised that honourable gentlemen in this House are so little acquainted with the districts north of Auckland; for this reason: that honourable members who have represented that part of the country for a number of years have scarcely ever got up to speak on its behalf, except when they wanted something for that particular part of it to which they belonged. I would point out that the district over which this line is proposed to be constructed is the oldest-settled part of the country. It has been settled for the last forty years. I reside in the district, and am thoroughly well acquainted with it. For fifteen

miles north of Kamo, along the route of this line, the land is thickly settled with prosperous settlers: and I would point out that these settlers have no roads—not even bush-tracks. I am not surprised that so little has been heard of this district, because that part of the country was grossly neglected. It is almost unknown to this part of the country. As I was saying, for fifteen miles north of Kamo you go through land settled with prosperous settlers; and there is one continuous seam of coal cropping out all the way, and a large area of that coalfield belongs to the Government. When we pass that, we come to this forest, which, I believe, is a very valuable one. It will be of no value whatever until a railway is constructed to it. It simply stands there, running the risk of being burnt down every summer. Of course there is no intention to hand over that forest or any land to a company to make this railway except on fair and reasonable terms. It is not likely that the Government would hand over that forest or Crown lands except at a fair value. I ask, is it wise to allow that forest to stand there at the risk of being burned down? Would it not be better to hand it over to a company, so that a railway might be made to the country to work it? It has been pointed out that there are coal-mines at Kawakawa and Whangarei. On these a large amount of money has been spent; and the mine at Whangarei has been obliged to close, in consequence of the want of facilities for shipping the coal, because there has not been sufficient influence in this House to get the railway extended to deep water, so as to put the coal on board large vessels. Yet the honourable member for Rodney—the gentleman who has represented that district for six years—has never raised his voice to help that district. He, of course, is not member for that part of the country exactly. But, Sir, I maintain that it is to the interest of New Zealand that that district should be developed. Is it a wise policy to neglect a district like that, and to lock up these minerals and this timber, simply because the financial rings in Auckland want it themselves? I do not say that the honourable member for Rodney is here to represent Auckland rings; but the minerals are being locked up because they do not wish to see anything developed there unless the whole profits go into their own pockets. I have no interest in the coalfields; I have not a sixpence invested in the coal-mines. I am only a settler. But, when we are borrowing money to make the railways, why should the oldest-settled district in the colony be completely ignored? Why has it been ignored? Simply because the inhabitants sent representatives here who did not do their duty; because it was represented by men who have misrepresented them, as the honourable member for Rodney has done to-night. That honourable gentleman and others have for years misrepresented that part of the country, in the interests of parties who wish—

Dr. FITCHETT.—I would ask, Sir, is that a right statement for the honourable gentleman to make?

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—I do not, of course, wish to impute mercenary motives.

Dr. FITCHETT.—Is it fair to accuse an honourable member of misrepresenting his district in the interest of financial rings?

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—Although they represented districts in the North, to my mind they misrepresented that particular district.

Dr. FITCHETT.—The honourable gentleman stated that for six years the honourable member for Rodney had misrepresented the district.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I did not understand him to use the term offensively, but in the sense that the honourable member did not correctly represent the views and interests of his district.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—I had no idea of using the word offensively towards the honourable member for Rodney. That part of the country seems to be unknown here, and I might state that the country north of Auckland contains a population of thirty thousand people, including Maoris; yet honourable gentlemen in this House seem to know little about it; and I know why. The people there are beginning to open their eyes. The people of that district do not come to this House begging money. There is never any agitation of unemployed from that part of the country. They are hard-working, industrious settlers. They are, to a certain extent, quite independent. They are not paupers. They would scorn to come and ask for anything they were not entitled to. But we should not be doing our duty if we did not make an effort to bring the great mineral resources of that district before the House. The honourable member for the Bay of Islands has no intention of pushing the measure beyond the second reading. That is my wish also. We do not wish to push the Bill or to steal a march on this House. I would be no party to promote this measure if I thought there was nothing in it; I could not recommend it. If the second reading is carried now, we will distribute the Bill among the people of the district, make further inquiries, and collect more information for this House next session. I am not even sanguine of carrying the Bill next session; but our object is to bring the district prominently before the House and the public. We have no intention to sit down and be ignored, as we have been for the last ten or fifteen years. The settlers are determined that their wants shall be heard of in this House—that they shall be no longer ignored. It has been stated publicly that the people of this part of New Zealand are a lazy, idle, thriftless lot of people. They attend to their own business; they are not agitators; but the time has come when they mean to make their voice heard, and honourable gentlemen will find that the people there have at last opened their eyes to the manner in which they have been treated. There is no intention of having this line, as has been stated, constructed as part of the North Auckland Trunk Railway. The route for that railway has already been fixed. I travelled over it myself a couple of years ago with Mr. Mitchelson and Mr. Knorpp. The

honourable member for Rodney insinuated that this was the thin end of the wedge to divert the route of the North Auckland Trunk Railway. That statement is absolutely without foundation. We have no intention whatever to bring the railway before the public except to ventilate the matter and place it before the country on its merits; and all I ask the House to do is to deal with this measure on its merits, and to treat the settlers there with justice and fair-play. So long as I am in this House I shall ask that, and nothing more; and I hope the honourable member for Rodney will not consider it his duty to get up in this House and try to prevent the development of the resources of that part of the country which he has misrepresented for so many years. I hope he will not do it again while I am in this House, at all events. I would ask honourable members to deal with this measure fairly, that it may be placed in a position to come before the Waste Lands Committee, so that all the information that it is possible to collect may be placed before the House. We have no intention whatever to force the matter on the country until it is right and fit to take the matter in hand.

Dr. HODGKINSON.—I shall vote for the second reading of this Bill. My object in doing so is simply to affirm the principle of making railways by means of land instead of by loan. That has been the practice followed by nearly all new countries in the world, and it has been attended with most beneficial results. The United States and Canada have got enormous railway systems, without incurring any debt; whereas we, by adopting the principle of making the railways out of loan, have brought the colony to the very verge of bankruptcy, and to a state of most profligate expenditure and very great corruption in all the administrative departments. I vote for the second reading, to affirm this general principle of making railways by means of land instead of by loan.

Mr. MOSS.—I should not have risen to speak on this Bill but for the admirable election address to the electors of Marsden which has just been delivered by the honourable member for Marsden. But for that, and the honourable gentleman's references to one of the most respected members from the Auckland District, I should not have thought it necessary to speak on this occasion. As that honourable gentleman will not have an opportunity of speaking himself, I should like to say a few words. I hardly know how to characterize the attack which has just been made by the honourable member for Marsden. The honourable gentleman was not talking to the House; he did not give the House one single item of information; he did not tell honourable gentlemen about the country. He intimated that this railway would serve thirty thousand people. He knows that it will do nothing of the kind, and that it will only be a by-railway, at the best, between two harbours. I will tell the honourable gentleman that, whatever he may say, there are those who consider that the bush, and not the railway, is the great attraction. He is too innocent to know it. Does

Mr. R. Thompson

the honourable gentleman know that his predecessor is the present Minister for Public Works, and that that honourable gentleman refused, even as member for the district, to have anything to do with this line?

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—The honourable member is misstating facts. The present Minister for Public Works, while representing the district, declined to take up this line as a portion of the North of Auckland Railway—he declined to recognise it as a portion of the trunk-line.

Mr. MOSS.—At all events, the honourable gentleman refused to bring it forward. The honourable member for Marsden talks of his district having been misrepresented. The Kamo Railway was one of very few of its kind made at the public expense. We have had no more earnest representative of a district in this House than the honourable member who now represents Rodney. The object of the speech of the honourable member for Marsden is not to enlighten the House, but to prejudice the constituents of the member for Rodney against him. There was one expression which the honourable gentleman used which gave me an insight at once into the object of his speech. He said that the members who represented the district previously had not sufficient influence to get the railway made. Was the object of the honourable member in coming here only to possess influence with the Government in order to get something for his district? I can assure the honourable member that, whatever he may think of other Auckland members, I am proud to say they do not all come here with that as their only object. They come here careless as to what their influence with the Government may be for such purposes, and they are only anxious to have influence in the House to do what is good for the country. The honourable gentleman knows perfectly well that the coal-mine to which he refers is not held by an influential ring in Auckland; it has been a disastrous undertaking to every one connected with it. The honourable gentleman has spoken of only twelve constables and two Magistrates. Does he think that he has told us something new? We have heard the honourable member for Rodney for several years past asking for justice for his district. We have heard the members from the northern part of the Auckland Province, assisted by the Auckland City members, declaring that this district has been neglected. The great fact, that the district contains some thirty thousand people, and that these few Magistrates and constables are the only cost to which the Government is put in administering it—that is nothing new. I venture to say that honourable gentlemen have heard this stated half a dozen times by different Auckland members; but it will look new when it is put in *Hansard*, and circulated amongst the honourable gentleman's constituents. If a railway is to be made, it should not run along the coast between two excellent harbours. This proposed line would not run through a country so wonderfully rich as the honourable member for Marsden seems to think.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—We have no paupers there.

Mr. MOSS.—Does the honourable gentleman think there are any paupers in New Zealand? What does the honourable gentleman mean by paupers? I know this: that perhaps there is no part of New Zealand in which there are a greater number of poor and struggling settlers than there are in the North of Auckland.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—They do not come "loafing" on this House.

Mr. MOSS.—"Loafing!" What does the honourable gentleman mean? The honourable gentleman stands up here as a simple and honest farmer. Has the honourable gentleman always been an honest farmer? Has the honourable gentleman made his money by farming? I do not know, and I do not want to know; but I know that the district is not one of honest farmers alone. There are gum-diggers who could perhaps tell us how money is made. There are people who, unfortunately, have a taste for drink, which very often reduces them to pauperism, and those who supply them with drink in that district very often make large sums of money, and through that money get great influence over honest farmers. The speech of the honourable member for Marsden was not made for the railway. It was an attack upon a gentleman who was well known in that district before the honourable gentleman was heard of. The speech was also an address to the honourable gentleman's constituents. The honourable gentleman says the Bill is to be read a second time, and then it will be circulated throughout the district. The House ought not to be used for that purpose. It is simply an electioneering "move." I am astonished that an honourable gentleman with so sensitive a conscience as the honourable member for the Bay of Islands could have entered into partnership with the honourable gentleman for that purpose. I am an Auckland member, and I hope the Bill will not pass. It took two months to compose this Bill; and, then, look at the printing and all the trouble connected with it! Why, the honest farmers in that district will be so dazzled that they will not listen to any one but the honourable gentleman for many years to come.

Dr. FITCHETT.—After the advocacy of the honourable member for Marsden and the criticism of the honourable member for Rodney and the honourable member for Parnell, I think the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill would do well to drop it. The advocacy is more damaging than the criticisms. For my own part, I am in favour of the abstract principle of constructing railways by land-grants. That, however, does not commit me to this concrete instance. Though I knew little about this matter when the Bill was introduced, I have listened, indeed, with a favourable mind to the proposal; but all that has come out has rather prejudiced me against the thing. We have learned that the route of the North Island Trunk-line has not been fixed, and that this proposed railway is dangerously near the possible route of that line. I think honour-

able members cannot fail to see, then, that, if this Bill be passed and the railway is started, it will prejudice the question of the route of the Main Trunk-line. We learn, indeed, that for that very reason a present Minister of the Crown declined to have anything to do with this railway. The Bill, so far as I can judge, is intensely crude. The honourable gentleman who has introduced it does not seem to have profited by the experience gained over the Midland Railway and Otago Central Railway Bills. There is no provision to conserve the interests of the miners or settlers; indeed, the whole thing is a rude shell; and I think it would be little more than a farce if the House passed the second reading. Indeed, that is unnecessary, because the honourable member who introduced the Bill said it was only intended to ventilate the matter.

Mr. HOBBS.—I did not say that.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I understood the honourable member to say that he only wished to secure the second reading for the purpose of ventilating the matter, and that he will bring in the Bill afresh next year. Why, then, ask the House to commit itself to the principle? The only persons speaking in favour of it are the two honourable gentlemen who introduced it. All the other speakers are hostile to it. I think it would be wise of the honourable gentleman to withdraw it now. Let him do as the honourable member for the Dunstan did: let him stick up maps in the lobby; let him educate honourable members on the matter; and then when we come to discuss the subject we shall know all about it. I cannot at present conscientiously support the second reading of the Bill, when the little I know of it is to its disadvantage.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—I have already stated that I shall vote against the second reading of this Bill, and my only object in rising now is to express regret that the honourable member for Marsden felt it his duty to make an attack on the honourable member for Rodney. I wish to say—and I think I shall be borne out by every honourable member who comes from Auckland—that the honourable member for Rodney is one of the most respected members we have from that district. The proof that he does not misrepresent his constituents is that he is here. There is not a member in this House who would be less likely to be chargeable with being connected with land-speculations, or rings of any kind, than the honourable member for Rodney.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—I never charged the honourable member for Rodney with being connected with land-speculations.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—I was not in the House at the time the honourable member for Marsden was speaking, but I heard that he had made a serious attack on the honourable member for Rodney, and I simply rose to express my regret that he had thought proper to do so. I again repeat that there is not a representative from the Auckland District who is more respected than the honourable member for Rodney. I am sure the honourable member for Marsden

will, on mature reflection, regret that he has made such an attack.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I trust the honourable member for Marsden will withdraw the statement. I have had the pleasure of knowing the honourable member for Rodney for two or three sessions, and I must say this of him: that he is a man of his word at all times; and I believe that he conscientiously does his best to represent the people who sent him here. It is unfair to attack the honourable member for Rodney for the purpose of making political capital out of the attack. I was prepared to support the second reading of the Bill brought in by the honourable member for the Bay of Islands, but I understand that the Premier has advised the honourable gentleman to withdraw the measure. I hope it is so. I thought the Bill was going to be withdrawn by a side-wind after discussion, and postponed until next session. Will the Premier say whether he is going to deal with any other Bills to-night?

Major ATKINSON.—No. I want to see this referred to the Waste Lands Committee, and have done with it.

Mr. TAYLOR.—If that is so, I shall not say any more about it. I think what was said about the honourable member for Rodney was very unfair. He is not a loud-talking man, but he is a sensible man, and I believe he honestly endeavours, to the best of his ability, to represent those who send him here: the proof of that is his re-election. This is not his first appearance here; but the honourable member for Marsden may not appear here again. And I am sorry, too, at the references that have been made to the honourable member for Auckland Central. That honourable gentleman sometimes wants assistance in this House, and I shall always be ready to do what I can to assist him, by moving the adjournment or otherwise, to enable him to give the people of the colony the benefit of his matured judgment and reflection. Honourable members may laugh, but the laugh does not come in here. The honourable member for Auckland Central can get elected to the House without a contest; and is not that a sufficient answer to all the abuse which the honourable gentleman gets? There is no member of this House, except, perhaps, myself, who is exposed to so much abuse as that honourable gentleman. I am always met by such accusations as this: "Oh, the honourable member for Sydenham always wants something for his district." Well, I ask those statesmen who say that, what about themselves? We have heard the honourable member for Thorndon, for instance, quite recently, saying, "I find by a return that two or three thousand pounds have been spent in the Addington workshops which ought to have been divided between Dunedin, Auckland, and Wellington." Now, is that a statesman's view? I should like to see those who will manage the railways henceforth manage them from the point of view of the interest of the colony, and not from a merely local-interest point of view. We find the Auckland, Dunedin, and Wellington members always asking questions and

moving for returns, and when they get their answers and returns they say these show that too much money is spent in some particular locality which ought to be distributed throughout the colony. Now, any one who is acquainted with the facts knows that the reason why a larger proportion of the work is done in one particular part of the colony is that it can be done at least 40 per cent. more cheaply there than anywhere else. As to the matter just now before the House, I ask the honourable member for the Bay of Islands, seeing that we have discussed the subject, to withdraw his Bill till next session, and then we may go into the question thoroughly on its merits, which we certainly cannot do this session.

Mr. CADMAN.—Sir, I have listened carefully to all this discussion, and especially to the references made to the honourable member for Rodney by the honourable member for Marsden; and, while listening, the thought flashed through my mind: Supposing it was asked, in the streets of Auckland, to the statements of which of those honourable gentlemen credence would be most likely to be given, what would the answer probably be? There can be no doubt whatever that the statement of the honourable member for Rodney would be taken far in preference to the statement of the honourable member for Marsden—and especially in reference to this subject. Now, as to the railway which is the subject of this Bill, I would ask this: Besides the two honourable members whose districts are to some extent interested, is there one other Auckland member out of the whole twenty who could stand up in this House and support the making of that railway? We have heard a good deal in this House about political railways and rotten railways; but this line, if made, would be both a political railway and a rotten railway. The Auckland people know well that, if the line were running to-morrow—except for the timber in the bush, which would soon be worked out—the line would not pay for the grease used on the axles. There can be no doubt it is a mineral district, and that coal has been found in many places on the route of the proposed line; and, if they want the railway, why do not the people there bore for coal, and prove there are good seams to be worked, before the railway is begun? But, instead of that, the idea seems to be to go the other way about—to get the line made first, and then try to find minerals to make the line pay. No doubt the forest is a valuable one: it cost the Government £12,000 or £14,000, and they could get £50,000 for it to-morrow. There is no doubt that while the bush was being cut and utilised the railway would pay; but directly the bush was all cleared the line could not possibly pay, unless good coal-seams were found and a large coal traffic made. Sir, I felt sorry when I heard the honourable member for Marsden speak in the way he did about the honourable member for Rodney. The honourable member for Rodney, although he does not occupy the time of the House often, yet is always listened to with

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respect when he does speak; he speaks always to the point, and is well worth listening to; and I am sure it will be felt in Auckland, when the personal references which have been made to that honourable gentleman to-day are read, that they are quite unwarrantable.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—Sir, I may say that I had intended voting for the second reading of this Bill; but after the remarks of the honourable member for Marsden I certainly could not do so.

Mr. LAWRY.—Sir, I believe the honourable member for the Bay of Islands deserves well of his constituents for the painstaking manner in which he has brought this Bill before the House. I know the district fairly well, having visited it on many occasions, and I have heard about this railway question from a number of settlers there, who have all expressed their opinion that this would be a beneficial work. I believe that, if a poll of the ratepayers were taken from one end of the district to the other, nine-tenths of the settlers would be found to be in favour of the railway being constructed; and if this Bill were passed I have no doubt a company could be formed which would take the enterprise up; because the bush there is a very valuable one, and I believe also there are many valuable coal-seams in that district. But all this is evidence to me against the Bill, because if the natural resources of the district are so very valuable, if the coal-measures and the timber-supply are likely to give so considerable a traffic, it is evidence to me that this railway should be a national work and not a private one. While, therefore, I am very desirous indeed to see the honourable member for the Bay of Islands have his industry rewarded, I must vote against the second reading of this Bill, for the reasons I have stated.

Mr. TAIWHANGA.—I come from the district which is the subject of this Bill, and I know that we need the railway there, and I think that the district will be able to support it. The Puhipuhi Bush certainly belongs to the Government; but there are other bushes on the route of the railway, and they will give it traffic. I am surprised to find some honourable members speaking against it who have done so. I think the least they can do is to let us have this railway down to the Bay of Islands, because the Bay of Islands is one of the richest districts in New Zealand. We have coal, and we have population there—there are about thirty thousand people there, both English and Maori, contributing to the revenue of the country; and we are paying for the railways in other districts instead of having a railway of our own. That is why we are strongly opposed to paying rates and taxes for the benefit of other districts—for the purpose of giving railroads to Dunedin, Christchurch, and Wellington—while we get none at all. And therefore the best way for us is to pay nothing. I believe that this small railway would be one that would pay well, and certainly benefit our district; and I hope this Bill will be passed. I think honourable members should simply assist

us to get this railway, for the Maori members have assisted them in many things in this House. I think there should be one complete railway in the whole of the North of Auckland district. If my Maori Relief Bill were passed, giving the Maoris control over their lands, we could borrow money on our lands to make our own railways, because we own the best part of the North Island. Why should we not have our own railways as well as the white people? And if my Bill were passed we should have them.

Mr. PARATA.—I wish to say a word on this Bill, and my reason for doing so is that I believe the proposed railway would benefit the Natives in the North Island, and therefore I support the proposal. But I think we should apply to the Waste Lands Committee as to the value of the land in connection with this railway, and I think we should wait for the report of that Committee, and then discuss the whole subject next session. Another thing: we should be able to find out what population is in that district. The honourable member for the Northern Maori District has told us that they have a large quantity of land in that district to support the formation of this railway. Therefore I think that we should vote for the second reading of this Bill, and then leave the matter over until next session, when we could get a report from the Waste Lands Committee.

#### COUNT-OUT.

The attention of Mr. Speaker having been called to the state of the House, and the House having been counted, and a quorum not being found,

Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House at twenty-five minutes to ten o'clock p.m.

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

*Monday, 12th December, 1887.*

Second Readings—Third Readings—Walton Park Coal—Education—Public Works Statement—Pensions—Wellington College and Girls' High School Bill—Land Bill—Local Bodies' Loans Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

#### SECOND READINGS.

Civil Service Reform Bill, Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill.

#### THIRD READINGS.

Civil Service Reform Bill, Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill.

#### WALTON PARK COAL.

Dr. FITCHETT.—Sir, with your leave, and with the indulgence of the House, I beg to be allowed to make a personal explanation. A few days ago I placed on the Order Paper notice of a question relating to the use of Walton Park coal on the southern railways.

I asked that question in consequence of information that had been supplied me, stating that when that coal had been used on locomotives it had thrown off such fumes that the engine-drivers had been rendered unconscious when their trains were passing through long tunnels. Subsequently to that question being asked, the honourable member for Caversham was about to give notice of his intention to ask me the source of my authority, when he was informed by you, Sir, that it was not competent for one private member to put a question to another in the House. Since then I have received a letter from the Walton Park Coal Company, in which they suggest that I was acting from other motives than a sense of public duty in putting the question I did. I desire, therefore, to be allowed to explain. So far from being actuated by any other motive, I desire to say that I have personal friends and political supporters connected with that company, and I should be the very last person to do anything to wantonly or needlessly injure the company. I believe their coal is very good for domestic and manufacturing purposes; but, if my information is true, it is evidently unfitted for use on railway-lines where there are long tunnels, such as some of those on the southern lines. The company, in their letter to me, further suggest that, as their tender for the supply of coal to the railway had been rejected before my notice appeared on the Order Paper, I should not have put it there. If this be so, I did not know it. I was induced to put it there from seeing in a Dunedin paper that a meeting of the company had been held when it was stated that it was likely that the railways of the colony would use the coal; and, knowing what I did about the coal, I deemed it my duty, if possible, to prevent it, at least, until full inquiries had been made. At the time I put the question on the Order Paper I thought that the tenders were still sealed. If I had known that the tender of the company had been rejected I should have seen the Minister privately, and not brought the matter before the House. Knowing what I did, I acted under a serious sense of public duty and responsibility in the matter. It is unnecessary to say that, if my information was correct, there would be terrible risks to life and property in using the coal on railway lines with long tunnels; and I considered it my duty to bring the matter promptly under the notice of the Government. In my judgment it was a matter of urgency. It has also been suggested that I should have interviewed the Minister privately. Well, I thought of that; but it seemed to me to be very unfair to the company for me to approach the Minister privately and behind the back of the company, and say anything to the Minister to the detriment of the company. I took, only after very careful consideration, the step I deemed it my duty to take. I deemed it my duty to suggest that inquiry should be made before the use of the coal on the railway-lines was sanctioned; and I gave my reason. In doing this I gave the company every opportunity of meeting anything that might be said against

*Dr. Fitchett*

their coal. If my information was wrong, no harm could be done to the company—rather good, indeed, for it was a common topic in Dunedin; and I gave the company the most public opportunity of clearing the character of their coal. If, on the other hand, my information was correct—and I firmly believe it to be correct—I think it would have been very wrong if I had not brought the matter under the notice of the Government. I have been asked to give the source of the information on which I asked the question; but, Sir, a member of Parliament is continually receiving from all sorts and conditions of men all sorts of information. We receive that information with the distinct or implied understanding that the source shall not be divulged. I have always so treated such information, and always shall so treat it. The company have ample opportunity of ascertaining if what I have said is true, but I desire to most emphatically disclaim any intention to say anything to the injury of the company.

Mr. BARRON.—I have information from the company, showing that their coal has been analysed by competent persons—amongst others, Professor Black—with the result that it appears to be quite suitable for locomotive purposes. I have also information that it has been properly tried by officers of the Government, and found to be not injurious in the way formerly alleged by the honourable gentleman. I hope the Government will make such inquiries as may set the matter at rest. In justice to the company they are called on to make the promised further inquiry as to the merits of the coal.

#### EDUCATION.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Sir, I move the adjournment of the House to bring up a matter of very great importance. In doing so I wish to say that I have consulted no one on my side of the House in regard to it. It might have been better, perhaps, had I done so; but the subject is one which, to my mind, should not be made a party question. I have no desire whatever to see it made a party question, and I hope it will not be. The question affects the privileges of this House; but I do not bring it forward as a question of privilege, though I have a full sense of the responsibility I incur in bringing the matter forward on a motion for the adjournment of the House. I can only characterize what has been done, which prompts my action now, as one of the most ill-advised acts any Ministry has ever committed, and I think it is calculated to bring the Governor into collision with the House. I wish to call the attention of the House to certain regulations under "The Education Act, 1877," made by the Governor in Council on the 7th December instant, and published in the *Gazette* on the following day. These regulations are of a most extraordinary nature, and I will read the first:—

"From and after the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight, it shall not be lawful for the teacher of any public school to retain upon the roll of his

school, or to place upon such roll, the name of any child whose age is less than six years, or of any child who has passed the Sixth Standard of education prescribed by regulation made under the said Act."

And there are other regulations of the same kind. Sir, I maintain that the issuing of this Order in Council, though it may be quite within the meaning of the Act, is a most ill-advised proceeding, because the House has been discussing that question, and a decision on it is pending in this House. While this House is in session, and while this very question is yet in abeyance before the House, for the Government to take upon itself to issue such regulations is a most extraordinary proceeding, especially when we know that the subject is one of the greatest importance to the whole country. I think, in ignoring the House as they have done in this matter, the Government have done one of the most extraordinary things of which any Government could be guilty. It strikes at the root of all independence of Parliament. It is simply a blow struck at every member of the House, whether he is on the Government side or on the side of the Opposition. Here, while the House is considering a matter of the greatest national importance, and before a decision can be come to by the House, the Government step in and anticipate any decision by issuing these regulations, and say they shall be brought into force at a certain time. I say it shows that the Government are determined to force this course on their own friends—to cause them to sacrifice their own feelings and opinions, whatever they may be. The Government make a matter a foregone conclusion, and then their friends are compelled to support a motion the Ministry bring forward. Sir, this is a most dangerous course, and I am quite sure that honourable members who agree with me will say that it is a very serious blow struck at the privileges of the House. Sir, I do not propose at present to do more than bring the matter under the notice of the House. I am not now going to enter into the subject itself, because I do not wish it to be raised at this juncture—I mean, the expediency of doing what the Government say by these regulations shall be done. I do not wish now to raise a debate on that question, but I consider it a duty incumbent on every member of this House to strictly guard its privileges, so that the House shall not be put in the unfortunate position it is put in by the issue of these regulations. By this course a question in issue is made a foregone conclusion, and we are treated as if we had no voice in the matter. If this is allowed, any Government can, by Order in Council, set the wishes of this House at defiance: they can come to a decision, cause the course they have decided on to be taken, and then they can tell this House that discussion is useless—the matter has already been done. Sir, I have deemed it my duty to bring this matter under the notice of the House, and I will now say no more, but leave it to other honourable members.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I beg to second the motion for the adjournment of the House, not for the purpose of saying much, but simply to indorse what the last speaker has said, and to point out that not only is a serious blow being struck at the privileges of this House, but that a serious blow is also being struck at our education system. I do not know whether the Minister of Education knows the extensive results which will follow upon his action in this matter; but, if not, he ought to be informed of it. If the Order in Council be carried into effect in Otago, it will inevitably diminish the educational revenues of the Board to the extent of 20 per cent., and will thoroughly disorganize the whole system there. I asked the Premier some days ago whether we should have an opportunity of discussing the whole of the educational proposals of the Government, and I understood the Premier, in reply, to say that we should have such an opportunity. But it seems to me that in first issuing this Order in Council, and then promising an opportunity for discussion afterwards, the Government are playing with the House. What is the use of discussing it after it is done? For myself, I think the Order in Council illegal. The Act does not authorise it. If so, then until an amending Act is passed the Government cannot refuse to pay capitation on the full age, and any Board or Committee which is short-paid can sue the Government, and recover the amount due to them, which is really fixed by statute.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I am rather surprised that the honourable gentleman who has brought this matter before the House has not told us whether, in his opinion, it is or is not illegal to make such regulations by Order in Council as appear to have been made. If it is legal—that is to say, if the Act of 1877 provides that an Order in Council may be issued, making regulations such as those I now see before us—I do not see what he has to complain of, because, after all, it is merely one of those acts upon which the House may form a judgment as to whether Ministers possess its confidence or not. It is quite clear to me that if Ministers have power to do this their action is proper in this sense: that they have intimated this change while the House is in session, and while the House has an opportunity of taking their action into consideration. If it is necessary to pass an Act, of course the Order in Council is illegal; but, if the Order in Council is legal, I do not see why we should expect the Government to adopt any other course than they have taken.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I do not deny its legality.

Mr. SAMUEL.—Then, how can you find fault with the Government for having taken such a course? If the action had been taken whilst the House was not in session, and we had no opportunity of considering the matter, then there might have been some reason for complaint. If it had been made while we were not here, we should have had no opportunity of considering it; but, being done while we are here,

and being duly published, it becomes one of those things upon which we may express an opinion—one of those acts by which we may judge as to whether the Government is worthy of our confidence or not. I certainly do not see what we have to complain of if the Order in Council is not *ultra vires*.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—Another phase of this question that ought to be brought before the House is this: There is no doubt that no question occupied the public mind more than did this one during the late election; and I venture to say that a great majority of the members of this House expressed their opinions in respect of this proposal. The proposal before us is that we should pledge ourselves on either one side or the other, while not able to express our opinions as to whether it is justifiable or not in the public interests that this change should be made. That is a strong point which the Government ought to have considered before they issued this regulation.

Major ATKINSON.—I am not going to say that the honourable gentleman who moved the adjournment misunderstands the whole position, but I will say that there is no interference with the privileges of this House, actual or intended. The fact is this: The time is getting very short for giving the Education Boards notice of the intention of the Government, and it was decided to give notice in this way; but the Order in Council does not come into force until after Parliament rises. I have already undertaken to give Parliament an opportunity of discussing this matter, but it seemed desirable to give notice to the Education Boards of the policy of the Government; and there is no harm done. If this House should determine that such a reduction shall not be made, there will be plenty of time to rescind the Order in Council, and it will be the duty of the Government to rescind it if they agree with the decision that the House comes to. I can assure the House that there is not the slightest idea of interfering with its privileges. All we desired to do was to give the Boards timely notice of what we proposed to do.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—Then the House will have a full opportunity of discussing the whole matter?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; I have already promised that the House shall have ample opportunity of expressing its views before the proposals of the Government are given effect to.

Mr. SEDDON.—I received a telegram this morning from the Secretary to the Westland Education Board, which I will read to the House. To the Minister of Education I may say that a number of members were anxious to see him this morning; but he was engaged on other business, and could not give us an audience, or otherwise we intended to consult him upon the subject of the effect of the proposals upon the Westland Education Board. The telegram I received is to the following effect:—

"Just received notice of reduction of capitation to £3 15s., and that payment will be made on strict, instead of working, average. Re-

Mr. Samuel

ported in papers that children under six years and past Standard VI. are also to be excluded. If this be true the Westland Board will lose annually upwards of £1,200, or exactly a fifth of last year's income.—JOHN SMITH, Secretary."

What I complain of in regard to the Order in Council is this: that it was issued by the Government before the House had had an opportunity of deciding upon the financial proposals of the Government; and it is no fault, I would say, of this House that we have not had that opportunity—the Government is solely responsible for that, because during the last three weeks we have been asking them to fix a day when we could go into the discussion and come to a definite conclusion upon their proposals. I regret also that the Government should have gone further by this *Gazette* notice than they proposed to go in their financial proposals. What they said in their proposals was as follows:—

"Our principal proposal will be to limit the capitation grant to the statutory amount of £3 15s. a head, which we think, under the circumstances of the colony, is ample for necessary purposes, and not to pay a capitation upon any child under six years old; but we shall make provision so that no country school shall be closed in consequence of this change."

There are two points on which the *Gazette* notice conflicts with what is here stated. In the first place, the Government now propose to pay upon actual attendance, instead of upon average attendance as heretofore; and that in itself makes a very serious difference to the Board's revenues.

Major ATKINSON.—I would suggest that it will be really spoiling the debate if we debate this matter this afternoon and then have it all over again.

Mr. TURNBULL.—It will not be reported then.

Major ATKINSON.—Oh! yes; all matters connected with finance are reported. And I would suggest that, the time being so short, we should not have two debates.

Mr. SEDDON.—Well, I was just about to finish. The second point I was going to refer to was this: In the Financial Statement the honourable gentleman states distinctly that no school shall be closed in consequence of this change. But if this *Gazette* notice is to be carried out in its entirety it must have the effect of closing schools in the case of Education Boards which have a large number of small schools under their control—Boards such as they have in the Education Districts of Taranaki, Marlborough, Westland, Grey, and such small districts. Their country schools must be closed unless there is a special allowance. These districts are therefore naturally alarmed, because in this *Gazette* there is no provision made for country districts. That is where the *Gazette* notice differs from the Financial Statement, and, naturally enough, the Boards in those places have telegraphed to members representing their districts. As to the question raised by the honourable member for New Plymouth,

as to the legality of this proposal, I would point out that, under section 83 of the Education Act, "school-age" is defined to mean "any age between the years of five and fifteen, reckoned in each case from the last-preceding birthday." That is clear on that point. Then, the 100th section provides the subjects on which the Governor in Council may make, alter, and repeal regulations and orders. The subjects are as follow:—

"(1.) For the organization and management of the Department of Education:

"(2.) For defining the principle on which daily average attendance shall be calculated:

"(3.) For the examination and classification of teachers:

"(4.) For the employment, education, and examination of pupil-teachers:

"(5.) For the issue of certificates of competency to teachers:

"(6.) For the establishment and management of normal or training colleges:

"(7.) For defining the standards of education which, under the provisions of this Act, may be prescribed by regulations:

"(8.) For prescribing the times and manner of auditing the accounts of Boards and Committees:

"(9.) For making such other regulations as may be necessary to secure the due administration of this Act."

It is true that I am only a layman, but it seems to me that where the law clearly defines the subjects on which Orders in Council may be issued, while not one word in the Act bears on the subject now in question, there certainly is no power in the Governor in Council to issue such an order as has been issued in this case. I think it would be much more convenient if we had come to a conclusion on the financial proposals of the Government before this *Gazette* notice was issued, because it does conflict with the financial proposals of the Government in the direction I have pointed out.

Mr. SMITH.—I do not wish to discuss this question at present, but I should like to ask the Premier whether he will give us an opportunity of considering the question as to whether this Order in Council regulating the school-age shall or shall not take effect so far as the country schools are concerned. I wish that the House may have an opportunity of saying that it shall not have effect so far as country schools are concerned—that is to say, schools outside boroughs.

Major ATKINSON.—I have already told the House that it shall have full opportunity of discussing this matter, and that the Government have no intention of injuring any country schools by the reduction. When the matter comes up we shall be able to give full explanation; and I do hope the House will see that no good can be done by debating the matter now.

Mr. BARRON.—I wish to point out that the whole subject is being inquired into by a Select Committee appointed by the House, and, if honourable members will defer discussing the

matter until the report of that Committee is made, they will come to the discussion with information such as no member of the House can at present be expected to be able to lay his hands upon. They will be able to consider the matter not only on the report of that Committee, but also when the estimates are under consideration. I may add that I may claim that there are not many honourable members who are more jealous of any encroachment upon the essentials of our education system, or more anxious to maintain them intact, than I am; and I know, as a member of that Committee, that information has been placed at our disposal which will be exceedingly valuable in considering this question.

Sir G. GREY.—I submit that the real question we have to consider is, whether the Government were authorised in advising the Governor to issue a Proclamation of this kind. I think we should very earnestly consider the conduct of the Government in taking this most serious step, for it is a most serious step to advise the Governor to issue a Proclamation which is unlawful, and which deprives large numbers of children of advantages which the law secures to them; and we should have an opportunity of considering this subject. What confidence can we repose in a Government that does an act of this kind?

Mr. FISH.—There is no doubt that the last speaker is correct in saying that the first thing we ought to do is to consider the fact of the Government having advised the Governor to issue this Proclamation. The honourable gentleman need not be surprised at that, because this is the second Proclamation the Government have issued this session. The other Proclamation was also in direct contravention of the law, and was regarding the election of Mayors on a certain day. That was an illegal Proclamation, issued hastily and without authority; and an Act has been introduced to validate the illegal Proclamation of the Government. And here we find the same thing. I think the honourable member for Timaru has done quite right in raising the question at the present time, not for the purpose of discussing the question of education or the education proposals of the Government, but as to whether the Government is justified or not in issuing an illegal Proclamation. The honourable member for Caversham is very disingenuous in his remarks, for he tells us, in order to prevent honourable members speaking on this subject, to wait till a report from the Committee comes down. It will take a month to get that, and that month will see the end of this session of Parliament; and therefore it is all very well for the honourable member for Caversham, in his new-born zeal for the present Government, to give expression to that opinion, which is calculated to mislead the House. I think we ought to require of the Government of the country that they should be the best acquainted with the law of the land.

Sir G. GREY.—We have not yet had any statement from the Government as to when a day will be fixed for considering this matter.

Major ATKINSON.—I cannot fix a day now, but it will be as early a day as possible; and I undertake that the House shall have an opportunity of discussing it. As I am advised, the Proclamation is not illegal in any sense of the word.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Nothing that has been said has changed the opinion I have formed in respect to this matter. Rather, I think, myself, on looking over the Act, that the honourable member for New Plymouth is probably wrong in his conclusions; but, even if he is not, I contend that while Parliament was sitting it was a most unwise thing to issue this Proclamation. It was quite competent, before that was done, to submit the question at once, and have it decided. If we are to be governed by Orders in Council, I do not see the necessity for honourable members at all; we are quite useless. In reference to this matter, I may say there is one honourable gentleman who is generally remarkable for his probity, but who has had the hardihood to stand up in the House and state that the matter was to be considered by a Committee, and to ask for an extension of one month. It is enough to surprise any member of the House. I was very much astonished at the conduct of that honourable member, because I consider he has hitherto always acted in a fair and open manner; but he now attempts to get rid of fair discussion by a statement which is calculated to mislead the House. He is a member of many years' standing; if he had been a new member he might have been pardoned. I hope the Government will lay on the table the opinion of the Law Officers on this subject. It is a most important subject, or I would not have ventured to call the attention of the House to it as I have done. But I think my duty as a member compelled me to do so, and that had I not done so I should have failed in my duty.

Mr. SAMUEL.—Would it be convenient for the Government to inform the House under what Act and under what section of that Act this Proclamation purports to be made? There are so many Acts on the subject that it would be impossible to look them all up now. Therefore I should be glad if he would say under what Act it was made.

Mr. SEDDON.—I beg to ask the Government if they will lay on the table the opinion of the Crown Law Officers on this matter. If we had that before us it would be more satisfactory.

Major ATKINSON.—I think it would be more convenient to leave this matter where it stands, so that we may go into the whole question when we discuss this particular vote. There can be no harm in that. This is merely putting in form certain proposals of the Government. It would be an advantage to the school bodies, because they would then see definitely what was proposed. Honourable members have, moreover, been informed of this.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—In the meantime, I think the opinion of the Law Officers should be placed on the table of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must point out that, the honourable member for Timaru having replied, I must now put the question.

Motion for adjournment of the House negatived.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—I again ask the Government to lay the opinion of the Law Officers on the table. The Premier knows he is relying on that opinion he has received, and I ask him to submit it to honourable members.

Mr. FISHER.—I suppose the honourable gentleman is quite aware that that would be a most improper thing to do.

#### PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT.

(For all Tables and Returns referred to in this Statement, see Appendix D.-1.)

Mr. MITCHELSON.—Mr. Speaker, in the Statement which I am about to make this evening I shall not attempt, in describing the various works, to go into minute details, as I find that all essential particulars as regards the progress of the construction of the railways and other works are more completely given in the reports of the Engineers—which have already been laid on the table of the House—than I could hope to give them in any Statement of reasonable length. In the case of the several railways which I shall have to treat upon, therefore, I shall merely endeavour to state, as shortly as possible, the present condition of the various lines; the funds already available, and now proposed to be provided for them; the rate at which we propose to expend these funds; and the condition into which the several railways will probably be brought when these funds are expended.

#### RAILWAYS IN COURSE OF CONSTRUCTION AND PROPOSED, INCLUDING ADDITIONS TO OPENED RAILWAYS.

To commence, therefore, with the railways—as I find it has been usual to commence with that class of works—I find that the total length of railways opened on the 31st March last was—in the North Island, 632 miles; and in the South Island, 1,090 miles: total, 1,722 miles. On the 31st October last there were opened for traffic 1,734 miles, of which 632 were in the North Island, and 1,102 in the South Island. There were also at that date 176 miles of railway in course of construction, of which 87 were in the North Island and 89 in the South Island. The total expenditure on railways, including cost of provincial lines and purchase of district railways, up to the 31st March last was £14,082,711; and the liabilities on the 31st March were £486,976; making, in all, £14,569,687.

#### Helensville Northwards.

On the railway from Helensville northwards a contract is in progress for the formation of four miles, and it is expected to be finished during the present month.

Until the line is completed to Kaukapakapa, a distance of seven miles from Helensville, it will not carry much traffic, and it is therefore proposed to complete it to that extent as soon

as practicable; but it is not intended to put a terminal station at Kaukapakapa, as it can be worked as a branch from Helensville until further extended. The funds already provided, with addition of £25,000 now proposed, will complete the railway for traffic for seven miles, up to Kaukapakapa, and will also enable the formation to be extended for a further distance of eight miles. The rate of expenditure proposed is—£10,000 for this year, and £27,000, £20,000, and £17,761 for the three following years: total to end of March, 1891, £74,761.

#### *Auckland to Penrose Doubling-line.*

For the Auckland to Penrose doubling-line an allocation was made under the loan of 1886; but, as it would have gone only a short way towards the completion of what was required, none of the necessary works have as yet been put in hand; and, as the balance necessary to complete the work, some £77,000, cannot conveniently be provided out of the money now proposed to be borrowed, it is not intended at present to take any further steps in the matter.

#### *Grahamstown—Te Aroha.*

On the Grahamstown—Te Aroha Railway the rails are laid from Grahamstown to Kauaeranga, about five miles, and the formation, without bridges, is complete between Kauaeranga and Hikutaia, about eight miles; and in progress, from thence to near Ohinemuri, about six miles. It is expected that the latter section will be finished in July next. From Ohinemuri to Te Aroha, thirteen miles, the contract survey is complete, but works have not yet been put in hand. Total length from Grahamstown to Te Aroha, thirty-two miles.

The funds already provided will complete the line to Ohinemuri, twenty miles from Grahamstown; and it is proposed to put the remainder of the bridging and platelaying still required for this section in hand this year.

The rate of expenditure proposed is—For this year, £10,000; and for the three following years, £15,000, £10,000, and £6,921 respectively: total, £41,921.

#### *Putaruru—Rotorua.*

On the Putaruru—Rotorua Railway a contract has been let for formation, platelaying, and stations from Putaruru to Ngatira, eight miles, and the works are progressing satisfactorily, and are expected to be finished in June next. At the Rotorua end, five miles, between Rotorua and Ngongotaha, have been set aside for Maori piecework, and a considerable extent of formation has already been done by the Natives in a satisfactory manner. The intervening distance between Ngatira and Ngongotaha, about nineteen miles, has been surveyed for a contract, but works have not yet been put in hand. The total length from Putaruru to Rotorua is thirty-two miles.

The funds already provided, with the addition of £18,000 (including £9,000 for rails) now proposed to be allocated, will complete the railway for traffic from Putaruru to the Okohiriki Saddle, a length of eighteen miles, that being

the shortest distance that can be opened with any real advantage, and will also enable communication to be established by road from that point to Ohinemutu, distance about fourteen miles. The rate of expenditure proposed, exclusive of amount required for rails, is—£40,000 for this year, and £25,000, £25,000, and £7,377 for the three following years: total to end of March, 1891, £97,377.

#### *North Island Trunk Railway.*

Coming now to the North Island Trunk Railway, I find, with very much regret, that the original estimate of this line was altogether misleading, the probable cost originally indicated having been £1,360,000, whereas the present estimate, exclusive of the probable costs and charges of raising the loan, and the amount allocated to purchase of Native lands, is £2,085,000. If to this amount there is added, say, £100,000 for raising loans, and also the £100,000 already allocated for Native lands, it brings the total to £2,285,000; and, taking the £1,000,000 already authorised from this, shows £1,285,000 as still required to be authorised in order to complete the whole line from Te Awamutu to Marton.

If the work is to go on, under the altered circumstances now disclosed, then the proposals which I have shown on Table C attached to this Statement, and which I shall presently describe, would, I think, be suitable for adoption in so far as regards the amount of money which might reasonably be expended during the present and three following years at each end of the railway; but before any further work is undertaken I think the House should have an opportunity of expressing its opinion on the new aspect which the matter has assumed; and, in any case, I do not propose to put any new contracts in hand until after next session.

With regard to the alternative route proposed for this railway, I find that the original estimate for the line from Stratford to Te Awamutu was £1,036,000; and at first sight, therefore, this project might appear to have a great advantage as compared with completing the railway from Marton to Te Awamutu; but, excepting that the estimated rate per mile was much higher than that for the central line, we have no guarantee that this estimate is any more accurate than that for the central route, and it would therefore be premature to express any opinion on the subject until a trustworthy estimate of this line is completed for comparison with the revised estimate now made of the central line. It would therefore, I think, be desirable that a survey should be made of the Taranaki route of a more accurate character than those which have hitherto been made, in order that something like a correct estimate may be formed of the probable cost of a railway in that direction. The cost of this survey would not be lost, even if the railway is not made, as the information gained could be utilised in locating a road, which must be made in the future in the event of no railway being made.

The best point to diverge from the Main

Trunk Railway in order to reach Taranaki would be at a point near Maramata, about fifty miles from Te Awamutu; and the cost of construction of railway, complete and equipped for traffic, from Te Awamutu to this point, including due proportion of cost of raising loan and departmental and other expenditure of every kind, is estimated at £500,000. This is inclusive of about £250,000 for expenditure and liabilities already incurred.

The only doubt, therefore, as regards the probable cost of a railway from Te Awamutu to Taranaki is as to the cost of the link between Maramata and Stratford, or wherever might be the best place to join the existing Taranaki Railway. The present estimate of this connection is £800,000; but, as there are no trustworthy data on which such an estimate can be based, it cannot be relied upon as being even approximately accurate.

In connection with this phase of the subject it should also be stated that the expenditure and liabilities (with a reasonable margin for contingencies) on account of works already undertaken between Maramata and Marton—including surveys £16,000, roads £40,000, Native-land purchase £100,000, and a due proportion of departmental expenditure and costs and charges of raising loans—will amount to within a trifle of £300,000; and if any further contracts are let at the south end of the line this amount will of course be increased.

Having thus dealt with the subject generally, I will now proceed to state the present condition of the line, and the rate of expenditure per annum which could reasonably be undertaken upon it, if decided to be carried on, and also the points to which that expenditure would probably carry the railway at each end by the end of the financial year 1890-91.

*North End.*—At the north end the railway is completed and ready for traffic from Te Awamutu to Te Kuiti, a distance of twenty-five miles and a half; and from Te Kuiti to the Upper Mokau Valley, length nine miles, a contract for formation and platelaying is in progress, and expected to be completed in December, 1888. From the Upper Mokau Valley to the Poro-o-tarao Range, eleven miles, the contract survey is completed; but works have not yet been put in hand. Through the Poro-o-tarao saddle a contract of a mile and a half is in progress, including a tunnel of fifty-three chains. Total length from Te Awamutu to end of tunnel contract, forty-seven miles. South of the tunnel a contract survey has been made for about eight miles, to the Maramata Junction. During the four years ending the 31st March, 1891, which is the extent of the programme which I have sketched out so far, it is proposed that the line shall be carried on steadily from Te Kuiti to near Maramata, in the Ongarue Valley, about fifty-five miles from Te Awamutu, this being the point at which a line could diverge to Taranaki. And the rate of expenditure indicated is £70,000 for this year, and £75,000, £75,000, and £80,000 for the three following years: total to end of March, 1891, £300,000.

*Mr. Mitchelson*

*South End.*—At the south end of the railway the section from Marton to Hunterville, nineteen miles, is nearly completed, and will be ready for opening about Christmas. From Hunterville, for about twenty-five miles, to a point about five miles up the Hautapu Valley, the contract survey is completed, and a contract for about eight miles of it is prepared, but the works have not yet been put in hand. The contract survey is also in progress for a further distance of about nineteen miles, to the end of the rough country at Turangarere, near the head of the Hautapu Gorge, sixty-three miles from Marton. As in the case of the works at the north end of the line, the proposal indicated on Table C is to carry on steadily from Marton for the four years ending 31st March, 1891, by which time it is anticipated that the railway will have reached to Powhakarua, near the mouth of the Hautapu Valley, a distance of about thirty-two miles from Marton; and the rate of expenditure suggested is £25,000 for this year, and £35,000, £40,000, and £42,000 for the three following years: total to end of March, 1891, £143,000.

After carrying out these proposals at both north and south ends of the line, it is estimated that there will be a balance of loan still available for further works to the extent of about £54,000.

*Further Works and Surveys.*—Further preliminary surveys have been made for the railway to extent of about twelve miles, at various places between the Murimotu and Waimarino Plains, and to extent of about twenty miles between the Waimarino Plains and the Upper Wanganui Valley; and service roads and tracks in connection with the railway have been made, in whole or in part, from Hunterville to Turangarere, twenty-four miles; Upper Rangitikei to Turangarere, four miles; Pipiriki to Ohakune, twenty-five miles; Murimotu to Upper Wanganui Valley, fifty miles; and Te Koura to Waimiha, fourteen miles. The Wanganui River has also been cleared of snags and otherwise improved from Wanganui to near Pipiriki, about fifty-six miles. The expenditure and liabilities on these roads and river-works up to the 30th September last were £39,239.

*Purchase of Native Lands.*—Of the £100,000 allocated for purchase of Native lands under the loan for the North Island Trunk Railway, about £70,300 was expended last year, leaving about £29,700 for expenditure during the present year.

The work done up to 30th November ultimo consisted of the purchase of 490,000 acres, at a cost of £54,100; and there is now under negotiation the purchase of blocks aggregating about 750,000 acres, on which £33,000 has already been paid. The lands purchased and under negotiation are situated mainly around Ruapehu and Tongariro, with the Wanganui River as their boundary on the west. The surveyed line of railway intersects the purchased land for forty-five miles, and that under negotiation for about fifteen miles, or sixty miles in all, out of the total 216 miles between Marton and Te Awamutu.



*Napier-Palmerston.*

The Napier to Palmerston Railway was completed and opened for traffic to Woodville (ninety-seven miles from Napier Spit) in March last, and now only remains to be completed from Woodville to Palmerston, a distance of about fifteen miles. Of this distance, four miles in the Manawatu Gorge is under contract for formation and bridges, exclusive of tunnels, and is expected to be finished in October, 1888. From Woodville to the upper end of the Gorge, three miles, and from the lower end of the Gorge to Palmerston, eight miles, the contract survey is completed; but works have not yet been put in hand.

To complete this very important link in the railway system of the colony an addition to existing funds is required to the extent of £120,000 (which includes £22,000 for rails), and this sum is proposed to be allocated to it accordingly; and it is hoped that the work will be completed by March, 1890. In order to get it done by that time it will be necessary to proceed at once with the tunnels in the Manawatu Gorge, and to let a contract for the Pohangina Bridge as soon as practicable.

The rate of expenditure proposed, exclusive of amount required for rails, is £40,000 for this year, and £50,000 and £70,813 respectively for the two following years: total to the end of March, 1890, £160,813.

*Wellington-Woodville.*

The Wellington-Woodville Railway is completed and open for traffic from Wellington to Mangamahoe, a distance of eighty-two miles; and a combined road- and railway-bridge has been constructed over the Manawatu River at Awapurua, near Woodville. From Mangamahoe to Eketahuna, length six miles, a contract for formation and platelaying is progressing satisfactorily, and is expected to be completed in August, 1888. Total distance from Wellington to Eketahuna, eighty-eight miles. From Eketahuna to Woodville, twenty-seven miles, the contract survey is completed, but works have not yet been put in hand. Total length from Wellington to Woodville, 115 miles.

The balance of the old loan will finish the line to Eketahuna, and complete some protective works which are requisite at the Awapurua Bridge. It is not proposed to provide for anything further at present.

The rate of expenditure proposed is £37,000 for this year, and £24,421 for next year: total to the end of March, 1889, £61,421.

In relation to the distance, just stated, from Wellington to Woodville by the Rimutaka route, 115 miles, it may be interesting to honourable members to know also the distance by the Palmerston route, which is 105 miles.

*Blenheim-Awatere.*

On the Blenheim-Awatere Railway the formation, without bridging, is made for four miles and a half, south of Blenheim; and a contract, called the Dashwood contract, has also been let for formation three miles and a half further, and is progressing slowly. It is estimated that

the works will be finished in February next. From the end of the Dashwood contract to the Dashwood Pass, two miles and a half, the contract survey is completed, but works have not yet been put in hand. Total length from Blenheim to Dashwood Pass, ten miles and a half. A preliminary survey has been made from the Pass to a convenient stopping-place on the southern bank of the Awatere, five miles and a half further. This makes the total distance from Blenheim to Awatere sixteen miles.

To complete the line to the Awatere would cost about £99,000, which is much more than could be afforded for it out of the loan now proposed. It has therefore been decided to recommend an allocation of £9,000 only, by means of which, in conjunction with existing funds, it will be possible to complete the first five miles at the Blenheim end for traffic, and to connect it with the Awatere by a dray-road, and also to build the railway-bridge over the Awatere, for use in the meantime as a road-bridge. This will be a great boon to the locality, as the river is a very dangerous one to cross, and is also the only large river remaining unbridged between Picton and the Bluff.

The rate of expenditure proposed is—For this year £7,000, and for the two following years £15,000 and £18,675 respectively: making, in all, £40,675.

*Greymouth-Hokitika.*

On the Hokitika to Greymouth Railway, at the Hokitika end, the line is finished and ready for traffic from Hokitika to near the Arahura, four miles; and between that point and the Kapitea Creek, seven miles, the formation is partly made, and the bridge over the Arahura River is completed.

At the Greymouth end the rails are laid for a mile and a half, and the formation is partly made for a further distance of seven miles and a half, to the Teremakau River, and a contract has been let for the bridge over the Teremakau. The total length finished and under construction at the two ends is thus twenty miles. This leaves a gap of four miles between the Kapitea and the Teremakau, on which no work has been done, pending final decision as to route; and it is intended that exhaustive inquiries shall be made as to the best route to adopt throughout this distance before any works along it are undertaken.

The money already available, with the addition of £2,000 now proposed to be allocated for the purchase of further rails, will finish this line, with permanent-way complete, for nine miles at the Greymouth end and four miles at the Hokitika end, and will also complete the formation from the fourth to the eleventh mile at the Hokitika end; and it is proposed to go on with the works to that extent without delay.

The rate of expenditure proposed, exclusive of amount required for rails, is for this year £24,000, and for the next two years £20,000 and £19,904 respectively: the total sum available for construction-works being £63,904.

*Mount Somers.*

The Mount Somers Railway is completed and open for traffic from Tinwald to Mount Somers, a distance of twenty-three miles; and from Mount Somers to Springburn, length four miles. The work is in progress by the "unemployed" of Christchurch. It is estimated that this length will be completed in May next. Total distance from Tinwald to Springburn, twenty-seven miles.

The funds provided for this work under the loan of 1886 are already exhausted; but it is proposed to allocate £7,000, including £2,000 for rails, out of the loan now contemplated, in order to finish the line to Springburn, which is a very convenient stopping-place. If this is authorised the whole work can be completed by about the end of the present financial year.

The rate of expenditure proposed, exclusive of amount required for rails, is £7,000 for this year, and £2,027 for next year; the total sum available for construction-works as from the 31st March last, including the additional sum now proposed to be allocated, being £9,027.

*Livingstone Branch.*

The Windsor - Livingstone Railway, from Windsor to Tokaraki, twelve miles, was completed and opened for traffic in August last. It is not intended to carry it any further at present, the sum of £1,000 allocated to it under loan, now proposed, being merely to provide for some additional accommodation required at the stations.

*Otago Central.*

On the Otago Central Railway the rails are laid from the Chain Hills to Big Mount Allen Creek, thirteen miles; and the formation and tunnels are completed for a further distance of about twenty miles to the Sutton Stream. Throughout this distance also, from Big Mount Allen Creek to the Sutton, the masonry of the bridges is under contract and making satisfactory progress; and a contract has also been entered into for the superstructure of the bridges along seven miles of the distance between Big Mount Allen Creek and the Deep Stream. It is estimated that the line will be ready for opening to the Deep Stream (twenty miles from the commencing-point) about September next.

From the Sutton Stream to Middlemarch the distance is seven miles, and from Middlemarch to Lake Hawea about 143 miles; and along the whole of this distance the contract survey is completed, but no works have as yet been put in hand. The total length, from Chain Hills to Lake Hawea, is 183 miles.

The balance of the loan of 1886 being insufficient to complete this railway to the first point to which it could be opened with any real advantage, it is proposed to supplement the funds already provided by a further sum of £105,000, including £20,000 for rails, which, it is estimated, will enable the railway to be completed for traffic from Chain Hills to Middlemarch, a distance of forty miles; and, if our proposals in this respect are authorised, this work will be carried out with all reasonable despatch.

*Mr. Mitchelson*

The rate of expenditure proposed, exclusive of amount required for rails, is—For this year £70,000, and for the next two years £60,000 and £40,974 respectively: the total amount available for construction-works, including the additional sum now proposed to be allocated, being £170,974.

*Catlin's River.*

The Catlin's River Railway is completed and open for traffic from Balclutha to Romahapa, a distance of eight miles; and from Romahapa to the Ahuriri Flat, length about five miles. The formation is under construction by "unemployed" from Dunedin, and is progressing satisfactorily. It is estimated that this length will be finished in May or June next. From the Ahuriri Flat, over the saddle, and to the Owake Flat, about six miles, the contract survey is completed; but works have not yet been put in hand.

The money already provided for this railway under loan of 1886 will finish it from Romahapa to the Ahuriri Flat, and will also complete the formation for two miles further.

The rate of expenditure proposed is—For this year £12,000, and for the next two years £15,000 and £10,398 respectively: making, in all, £37,998, which was the total balance of the allocation of 1886 on the 31st March last.

*Riversdale-Switzers.*

On the Riversdale-Switzers Railway the rails are laid from Riversdale to the Mataura River, a distance of two miles; and the formation, exclusive of bridges, is constructed for five miles further; and the contract survey is completed throughout. The total length from Riversdale to Switzers is fourteen miles.

The balance of the allocation for this railway under loan of 1886 is only sufficient to complete it, with permanent-way, &c., from Riversdale to a point on the north side of the Mataura River, a distance of three miles, and to do the formation from thence to the Switzers Township, eleven miles further. It would require a further sum of £15,000 to complete it altogether, and this amount the Government does not see its way to provide out of the loan at present proposed, as there are so many more-promising undertakings which also require to be completed. It is therefore merely proposed to go on with the expenditure of the funds in hand for this line so far as they will reach.

The rate of expenditure proposed is—For this year £3,000, and for the next three years £5,000, £5,000, and £6,646 respectively; which makes up the total available at the 31st March last—namely, £19,642.

*Seaward Bush.*

The Seaward Bush Railway is completed and opened for traffic from Appleby to Waimatua, a distance of about five miles; and from Waimatua to Oteramika, length about six miles, the work is in progress by the "unemployed," and expected to be finished about the end of March next. From Oteramika to Waimahaka, twelve miles, the contract survey is completed; but no works have as yet been put in hand.

Total length from Appleby to Waimahaka, twenty-three miles.

The balance of loan of 1886, together with £10,000 (including £5,000 for rails) proposed to be allocated under loan now contemplated, will be sufficient to finish the line for traffic to Oteramika; and, if the allocation proposed is approved of, the work can be completed by April or May next.

The rate of expenditure proposed, exclusive of amount required for rails, is £5,000 for this year, and £2,508 for next year: the total funds available for construction-works as at the 31st March last, including additional sum now proposed to be allocated, being £7,508.

#### *Lumsden-Mararoa.*

The Lumsden-Mararoa Railway is completed as far as it is contemplated to carry it at present, being open for traffic from Lumsden to Mossburn, a distance of ten miles and a half.

#### *Edendale-Fortrose.*

The Edendale-Fortrose Railway is completed and opened from Edendale to Wyndham, a distance of four miles; and the formation is finished for three miles and a half further. A contract has also been let for another two miles, including a tunnel ten chains long. This brings the line to the crossing of the main road at Glenham Homestead. It is estimated that the tunnel-works will be finished by about the end of March next. The total distance from Edendale to Glenham is nine miles and a half. From Glenham to the Waimahaka Valley, nine miles further, the contract survey is completed; but no works have as yet been put in hand.

The money already provided under the loan of 1886 will complete this railway to the crossing of the main road at the Glenham Homestead already referred to, and it is not proposed to carry it any further at present.

The rate of expenditure proposed is—For this year £9,000, and for next year £18,656, making, in all, £27,656: and it is hoped that the line will be completed to Glenham by about March, 1889.

#### ADDITIONS TO OPENED LINES.

The expenditure on additions to opened lines, which includes a multiplicity of works, such as additional railway-stations, additional goods-sheds and engine-sheds, additional sidings, and additional rolling-stock, &c., has in the past been a very considerable item of our outgoings under the Public Works Fund: the amount thus expended in 1883-84 having been £174,169; in 1884-85, £140,326; in 1885-86, £90,962; in 1886-87, £79,761. It will thus be seen that the expenditure has been continuously decreasing, the fact being that the railways in many cases were very poorly equipped previous to 1883-84, while they are at present fairly well equipped in every particular. I anticipate, therefore, that the expenditure which I have provided for during the present and the next three following years on this class of works will be sufficient—namely, for the present year, £40,000; and for

the three following years, £39,000, £29,000, and £19,239 respectively; and I am in hope that after the year 1890-91 works of this character will have become so insignificant that they can be made a charge on revenue.

#### WORKING RAILWAYS.

Coming now to the working railways, I find that the receipts for the year ending the 31st March last were £998,768, and the expenditure £699,072; the net profit being £299,696, or £2 6s. per cent. on the outlay of £18,017,567 which the lines open for traffic had cost up to the end of March last.

The rates of profit on the different sections have varied from £5 10s. 2d. on the Greymouth Section to 11d. on the Pictou Section.

In considering this profit it should be borne in mind that the railways do a large amount of free work for other departments, probably to the extent of about £35,000 per annum.

The mileage open at the end of the year was 1,722 miles, 114 miles having been opened or purchased during the year.

The tables attached to the report of the General Manager, which have already been laid before the House, show in what respects the traffic has fluctuated. It will be seen that in merchandise, timber, and grain there is a less tonnage, while live-stock, wool, and minerals have considerably increased.

Honourable members will find it very interesting to study these tables, as there is no better index to the business of the colony than what we have disclosed in the railway returns. Revenue is of course largely affected by the rates which are charged, but the tonnage very clearly indicates the volume of business in the colony.

Thus, in the case of the farming interests, the tonnage of grain being much smaller than in previous years, and being indeed less than in any year since 1879-80, while the traffic in live-stock and wool has largely increased, shows clearly that greater attention is being paid to sheep and cattle, and that the area of country under crop has been reduced.

Again, as regards the building trade, the timber-tonnage on railways having been very much less shows that this trade, during the year ending March last, must have been in a depressed state.

During the year ending March last a large amount of additional rolling-stock, which has been almost entirely built in the colony, has been supplied; and improvements of various kinds, at stations and on the various lines of railway, have been carried out, whereby public accommodation has been increased or working facilitated.

None of the engines which are being manufactured in the colony have yet been completed, but delivery of some of them is expected about the end of the year.

The result of the working during the present financial year, up to the period ending the 15th October, is that the revenue for the twenty-eight weeks of this year is nearly £20,000 in

excess of that for the corresponding period last year, while the expenditure is slightly less.

In the short time I have had at my disposal I have not been able to examine closely into all matters of detail; but reductions in expenditure are being made wherever I have seen them to be possible; and I believe that still further economies can be effected, even with the considerable addition to our business which I confidently look forward to, as I am assured that we may expect a largely-increased grain-tonnage this season.

It may be well, however, to remind honourable members that economy can very often be effected by reducing conveniences which have been previously enjoyed, but which are in some cases too liberal for the small population and the business which requires to be done. All such endeavours to economize are, however, generally stoutly resisted in the particular districts where the necessary economies are attempted to be carried out.

Under ordinary circumstances there would be many other matters which I should properly be expected to deal with; but, as circumstances at present stand, I shall not attempt to indicate in detail the directions in which I may think that the management might be improved, the revenue increased, and the expenditure reduced, because the Government has already stated that, in its opinion, the groundwork of the system is defective, and that it is essential for the proper administration of this valuable property that Commissioners should be appointed who can act independently, and who will deal with the railways and conduct their business unfettered by political control. For this purpose I have prepared a Bill, which is now before the House; and I believe that, great as are the benefits which the colony has already derived from its railway system, much better results may be reasonably expected if the proposals now before Parliament are assented to.

Before leaving this branch of my subject, however, I would wish to repeat what has already been said by my colleague the Colonial Treasurer—namely, that I have no fault to find with the officers of the Railway Department. While the groundwork of the system, however, involves continual change, and want of finality in any principle of action, no good can come of it; but I expect to learn that, under the Commissioners, officers who have served the colony faithfully for many years will do much more useful work in the future than the surrounding circumstances have admitted of their doing in the past.

#### ROADS.

The next subject which I have to treat upon is that of roads of all classes; and, before going into the details of this subject, it may be interesting to honourable members that I should give them the results of a return recently prepared, showing the length of roads constructed and improved in the colony generally out of the Public Works Fund from the commencement of the public-works policy. These I find to be as follow:—

*Mr. Mitchelson*

Dray roads—			Miles.
North Island ..	..	..	3,284
Middle Island ..	..	..	1,108
Total ..	..	..	<u>4,342</u>
Horse roads—			
North Island ..	..	..	2,452
Middle Island ..	..	..	1,126
Total ..	..	..	<u>3,578</u>

Grand total of roads of all classes.. 7,920

Mostly in connection with these roadworks, but in some cases as separate undertakings, a number of large bridges have also been constructed, not to mention smaller bridges and culverts which have been taken no special account of; and I find that the number of these large bridges is—In the North Island, 611 bridges, having a total length of 48,239ft.; and in the South Island, 154 bridges, having a total length of 32,750ft.: total for both Islands, 765 bridges, having a total length of 80,989ft.

ROADS NORTH OF AUCKLAND, MAIN ROADS, MISCELLANEOUS ROADS AND BRIDGES, AND GRANTS IN AID.

#### Roads north of Auckland.

On roads north of Auckland the expenditure for the year ending on the 31st March last was £30,738, and from the end of March to the end of September there was a further expenditure of £2,957, leaving a balance then available, out of the amounts provided for this class of works, to the extent of only £913. Of this sum, £420 is due to counties under grants already made; so that there is only £493 remaining for any further undertakings.

A further allocation for this class of works would be very desirable; but the area of country requiring development is so great, and the counties requiring aid are so numerous, that nothing short of £50,000 or £60,000 would be sufficient to attain any material benefit, and the Government has not seen its way to making an allocation to anything like that extent.

#### Main Roads.

The works undertaken by the Government under the head of "Main Roads" consist, principally, of the maintenance of the roads from Oxford to Rotorua, Tauranga to East Cape, Tauranga to Napier *via* Taupo, Nelson to Westport, Greymouth, and Hokitika, Hokitika to Christchurch, and the Haast Pass Track. The amount expended on this class of works during the last four years has ranged from about £32,000 to £22,000, and the amount proposed for the present and next three years ranges from about £19,000 to £5,000, the intention being to gradually reduce the charge for this class of works against the Public Works Fund until it disappears altogether at the end of the fourth year, handing over such of the works as can reasonably be so handed over to the local bodies, and providing for the others out of the Consolidated Fund.

*Miscellaneous Roads and Bridges.*

Under the head of "Miscellaneous Roads and Bridges" a number of new works have from time to time been undertaken, varying in extent during the last four years from about £61,000 to about £40,000 per annum, and we have thought it necessary to make provision for the completion of such of these works as are incomplete, and also to some extent for works of a similar character in the future. It is proposed, however, that the expenditure shall be gradually reduced, for the present and three following years, from £85,000 to £5,000 per annum, and it is intended to stop such expenditure altogether at the end of the fourth year. The principal works in hand during last year have been—Improvements in road from Lyell to Westport, cost about £5,000; bridge over the Buller River at the Lyell, for which a contract is in progress, estimated total cost about £9,500; bridge over the Waiau at the Hanmer Plains, cost about £15,000; bridge over the Clarence River, now completed, cost about £18,600; road, Kaikoura to Clarence, estimated cost £12,000; road, Kaikoura to Waiau, also now completed, cost about £31,500; and bridges over the Clutha at Beaumont and Roxburgh which have cost, respectively, about £12,500 and £9,900.

*Grants in Aid (including Roads under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, Subsidies to Local Bodies under Finance and Powers Act, and Provision for Work for "Unemployed").*

*Roads under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act.*—The transactions under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act have been brought almost to a conclusion. The only grants made during the past financial year were for completing some bridges in Collingwood and Tuapeka Counties that had been commenced under the provisions of the Act, and the amount thus granted only came to £314.

The liabilities outstanding on the 31st March last were £12,932—namely, £11,648 on main roads, and £1,284 on district roads.

Since the 31st March these liabilities have been largely paid off, and the only important undertaking that is still unfinished is the Wairoa Bridge at Clyde, which is well advanced, and is expected to be completed by about the end of March next. The remaining liabilities consist of sundry small balances, several of which have been outstanding for a long while; and, as it is considered that the time has now come when all transactions under the Roads and Bridges Act should be closed, the local bodies have been informed that these balances will shortly be written off, unless good reason is shown to the contrary.

*Subsidies to Local Bodies.*—As regards subsidies to local bodies under the Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Act, my colleague the Colonial Treasurer has already, in his Financial Statement, alluded to this subject, so I shall do no more than reiterate that it is proposed to reduce the amount of subsidies paid last year by

one-half for the current year, and provision has been made in the current year's estimates for this purpose.

Further provision will also be made under the Public Works Fund for half the subsidies due next year, in the event of its not being practicable to throw them entirely on the Consolidated Fund before that date; but, in any case, they will cease to be a charge on the Public Works Fund after March, 1890.

*Work for "Unemployed."*—It is to be regretted that, owing to the depressed condition of the country, it has been necessary for some time past to expend considerable amounts of money on more or less unproductive undertakings, in order to provide work for the unemployed, and these amounts have hitherto been mostly charged to loan.

As the Government, however, does not consider that any moneys expended on relief-works are a proper charge to loan funds, it is intended that, for the future, only such amounts for "unemployed" shall be charged to loan as are expended on works of a reproductive character. And, if further assistance than that is required to meet the "unemployed" difficulty, it is intended to provide for it out of consolidated revenue.

It is also considered that no relief-works that can possibly be avoided should be undertaken, as we believe that it is detrimental to the interests of the men themselves to keep them employed on purely relief-work,—which, after all, is merely another name for charitable aid.

One of the great difficulties in connection with the matter is to get the men out of the towns and into the country; but this difficulty must be got over, as it is out of the question that we can continue to provide work within the towns, and we have therefore determined that such further work as is provided should be entirely in the country districts, and of, so far as possible, an immediately-reproductive character.

On the class of works hitherto undertaken for providing work for the "unemployed" the expenditure last year was £16,629; and provision has been made for further expenditure, if requisite, to the extent, in all, of about £30,000 for the present and three following years.

#### ROADS TO OPEN UP CROWN LANDS BEFORE SALE, ALSO VILLAGE SETTLEMENTS.

*Roads to open up Crown Lands.*—The important work of rendering the Crown lands more accessible to settlement, by the clearing and formation of road-lines, has been and is being promoted extensively throughout the colony, as will be seen from the annual report of the Survey Department for the year 1886-87.

The expenditure on this class of works has been very considerable, having been about £84,000 in 1883-84, £49,000 in 1884-85, £62,000 in 1885-86, and £57,000 in 1886-87; and for the present year the expenditure will have to be about £60,000. In the two following years, however, it is proposed to considerably diminish the expenditure, the amount proposed for

1888-89 being £45,000, and for 1889-90 being £20,000, subject to some slight modifications, which I shall refer to presently under the head of village settlements; but it is not anticipated, in any case, that the expenditure out of the Public Works Fund should proceed beyond 1889-90, as my colleague the Minister of Lands hopes that by that time he will have sufficient revenue in the shape of Land Fund to cover works of this character which may require to be done.

**Village Settlements.**—For village settlements the expenditure during the year ending 1886-87, on the basis of the vote of £5,000 then granted for this class of undertakings, was £1,891; and it has been found necessary to make further provision to the extent of £72,200, to cover the expenditure of £4,092 between March and September last, and the liabilities of £68,118 existing at the end of September: total, £72,150, or, in round numbers, £72,200. Under this allocation it was anticipated that the expenditure would be £23,000 this year, and £20,000, £20,000, and £9,200 respectively for the three following years; but the Government has since been given to understand that the liabilities, as stated at the end of September, may possibly not all accrue, and that consequently something less than the £72,200 may eventually be found to be sufficient: and, if this is so, the balance thus saved will be made available for further works in the shape of roads to open up lands before sale.

#### ROADS ON GOLDFIELDS.

Coming now to the last of our very numerous classes of roads—between some of which, I may say, the line of demarcation is so very slight that they are rather apt to overlap—I find that on account of roads on the goldfields the expenditure for the four years ending March, 1887, has been, in round numbers, £27,000, £15,000, £32,000, and £32,000 respectively; while for the present and two following years the amounts proposed to be provided are £31,000, £30,000, and £10,760 respectively. The amount thus allocated for next year is large, but most of it will be required to meet existing engagements.

#### WATERWORKS ON GOLDFIELDS.

On account of waterworks on the goldfields the expenditure during the last four years has been, respectively, in round numbers, £16,000, £8,000, £9,000, and £7,000; while for this year and next year the expenditure proposed is only £1,200 and £800 respectively, the intention being merely to complete certain works which are in hand, as it is considered that works of this character can be more satisfactorily carried out by private enterprise.

#### PURCHASE OF NATIVE LANDS, NORTH ISLAND.

On the purchase of Native land in the North Island (exclusive of land along the North Island Main Trunk Railway) the expenditure during the last four years has been, in round numbers, respectively, £24,000, £70,000, £34,000, and £18,000. For this year the expenditure re-

quired to meet engagements will amount to about £12,000; but, as £11,000 will come to the credit of the vote from the fund provided for land-purchase along the North Island Main Trunk Railway, the actual charge this year will amount to only about £1,000; and for the next two years the expenditure is proposed to be £10,000 and £5,000 respectively. The total allocation proposed for this purpose is, thus, £16,000.

The amount of land in respect of which transactions were completed under this heading, and which has consequently become the property of the Crown, for the period from the 31st March, 1886, to the 30th September last was 207,000 acres; and the area of land in respect of which negotiations are still pending, and upon which more or less payments have been made, is about 575,000 acres.

#### IMMIGRATION.

As regards the important question of immigration, I find that, for the period between the 1st May, 1886, and the 30th November, 1887, 1,460 nominated immigrants have arrived in the colony, towards the cost of whose passages the sum of £12,162 15s. has been contributed by their friends in the colony.

During the above period eighty farmers have arrived who satisfied the Agent-General that they were possessed of the requisite capital (amounting, in all, to £34,405) as required by the regulations of the 28th September, 1885.

The total number of immigrants, exclusive of small farmers, introduced since the inauguration of the immigration scheme by the Colonial Government is 113,953.

Details of the nationalities and classes of the immigrants introduced to the 30th April, 1887, will be found in Parliamentary Paper D.-9, 1887, presented last session.

The expenditure on immigration during the last four years has been, respectively, in round numbers, £107,000, £57,000, £12,000, and £12,000; and for this and the three following years the expenditure proposed is, respectively, £16,720, £20,000, £20,000, and £14,000, being a total allocation for immigration purposes, out of funds in hand and now proposed, amounting to £70,720.

#### TELEGRAPH EXTENSION.

As regards the subject of telegraph extension, I find that during the present financial year telegraph or telephone communication has been established between Clevedon and Papakura, Pukekohe and Mauku, Tahoraite and Danevirke, Springston and Prebbleton, Upper Riccarton and Middleton; and a line is now in course of construction from Masterton to Mauriceville and Mangamahoe.

The proposals for further telegraph extension in the estimates for the present year include the construction of lines between Kaipara Heads and Te Kopuru, Blenheim and Awatere, Ophir and Tinker's (Matakanui), Miller's Flat and Lawrence, Henley and Berwick, and the erection of an additional wire between Wellington and Auckland by way of Foxton, Wood-

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ville, and Napier, as well as a local wire from Foxton to Woodville.

The expenditure for the last four years has been, respectively, about £19,000, £26,000, £36,000, and £19,000; and for the present and three following years the amounts proposed are £20,100, £10,000, £6,000, and £5,000, the intention being that the cost of future extensions of the telegraph system should be gradually thrown on the Consolidated Fund, and that after March, 1891, no further expenditure of this character shall be charged to loan funds.

#### PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

The principal public buildings in course of erection during last year were some additions to the Lunatic Asylums in Christchurch and Auckland, the construction of a new Printing-office in Wellington, and the continuation of the works for the new prisons at Wellington and Auckland. During the current year it is proposed to put in hand gasworks and a doctor's residence at Seacliff Asylum; a doctor's residence and farm-buildings, &c., at the asylum at Sunnyside; and the addition of a male wing to the asylum at Auckland. It is also proposed to ask for a vote for a new asylum at Porirua, for the Wellington District; and also for the long-proposed public offices in Auckland.

The re-erection of the Post Office in Wellington will shortly be undertaken; but, as the Government considers that this is not properly chargeable to loan, it has been determined to provide for it out of consolidated revenue.

On public buildings generally the expenditure during the last four years has been, in round numbers, respectively, £164,000, £117,000, £87,000, and £89,000; and during the present year the liabilities already incurred are such, especially in respect of lunatic asylums, school-buildings, and the Printing-office at Wellington, that the expenditure will have to be about £109,000. It is proposed, however, to materially reduce the expenditure out of loan on this class of works during the following three years, the amounts proposed being respectively £69,700, £26,000, and £7,600.

The total amount allocated for public buildings during the four years is, thus, £212,410, of which departmental buildings, including the Wellington Printing-office and the Auckland departmental offices, will absorb £40,000; judicial buildings, including the gaols at Auckland and Wellington, £34,550; lunatic asylums, including a new asylum at Porirua and additions to the asylum buildings at Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin, £77,000; and school-buildings, £50,000.

As regards school-buildings, I should mention that provision is only proposed to be made for this year's grant, together with the liabilities which will probably exist at the end of the year, the intention of the Government being that after the end of this financial year provision should be made for this class of work in some way other than by drawing on the Public Works Fund.

#### LIGHTHOUSES AND HARBOUR WORKS.

*Lighthouses.*—On lighthouses the expendi-

ture during recent years has never been very large, the amounts expended during the last four years being, respectively, about £6,700, £7,400, £300, and £3,300; and for this and next year the expenditure proposed is £4,300 and £4,000 respectively, making, in all, £23,300 as the total amount intended to be devoted to this class of works out of funds available and now proposed.

The amount so allocated is principally for the Cuvier Island Lighthouse, the apparatus and lantern for which have already been received in the colony; and plans for the tower, which is to be of cast-iron, have also been prepared, ready to call for tenders. Steps are also being taken to acquire the land for the buildings, and it is proposed to shortly commence the necessary works on the island to complete this long-promised undertaking.

*Harbour Works.*—For harbour works a sum of £500 only has been allocated, and it has already been expended, being the balance of a grant of £1,500 made under vote of last year to the Hokitika Harbour Board, of which £1,000 was paid before March last, and the remainder since then.

#### HARBOUR DEFENCES.

The cost of the harbour defences of New Zealand up to the end of March last was £318,827; and I find that a further sum of £180,000 is required to pay off existing liabilities and complete the undertakings which are at present in hand. This sum has therefore been allocated to harbour defences, and will be required for payment to the extent of £80,000 this year and £50,000 next year. Up to the end of September last the total expenditure was £353,483; of which, £174,012 was for guns, ammunition, torpedo-boats, torpedoes, and other war-material imported from England, and the remainder, £179,471, for works within the colony itself, including land-purchase. Up to the 31st March last the works in the colony were carried out by the Engineers of the Public Works Department; but since that date the Defence Department has taken them into its own hands entirely.

#### RATES ON NATIVE LANDS.

Under the heading of "Rates on Native Lands" the expenditure last year was £25,139; and the amounts required to meet our engagements under the existing Act will be, for this year £15,000, and for next year £10,700; beyond which nothing more has been provided, as it is proposed that the Act should be repealed.

#### THERMAL SPRINGS.

The expenditure on thermal springs last year was £7,814, and the amount required for this year is £3,200, and for next year £300. This is principally for the completion of the water-supply at Rotorua, and planting and improvements of the baths and grounds; and, as it is not intended to undertake any further works than those at present in hand, no further funds have been allocated beyond the £3,500 for this year and next year.

## PUBLIC WORKS FUND.—PART I.

To sum up the proposals of which I have now given the details, they amount to this: In Part I. of the Public Works Fund we had on the 31st March last a balance of £491,246, and we are further entitled under this fund to a sum of £83,814 under section 31 of the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act, making, in all, £575,060; but, as against this, we had expenditure up to the 30th September amounting to £243,958, and liabilities actually brought to book at same date amounting to £280,495, and further engagements which, though not brought to book, were, to all intents and purposes, liabilities, amounting to £184,836.

The total amount of these engagements over and above actual expenditure and liabilities, in point of fact, amounted to £205,446; but, as against these, there were credits to come in from Consolidated Fund and Parts II. and III. of Public Works Fund amounting to £20,610, thus bringing the net amount of engagements to £184,836, as before stated.

My colleague the Colonial Treasurer, in his Financial Statement, referred to these engagements as amounting to about £150,000; but since then they have been more accurately gone into during the preparation of the public-works estimates, and are now ascertained to be £184,836.

Adding together the expenditure up to end of September with liabilities and engagements at that date gives, in all, £709,284 as expenditure, liabilities, and engagements up to end of September, as compared with the £575,060 assets on the same date; thus showing that our actual present expenditure, with liabilities and engagements on the 30th September, exceeded our assets on that date by £134,224; and this, too, without allowing anything for recurrent charges, such as immigration, departmental expenditure, roads maintenance, subsidies to local bodies, work for "unemployed," completing engagements in aid of land-purchases, telegraph-extension, additions to lunatic asylums, school-buildings, and rates on Native lands, &c.

In view of these recurring charges, therefore, and also in view of the deficit of £134,224 already existing, it was considered and it is still considered by the Government that nothing short of £500,000 additional funds would be sufficient to admit of a reasonable sum being allowed for immigration, and at the same time permit of our bringing our recurrent engagements in respect of the other services to a close otherwise than in an abrupt and unsatisfactory manner.

In the case of the several main roads, for instance, for the maintenance of which the Government has made itself responsible, we cannot abandon these roads to their fate, as we might thus become liable for damages in the event of any accidents happening through our negligence, and neither can we divest ourselves of the responsibility attaching to these roads all at once by handing them over to the local bodies, or placing the whole charge on the Con-

solidated Fund. The same also applies more or less to the class of buildings and other works.

With great reluctance, therefore—for we had hoped to be able to do without a loan at all—we came to the conclusion that we must ask for authority for £500,000 under Part I. of the Fund; and, assuming that this is granted, our total assets under this Fund, counting from the 31st March last, would be £1,075,060; and we would propose to allocate the expenditure of this sum, during the present and next three years, as follows:—

For immigration, with debits (consisting of expenditure, liabilities, and engagements at 30th September), amounting to £13,702, we propose to allocate £70,720.

For Public Works Departmental services, with debits amounting to £6,000, we propose to allocate £13,000.

For railways (other than those provided for under Parts II. and III. of Fund), with debits amounting to £3,500, we propose to allocate £3,500.

For roads of all classes, with debits amounting to £366,020, we propose to allocate £528,330.

For waterworks on the goldfields, with debits amounting to £2,000, we propose to allocate £2,000.

For purchase of Native lands, North Island (exclusive of purchases under the North Island Trunk Railway Loan), with debits amounting to £12,000 (less £11,000 which is to come in to credit from Part II. of Fund), we propose to allocate £16,000.

For telegraph-extension, with debits amounting to £26,070, we propose to allocate £41,100.

For public buildings, with debits amounting to £120,360, we propose to allocate £212,410.

For lighthouses, with debits amounting to £2,932, we propose to allocate £3,300.

For harbour works, with debits amounting to £500, we propose to allocate £500.

For harbour defences, with debits amounting to £130,000, we propose to allocate £130,000.

For rates on Native lands, with debits amounting to £25,700, we propose to allocate £25,700.

For Thermal Springs, with debits amounting to £3,500, we propose to allocate £3,500.

And for charges and expenses of raising loans, with debits amounting to £8,000, we propose to allocate £20,000.

Finally, for all the services under this fund, with debits (consisting of expenditure, liabilities, and engagements at 30th September last) amounting to £709,284, we propose to allocate £1,075,060.

The following table will probably show these results in a form which will be more convenient to honourable members:—

Mr. Mitchelson



Class of Works.	Debits.	Proposed Allocation.
	Consisting of Expenditure from March 31 to Sept. 30, 1887, and Liabilities and Engagements at the latter Date.	
	£	£
Immigration .. .. .	13,702	70,720
Public Works departmental services .. .. .	6,000	13,000
Railways (other than those provided for under Parts II. and III. of Fund)	3,500	3,500
Roads of all classes .. .. .	366,020	528,330
Waterworks on goldfields .. .. .	2,000	2,000
Purchase of Native lands, North Island, exclusive of purchases under the North Island Trunk Railway Loan £12,000		
Less amount which is to come into credit from Part II. of Fund .. .. .	11,000	
	1,000	16,000
Telegraph extension .. .. .	26,070	41,100
Public buildings .. .. .	120,360	212,410
Lighthouses .. .. .	2,932	8,300
Harbour works .. .. .	500	500
Harbour defences .. .. .	130,000	130,000
Rates on Native lands .. .. .	25,700	25,700
Thermal Springs .. .. .	3,500	3,500
Charges and expenses of raising loans .. .. .	8,000*	20,000
For all services under this Fund .. .. .	709,284	1,075,060

\* This amount would have been required for expenses of raising sufficient loan to cover actual deficit.

#### PUBLIC WORKS FUND.—PART II.

Coming now to Part II. of the fund, being the portion devoted to the North Island Main Trunk Railway, we had unexpended on the 31st March last the sum of £674,315, and on the 30th September this was reduced to £615,258, with liabilities amounting to £197,474. Starting with the balance at the end of the year—namely, £674,315—the expenditure suggested by the Engineer-in-Chief, if the work is to go on vigorously from both ends during the present and next three years, is £619,800, which would leave a balance unexpended on the 31st March, 1891, of £54,515.

#### PUBLIC WORKS FUND.—PART III.

Under Part III. of the Public Works Fund we had unexpended on the 31st March last the sum of £769,235, and by the 30th September last this was reduced to £556,645, with liabilities amounting to £304,004. The net amount available for further undertakings on the 30th September was therefore only £252,641; and, as this amount was quite inadequate for carrying the most of the railways in hand to points at which they would be even moderately reproductive, it was decided to ask for further authority of £500,000, which is proposed to be allocated as follows:—

	£
Helensville northwards .. .. .	25,000
Putaruru-Rotorua .. .. .	18,000
Woodville-Palmerston .. .. .	120,000
Blenheim-Awatere .. .. .	9,000
Greymouth-Hokitika .. .. .	2,000
Mount Somers .. .. .	7,000
Livingstone .. .. .	1,000
Otago Central .. .. .	105,000
Seaward Bush .. .. .	10,000
Additions to opened lines .. .. .	122,000
Surveys .. .. .	6,000
Charges and expenses of raising the portion of the loan allocated to railways .. .. .	30,000
Departmental (engineering and supervision) .. .. .	45,000
Grand total for railways .. .. .	£500,000

Adding this sum of £500,000 to the £769,235 before alluded to as existing at the 31st March last will give a total of £1,269,235, the expenditure of which (including the expenditure which has already taken place) we propose to spread over the present and next three years at the following rate—namely, 1887–88, £442,500; 1888–89, £437,403; 1889–90, £298,917; and 1890–91, £67,444: giving a total for four years of £1,246,264, which will leave £22,971 unexpended at the end of the term.

### *Costs and Charges of raising Loan.*

As regards the item of £30,000 for charges and expenses of raising the £500,000 allocated to railways, I should explain that about £10,000 of this is required to supplement the amount allocated to charges and expenses of raising loans, and contingencies in connection with the loan of 1886, which will be exceeded to about that extent. The amount actually required for raising £500,000, at present asked for, will probably be about £20,000.

### **TOTAL EXPENDITURE PROPOSED UNDER PUBLIC WORKS FUND AS A WHOLE.**

Taking the whole three funds together, our proposed expenditure is—For 1887–88, £1,127,550; for 1888–89, £986,903; for 1889–90, £577,677; and for 1890–91, £248,994; giving an average throughout the four years of about £735,281 per annum.

While on the subject of this expenditure, I should explain that it was the wish and intention of the Government, if possible, to have distributed the expenditure more evenly over the four years; but it was found that we had practically very little control over the expenditure during the current year and part of next year, as that is fixed to a very large extent by existing engagements; and there was also the consideration that, if we spread the expenditure on each one of the railways over the whole period, a work which might quite easily be completed in two years would be left unproductive for another year or two without any great good being attained. In the case of several of the railways, therefore, I have put expenditure into the year 1889–90 which I originally intended to have thrown into 1890–91, with the view of getting such of the railways completed by March, 1890, as could then reasonably be completed. Even as the proposed expenditure stands, however, it indicates a very considerable reduction as compared with the expenditure of the previous years, which has been—For 1883–84, £1,409,588; for 1884–85, £1,336,727; for 1885–86, £1,475,386; for 1886–87, £1,333,484.

In actual practice, too, it is probable that the expenditure during this year and next year will be somewhat less than I have estimated for, the amounts set down being the sums necessary to meet the liabilities which will probably come in for payment during those years; and, if these liabilities do not fall due so rapidly as is anticipated, the expenditure will of course be reduced accordingly during the first two years, and can thus be spread more evenly over the whole four years, as we originally intended.

As affecting the proposed expenditure for the year after this one—namely, for the year ending March, 1889, which I have already stated will probably be larger than we wished it to be—it should also be mentioned that the amount required to be expended that year will include about £80,000 for charges and expenses of raising loans, as the North Island Trunk Railway Loan of £1,000,000 still requires to be raised, as well as the £1,000,000 which we now propose to ask authority for, and

it is estimated that the expenses for each £1,000,000 will be about £40,000.

### *Probable Effect of determining the Rate of Expenditure for Three Years in Advance.*

In thus endeavouring to fix the expenditure over a series of years, I am quite alive to the fact that I may be met with the assertion that it is impossible to absolutely adhere to any such programme, or to keep the expenditure rigidly within the limits which I have fixed. But, while admitting that this, to a certain extent, is true, I nevertheless maintain that we shall probably come much nearer what is the intention of the Government and, I believe, also the wish of most honourable members as regards the so-called “tapering-off” in borrowing by shaping out some definite programme to guide us, such as I have endeavoured to do, rather than by leaving everything to the chapter of accidents in the future.

### *Allocation for Rails, Sleepers, and Rolling-stock, £125,000.*

As honourable members may possibly not be prepared for the large sum—£125,000—which is set down in proposed loan-allocation for permanent-way and rolling-stock, and especially as regards the sum of £65,000 shown as required for permanent-way and rolling-stock for additions to opened lines, it may be desirable that I should explain that £45,000 of this amount is due to insufficient provision having been made for this class of expenditure in the loan-allocation of 1886; and I have charged this £45,000 to additions to opened lines in order to avoid an undue charge falling upon any of the individual railways. This was the only way to fairly meet the case, as some of the railways provided for in 1886, and which have been already completed, and which, consequently, do not appear in the present allocation at all, have already received their full complement of rails; and the deficit, if charged otherwise than to additions to open lines, would have to fall entirely on the railways which have still to be completed, which would manifestly be unreasonable. In the final accounts showing cost of railways from time to time, it would make no matter, as each line is of course only eventually charged with the actual expenditure upon it; but, even in making an allocation, it seemed to me to be unjust to include an amount in present loan schedule for a service which purported to have been fully provided for in the allocations of 1886.

### *Proposals as to carrying on Formation-works on Railways beyond the Points up to which the Lines can be entirely completed with the Funds available.*

The first intention of the Government, in view of the desirability of stopping all expenditure where practicable, was to omit any provision for carrying on formation-works (even when already provided for) beyond the points to which funds are available for entirely completing the various railways; but, on further consideration, it was decided that it would be better to

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retain power to carry on these formation-works, in the event of its being necessary to provide work for the unemployed; and I have therefore shown the amounts authorised, as proposed to be expended over the present and next three years accordingly, in the event of such expenditure being requisite.

#### *Departmental Expenditure.*

In connection with our future proposals to gradually reduce loan-expenditure on all classes of works it will be necessary to correspondingly reduce the departmental expenditure, which was £90,156 for 1884-85, £29,632 for 1885-86, and £25,835 for 1886-87.

The expenditure for this year will be about £25,000, which is somewhat short of 4 per cent. on the portion of the loan-expenditure under the control of the Public Works Department proper; and, on the same basis, I think it is probable that the expenditure for the next three years could be reduced to £20,000, £15,000, and £13,000, respectively, making in all, for the four years, £73,000. It is also intended that this expenditure should be charged proportionately in accordance with the amount of works under the control of the department in each of the several subdivisions of the Loan Fund, which would give, for the four years, £13,000 chargeable to Part I., £15,000 to Part II., and £45,000 to Part III., making, in all, £73,000, as before.

#### *Public-works Estimates.*

As regards the general shape in which the public-works estimates will be brought down, I have not found it desirable to alter the form recently in vogue, with one exception—namely, in respect of the estimates for the North Island Trunk Railway, the amount required for which has hitherto been voted in one lump sum to cover construction-works and surveys of all classes at both ends of the line. In that case I have made an alteration, as it seemed to be desirable that full information should be given as to the expenditure at each end of the railway, firstly, on railway works proper, and, secondly, on roads; and also that separate information should be given as to cost of surveys as distinct from construction-works. I have therefore now divided the estimates for this line into the several items of "Departmental expenditure," "Railway construction (north end and south end)," "Permanent-way and rolling-stock," "Surveys," "Roads (north end and south end)," and "Purchase of Native lands;" but, as regards the roads, as I have already mentioned, no further roadworks are intended to be undertaken under the loan for this railway. The votes proposed for road-works are therefore merely sufficient to cover the liabilities already incurred, with a slight margin for contingencies.

#### *CONCLUSION.*

Finally, Sir, I would wish to state that, in approaching this task of dealing with the public-works expenditure of the colony, the Government was convinced that, however much

the construction of public works may have tended to develop the country generally, and also to meet the demands of growing settlement, it was nevertheless evident that our rate of expenditure in the past has been more than the colony could well afford, and that the time has come when we must materially curtail it. With that object in view we prepared the proposals which I have now had the honour of laying before this House, and I may say that throughout the whole of this allocation our object has been to do justice to all concerned, and to endeavour, where practicable, within the limits of the funds at our disposal, to avoid stopping ruthlessly any works on which the expenditure already incurred would be altogether thrown away, or which would yield a reasonable percentage on their cost if completed as hitherto intended.

To the best of our belief, these objects have been attained by the allocation which I have described; and we now therefore lay it before Parliament, in the full confidence that honourable members will aid us in carrying these proposals out, in the interests of the colony as a whole, at whatever sacrifice it may be to their individual districts. Taken as a whole, the chief feature in our proposals is to steadily reduce expenditure under loan from, in round numbers, £1,100,000 per annum for this year, to £300,000 per annum for the third year from March next; and we believe that in this way the loan expenditure may be gradually brought to an end, after March, 1891, without, on the one hand, increasing our burdens overmuch, or, on the other hand, putting too sudden a check on the progress of colonial industries.

I would also wish to say, Sir, in conclusion, that throughout the whole of the investigations necessary to frame proposals calculated to bring about this result—and which, I confess, I have found to be a very difficult task—I have received the most cordial assistance from all the chief officers of the departments over which I have the honour to preside.

On the question, That the estimates be referred to the Committee of Supply,

Mr. W. P. REEVES said.—Sir, I should like, if I might, to ask the Minister for Public Works a question without notice. Some weeks ago a deputation of Christchurch members waited on the Minister, requesting that a certain work in the neighbourhood of Christchurch should be undertaken, as being likely to meet the distress prevailing there. He gave us to understand that he was somewhat favourably inclined towards it, and we expected either that it would appear in the Statement he has made or that some reason would be given why it did not appear. It has not appeared in the Public Works Statement, and no reason has been given us. I ask the Minister now why the Sumner Railway has had the cold shoulder given to it.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—Sir, the Government have very carefully considered this railway. At one time it was intended to include it among the works to be proceeded with; but, after giving it due consideration, the Government came to the conclusion that, it being a new

line of railway, they would not be justified in asking the House to authorise it, there being an understanding that no new lines should be undertaken. I say that with great regret.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I, also, should like to say that I am exceedingly sorry that the matter brought forward by the honourable member for St. Albans has not been dealt with in the Public Works Statement, because I can bear out what he has just said, that, at any rate, there was a promise that this matter would be carefully considered—kept steadily in view. But, so far as I have learned from the Statement this evening—of course I may be labouring under a misapprehension—I certainly think the Provincial District of Canterbury is not getting that fair share of the loan which, from her population, she has a right to expect; and I feel it my duty to enter my protest on this occasion, and, when the time comes, to endeavour to amend the estimates for the purpose of carrying on works which would be equally valuable with, and far more profitable from a paying point of view than, many of the works which have been mentioned to-night. I protest that we are “over-railroaded,” and we should cut the railways off rather than incur further burdens by carrying on railways through country that will never pay. The railway to Sumner is one of a certain and profitable character. We have the evidence of the Public Works officials to prove that.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Make it yourselves.

Mr. TAYLOR.—It is all very well to say, “Make it yourselves;” but when it comes to making roads for themselves what do they say? Look at the enormous sum which has been spent for roads which are of a perishable character, and which require a very large expenditure to keep these roads in condition for the public to traverse them. I trust that the Government and the Minister for Public Works will seriously reconsider the question mooted to-night by the honourable member for St. Albans in reference to the expenditure he has mentioned. I take the opportunity of saying this: that, so far as I have been able to gather from the Statement, there is too large a sum of money to be expended on railways to suit my view. I think the time has arrived when this borrowing should be entirely stopped. As far as I can judge, a good deal of it is to carry out works which have been already proved to be unproductive. Of course the Minister says he will endeavour to carry them to a point at which they will pay; but we have been told that from year to year, and with what result? Every additional mile of railway that has been opened for some time past has been an additional burden upon the country. I trust this matter will be reconsidered.

Motion agreed to.

#### PENSIONS.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said there were three applications on the table for pensions, and, having consulted the Premier, he found that that honourable gentleman was quite willing that a Committee should be appointed to con-

sider these applications. He therefore begged to move, That a Select Committee be appointed, with power to call for persons and papers, to inquire into and report on the applications for pensions or allowances to Messrs. A. T. Alston, H. C. S. Baddeley, and A. Muir: the Committee to consist of Mr. Goldie, Mr. Guinness, Dr. Fitchett, Mr. Peacock, Mr. E. Richardson, and the mover.

Motion agreed to.

#### WELLINGTON COLLEGE AND GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL BILL.

Mr. FISHER, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said that, although it contained nineteen clauses, they were of a purely formal character, relating to the reconstitution of the Board and altering, in some respects, the composition of the Board. There was one clause relating to a monetary liability of the College Governors; but that was rendered necessary in order to carry out an undertaking by Sir Robert Stout, the previous Minister of Education, given to the Board. This clause gave the Board legislative power, under mortgage-deed, to raise money for the erection of the Girls' High School. If any discussion should take place upon that clause, it could be considered in Committee, and he would therefore content himself with moving the second reading.

Mr. PEACOCK did not object to the power asked for in the way of raising money for the Girls' High School, but he did object to the manner in which it was proposed that the Board should be elected. It would be seen that of the nine members to be elected outside the *ex-officio* members, the Mayor and the Chairman of the Board of Education, three were to be elected by the members of the House of Representatives residing within the Wellington Provincial District. It was a very objectionable principle that the members of that House should create themselves into a constituency to elect members to any other body. He was aware that there was a precedent for this in the Auckland College and Grammar School; but, far from being a precedent to follow, it was one that should be avoided. He did not think it was likely that honourable members, scattered all over a provincial district, would take such interest in the election of members of this Board as would be desirable: and the consequence would probably be that the elections would be very much left in the hands of one or two active individuals who would take the trouble of moving in the matter. He did not think past experience was such as would warrant their following the example. He believed that this mode was adopted in the first instance from a feeling that there should be more of the elective principle in the constitution of these Boards: at the same time it would be better if a more popular form of election existed. He might be asked what he would substitute. He thought they might fairly substitute the election of three members of the Board by the parents or guardians of pupils attending the school for a certain length of time. He was sure the Minister of Education

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would sympathize with the idea of popularising the mode of election of secondary educational Boards. He would be prepared to move in the direction he had indicated when the Bill got into Committee; but he still hoped that the Minister would see himself that it was the right and proper course to take. He also wished to express his regret that, while this Bill was before the House, the Government had not put on the Order Paper the Auckland Girls' High School Bill. No discussion could have taken place over that Bill, as it was of a precisely similar nature to this one, so that one discussion would have been sufficient for both. With the exception of that portion relating to the mode of electing the Board, he would support the Bill, and hoped the Minister himself, in Committee, would see his way to alter the form of election in the way he (Mr. Peacock) had indicated.

Sir G. GREY said there was one very great objection to this Bill. He understood the Minister of Education to say that it was intended to allow sums of money to be raised upon the security of the site, or the value of the site, on which the Girls' High School stood. He wished to point out that a very great injustice had been done. That site was an endowment for the Wellington Hospital, and would have been a most valuable site for a branch hospital in the case of accidents; and, looking at the great distance of the hospital from the town, it was certain that there must be a branch hospital at that end of the town before long, and no better site for such a purpose could be found than this one. It really belonged to the whole of the poor of the district, and was a valuable endowment for them; and he understood it was taken for a girls' high school under a clause of the Special Powers and Contracts Act without anybody knowing what was taking place. That site had been taken from the poor of the district to give it to an educational institution which would only benefit the higher classes. Such practices ought not to be allowed to take place as that a valuable hospital-site of that kind should be given over to education. The cost of education should be charged to the whole colony in the usual manner; and, if this was persisted in, he would endeavour in Committee to make an alteration providing that an equivalent should be given to the Wellington Hospital, if this site was retained permanently for education purposes. He also felt, with the honourable gentleman who spoke last, that it was unfair that this Bill should go on and that the Government should not allow the Bill for the Auckland Girls' High School to go on also. It was very unjust towards Auckland, and no sufficient explanation had been given by the Minister of Education for not carrying that Bill through. He would have thought that that establishment would be equally dear to the honourable gentleman, and that, particularly as he was a member for Wellington, it would be becoming in him to do as much for Auckland as for Wellington. He hoped the Minister of Education would still allow the

Auckland Bill to be carried on by the Government exactly as this Bill was being carried on.

Dr. NEWMAN thought the objection raised by the honourable member for Ponsonby to the mode of election of the Governors, and his proposal that they should be elected by parents of the pupils, would entail a great deal of unnecessary expense upon the College Governors through having to send out so many notices. With regard to the power given to the Governors to raise money to pay for building the Girls' High School, he might say that the credit of the colony was pledged to carry this Bill out, in consequence of the pledge given by the late Premier.

Mr. IZARD said it was very desirable that this Bill should be passed, and for this reason: The Governors of the Girls' High School of Wellington, to whom the land had been granted under power of an Act of Parliament, had erected a costly building on it at their own expense, under a minute by the late Minister of Education promising that he would bring in a Bill to allow the land to be used as security for raising the necessary funds to reimburse the contractor. He hoped, therefore, that honourable members would see that this Bill was carrying out an agreement entered into on behalf of the colony by a Minister of the Crown, and that therefore to decline to pass the Bill would be doing a great injustice. With regard to the observations of the honourable member for Ponsonby, who objected to three members of the governing body of the school being elected by the Wellington City members of the House of Representatives, that was an objection to be dealt with in Committee, and did not affect the principle of the Bill.

Mr. CADMAN hoped the Minister of Education, in reply, would tell the House why the Bill for the Auckland Girls' High School had been ignored.

Major ATKINSON said the Government hoped to bring that up next day.

Bill read a second time and committed.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Constitution of governing body of Wellington College and Girls' High School.

Mr. PEACOCK moved, That the words empowering the members of the General Assembly of the Wellington District to elect three members be struck out, for the purpose of inserting others conferring such power of election upon parents or guardians of children who have been in attendance at the College or High School for not less than one quarter.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 30.

Allen	Fergus	McGregor
Anderson	Fisher	Moat
Atkinson	Graham	Rhodes
Barron	Hislop	Richardson, G.
Beetham	Hutchinson	S.-Menteath
Bruce	Isard	Tanner
Carroll	Macarthur	Thompson, B.
Duncan	Mackenzie, M.	Turnbull

Ward	Wilson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Whyte	Withy.	Guinness
		Newman.
	NOES, 37.	
Buchanan	Levestam	Ross
Buxton	Mackenzie, T.	Seddon
Cadman	Marchant	Seymour
Cowan	McKenzie, J.	Smith
Feldwick	Mitchelson	Steward, W. J.
Fish	Monk	Stewart, W. D.
Fitchett	Moss	Taylor
Goldie	O'Connor	Thompson, T.
Grey	Ormond	Walker.
Hodgkinson	Parata	
Joyce	Perceval	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly	Reeves, R. H. J.	Lawry
Kerr	Richardson, E.	Peacock.

Majority against, 7.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill reported to the House, and read a third time.

#### LAND BILL.

##### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 27.—All Land Boards abolished.

Major STEWARD moved, That the word "All" be struck out, with the view of inserting the words "In lieu of the."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word 'All' stand part of the clause."

AYES, 28.

Anderson	Izard	Richardson, G.
Atkinson	Jackson	Ross
Cadman	Lance	Seddon
Fisher	Lawry	Thompson, R.
Fraser	Monk	Valentine
Goldie	Newman	Withy.
Graham	O'Connor	
Grey	Ormond	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Pearson	McGregor
Hobbs	Reeves, R. H. J.	Tanner.

NOES, 36.

Allen	Jones	Peacock
Beetham	Joyce	Pyke
Blake	Kelly	Rhodes
Bruce	Kerr	Richardson, E.
Cowan	Levestam	Smith
Dodson	Mackenzie, T.	Taylor
Feldwick	Marchant	Thompson, T.
Fish	McKenzie, J.	Turnbull
Fitchett	Moat	Ward.
Fitzherbert	Moss	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	O'Callaghan	Barron
Hodgkinson	Parata	Steward, W. J.
Hutchison		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Fergus	Fulton
Hall	Vogel
Hislop	Seymour
Larnach	Walker
Mackenzie, M. J. S.	Reeves, W. P.
Samuel.	Duncan.

Majority against, 8.

Word struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words 'In lieu of the' be inserted."

Allen	Joyce	Seddon
Anderson	Kerr	Smith
Beetham	Levestam	Taylor
Blake	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson, R.
Bruce	Monk	Turnbull
Cowan	Moss	Walker
Feldwick	Newman	Ward
Fitchett	O'Callaghan	Withy.
Graham	O'Connor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Parata	Steward, W. J.
Guinness	Pyke	Tanner.
Hutchison		

NOES, 29.

Atkinson	Hodgkinson	Pearson
Barron	Izard	Rhodes
Cadman	Jackson	Richardson, E.
Fisher	Jones	Richardson, G.
Fish	Kelly	Ross
Fitzherbert	Lance	Thompson, T.
Fraser	Lawry	Valentine.
Goldie	McKenzie, J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grey	Moat	McGregor
Hobbs	Ormond	Peacock.

PAIRS.

*For.*

Duncan
Fulton
Reeves, W. P.
Seymour
Vogel

*Against.*

Samuel
Fergus
Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Hislop
Hall

Majority for, 4.

Words inserted.

Clause 31.—Repeals.

Dr. FITCHETT moved, That the words "the proviso to section two hundred and thirty-seven, the proviso to section two hundred and forty," be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

AYES, 31.

Atkinson	Jones	Richardson, G.
Beetham	Kerr	S. Menteath
Cowan	Marchant	Tanner
Dodson	Monk	Thompson, R.
Fisher	O'Callaghan	Turnbull
Graham	O'Connor	Valentine
Hislop	Ormond	Walker.
Hobbs	Pearson	
Hutchison	Pyke	<i>Tellers.</i>
Izard	Rhodes	Lance
Jackson	Richardson, E.	Steward, W. J.

NOES, 35.

Allen	Guinness	Peacock
Anderson	Hodgkinson	Reeves, R. H. J.
Barron	Joyce	Reeves, W. P.
Blake	Kelly	Ross
Bruce	Lawry	Seddon
Buxton	Mackenzie, T.	Smith
Cadman	McGregor	Taylor
Feldwick	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, T.
Fish	Moat	Ward.
Fraser	Moss	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grey	Newman	Fitchett
Grimmond	Parata	Fulton.

Majority against, 4.

Words struck out.

Mr. BEETHAM moved the insertion of a new clause providing that two members of the Board shall be nominated by the Governor and two elected by the County Councils.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON moved, That the words, "Section thirty-six of the said Act is hereby repealed, and the following substituted in lieu thereof," be struck out, with a view of testing the opinion of the Committee as to whether the amendment should be made.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

## AYES, 48.

Allen	Hobbs	Reeves, R. H. J.
Anderson	Hodgkinson	Reeves, W. F.
Barron	Jones	Rhodes
Beetham	Joyce	Seddon
Blake	Kelly	Smith
Bruce	Lawry	Steward, W. J.
Buxton	Loughrey	Stewart, W. D.
Cadman	Marchant	Taiwhanga
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Feldwick	Mills	Thompson, R.
Fitchett	Monk	Thompson, T.
Fraser	Moss	Turnbull
Fulton	O'Callaghan	Walker.
Goldie	O'Connor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	Parata	Buchanan
Grey	Perceval	Hutchison.
Grimmond		

## NOES, 32.

Atkinson	Lance	Ross
Cowan	Larnach	Samuel
Dodson	Levestam	Seymour
Fergus	McGregor	S.-Menteath
Fisher	Mitchelson	Tanner
Fish	Moat	Whyte
Fitzherbert	Ormond	Wilson
Hislop	Pearson	Withy.
Izard	Pyke	<i>Tellers.</i>
Jackson	Richardson, E.	Peacock
Kerr	Richardson, G.	Valentine.

## PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Ward.	Mackenzie, T.

## Majority for, 16.

Words agreed to.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON moved, That in the subclause fixing the representation of counties at two members, the word "two" be struck out, with the view of inserting the word "three."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word 'two' stand part of the subclause."

## AYES, 31.

Allen	Lawry	Reeves, W. P.
Barron	Loughrey	Richardson, E.
Blake	McGregor	Ross
Fisher	McKenzie, J.	Stewart, W. D.
Fish	Mills	S.-Menteath
Fraser	Mitchelson	Taylor
Goldie	Moss	Thompson, T.
Grey	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Ormond	Feldwick
Joyce	Peacock	Fitchett.
Larnach	Perceval	

## NOES, 46.

Anderson	Jackson	Seddon
Atkinson	Jones	Seymour
Beetham	Kelly	Smith
Buchanan	Kerr	Steward, W. J.
Buxton	Lance	Tanner
Cadman	Levestam	Thompson, R.
Carroll	Marchant	Turnbull
Cowan	Moat	Valentine
Dodson	Monk	Walker
Duncan	O'Callaghan	Whyte
Fergus	O'Connor	Wilson
Fulton	Parata	Withy.
Grimmond	Pearson	
Hobbs	Reeves, R. H. J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hodgkinson	Rhodes	Bruce
Hutchison	Richardson, G.	Graham.

## PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Ballance	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Fitzherbert	Pyke
Samuel	Hall
Vogel	Taipua
Ward.	Mackenzie, T.

## Majority against, 15.

Word "two" struck out, and "three" inserted.

Progress reported.

## LOCAL BODIES' LOANS BILL.

This Bill was read a second time, and committed.

## IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 5.—Verbal amendments in original Act.

Mr. GUINNESS moved the addition of the following subsection: "(7.) In the second section the words, 'and persons duly enrolled in a county as holders of miners' rights or business licenses,' shall be omitted."

The Committee divided.

## AYES, 33.

Allen	Joyce	Perceval
Anderson	Kelly	Samuel
Atkinson	Lawry	Seymour
Barron	Levestam	Steward, W. J.
Beetham	Macarthur	Thompson, R.
Bruce	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson, T.
Buchanan	Mitchelson	Ward
Buxton	Moat	Wilson.
Cowan	Monk	<i>Tellers.</i>
Dodson	Newman	Cadman
Fisher	Peacock	Guinness.
Hutchison		

## NOES, 11.

Fergus	Kerr	Tanner.
Graham	McGregor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Reeves, R. H. J.	Pearson
Hislop	Richardson, G.	Seddon.

## PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Fraser.	Fulton.

## Majority for, 22.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

Mr. SEDDON.—I move, That the Bill be

recommitted with the view of considering the amendment which has been made in clause 5.

Amendment negatived.

On the motion, That the amendments be agreed to,

Mr. SEDDON said,—I cannot permit myself to lose the opportunity of having my final protest recorded in *Hansard* against the amendment which has just been made in this Bill. I fought against this amendment in previous years. The effect of the amendment will be that the holders of miners' rights or business licenses are not to have a voice in the borrowing of money by local bodies on the goldfields. The proportionate amount raised by way of rates on goldfields is generally as about £1 in rates to £5 contributed by those who hold miners' rights and business licenses. I say it is a moral impossibility for the ratepayers of the counties in mining districts to pay the money that is wished to be borrowed, and they have to fall on the general revenue contributed by the holders of miners' rights and business licenses to pay interest and sinking fund, and it is not safe to allow them to borrow money unless the miners and business people I refer to have a voice in the matter. The Government will find, before long, that a call will be made on the colony to find interest and sinking fund. I say it is a safeguard to leave it to the people generally, and not to leave the matter simply to the ratepayers. The rate-roll of the Grey County shows, net, only £1,000 a year, and the rate-roll of the Westland County only £500 a year net; and the gold duty and goldfields revenue amount to from £3,000 to £4,000 in each case. How can the revenue from rates possibly pay interest and sinking fund on the amount of money which from time to time the Grey Council have in the past borrowed, or in future may wish to borrow under this Bill? Why the honourable member for Greymouth, who represents a purely mining community, wishes to deprive the holders of miners' rights and business licenses of their power of voting is a thing I cannot understand. I say this has been brought about by a catch-vote, and without the Premier or the Government knowing the meaning of it. The question has been discussed three times before, and divisions have been taken upon it. I protest against this proposed change; and if ill comes to the colony or to the Government through taking away this power from the people in the districts who have to find the great bulk of the money, then the responsibility rests upon the shoulders of the Government. I wash my hands of it. The honourable member for Greymouth has not fought the matter fairly. It has been done by a snatch-division. In another place time will tell who wins in the long-run.

Major ATKINSON.—I hope we shall not get into a long debate to-night. I confess I am not quite satisfied with the understanding we have come to, but I think we should leave it with the understanding that the Government will carefully consider the matter; and I shall be happy to confer privately with those honour-

Mr. Seddon

able gentlemen who consider that it would have been better to have arrived at another arrangement. But I think we cannot get much further by a long argument to-night.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I cannot allow the remarks of the honourable member for Kumara to pass, and be recorded in *Hansard*, without shortly placing my case before the ratepayers whom I have the honour to represent. In the first place, the amendment that was made in the Committee upon my motion was an amendment to take away the power from holders of miners' rights to vote upon the question whether the electors in the district should sanction a loan under the Local Bodies' Loans Act or not. Under the law as it stands miners are not liable to pay any special rates payable for the purpose of paying interest and sinking fund on the loan thus borrowed. The argument adduced by the honourable member for Kumara in favour of giving miners a vote is simply this: that when a rate is levied the Councils have power to pay those rates into the general county funds, and that, as miners contribute a very considerable portion of those rates, they should have some voice in it. Now, in the district I represent the proportion is not at all what is stated by the honourable member for Kumara. He states it is three to one. The ratepayers contribute £1,900 and £2,000 in rates, and the revenue from miners' rights and business licenses does not amount to £1,500, and the gold duty amounts to £2,500. It comes to £4,000 as against £2,000—that is the proportion. I say it is unfair to give a voice in deciding whether a loan shall be raised or not to persons who are not liable for repayment of the money borrowed. That is the principle I went on, and I believe it is on that principle the Committee acted, by a large majority. It is not a catch-division at all. This Bill was in Committee, and there was no occasion to give a warning or notice to members. Honourable members knew to-night that the Bill was coming on. I stood in my place, and when the proper time came I moved my amendment. The honourable member for Kumara was in his place, and used arguments against it. The Committee heard both sides, and decided by thirty-three to eleven in favour of the amendment.

Amendments agreed to, and Bill read a third time.

The House adjourned at fifteen minutes past two o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 13th December, 1887.

First Readings—Third Readings—Australian Centenary—South Island Pastoral Runs—Representation Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Building Societies Bill, Wairarapa North



County Council Empowering Bill, Otago Harbour Board Bill, Pukekohe Borough Bill, Invercargill Water Reserve Bill, Gisborne Harbour Board Bill, Christchurch District Drainage Bill (No. 2), Otago Central Railway Extension and Construction Bill, Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill, Local Bodies' Loans Bill, Civil Service Reform Bill, Wellington College and Girls' High School Bill.

### THIRD READINGS.

Municipal Corporations Bill, Sounds County Hospital Representation Bill, Sheep Bill, Napier Harbour Board Amendment and Endowment Improvement Bill.

### AUSTRALIAN CENTENARY.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—Before proceeding to the orders of the day, I desire to inform honourable members that I have received a telegram from the President of the Legislative Council of New South Wales in reference to the Australian centenary, about to be celebrated in Sydney.

The CLERK read the telegram, as follows:—

"Have the goodness to inform honourable members of the Legislative Council of New Zealand that invitations to the State banquet to be given in this city on the 26th January next, in celebration of the completion of the first hundred years of Australian settlement, will be sent to each of them at the earliest possible date.—JOHN HAY, President, Legislative Council, Sydney."

### SOUTH ISLAND PASTORAL RUNS.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI moved, *That a return be laid upon the table of all pastoral runs in the South Island of which the licenses expire between January, 1888, and 30th December, 1890, giving in detail the number of the run, the provincial district, the acreage, name of present occupier, and present rental paid.*

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said the Government would be very glad to supply this return; but, he presumed, the honourable gentleman hardly expected that he would be able to get it this session. He was afraid that it could not be got ready in so short a time. In the event, however, of the honourable gentleman wishing for any information with regard to the runs in Canterbury, specially or only, he would find it in Paper C.—8, 1879.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said these did not give all the information he desired. He wished to get numbers, acreage, owners, occupiers, and price paid; and, if he could not get the information this session, he supposed he would have to wait till next session.

Motion agreed to.

### REPRESENTATION BILL.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I move, *That this Bill be now read a second time.* The object of it is to reduce the number of members of the House of Representatives from ninety-five, as it is at present, to seventy-four, a reduction of twenty-one. One object of the Bill is also to reduce the amount of the ex-

penses, which will be considerably reduced by reducing the number of members; and it is considered, in connection with this reduction, that the business transacted by the House will be transacted more speedily than, and quite as efficiently as, before. As the members of the other House are themselves in favour of this measure, I apprehend the Council are not likely to stand in the way of giving effect to their wishes.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I shall not oppose the second reading of this Bill; but I think it contains one very important provision that is worthy of the consideration of honourable members, and is, as far as I am aware, an entirely new feature in legislation of this character. I see its introduction here with a considerable amount of regret. It is perfectly legitimate, I think, that the reduced number should come into operation at the expiration of Parliament by the effluxion of time, but I am not certain it is an advisable or constitutional proceeding that it should come into operation whenever the Government deem a dissolution of the Assembly desirable. I say, Sir, I doubt whether it is a constitutional proceeding, and for this reason: that it does give the Government an immense power over the Assembly. It gives them an enormous power: honourable members cannot be free agents; they know they could be severely punished if the Government were to put this into operation, for they would know that, of the ninety-five who voted, twenty-one would be absolutely incapable of returning, and no one would be positively certain to return. It gives the Government a power over the Assembly which I do not think it desirable they should possess, and the pressure of which would be continually felt. The Bill has no doubt been introduced in the interests of the colony. I do not know how far the drastic system of retrenchment that we hoped for will be carried out. There is such a thing as saving at the spigot and letting out at the bung, and it seems to me, judging from a document that has been put into our hands lately—I refer to the Public Works Statement—that all our efforts in this respect are likely to be lost by extravagant expenditure in other directions. I am not, as I have said, going to oppose this Bill, but I should like to see retrenchment not confined to ourselves, but entering into the public works to a much greater extent than is indicated in the document to which I have referred. It is for the Council to say whether the first point I have referred to—whether it is constitutional or desirable to give the Government this immense power over the Assembly—should not be considered; but I could not permit you, Sir, to put such a question without calling attention to this important point.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—I think the honourable member need have no doubt whatever as to the constitutional or unconstitutional nature of this Bill. First of all, I take this opportunity of correcting a misreport, which was made in some observations of mine at the beginning of the session. I then said I was not prepared to say that the House of Repre-

sentatives was too numerous. I repeat it now. I remember the time when the House of Representatives was far less numerous than it is now; and the difficulty then was this: that each member's vote was far too valuable. I do not mean to say in a purchase point of view—there was nothing of that kind going on in those simple times; but each individual was far too important an entity, and it was thought that by increasing the number of members it would be more easy to get at accurate judgments on public questions than under the then-existing circumstances. I rejoiced to see the increase in the number of representatives; but now we are going to vote for an alteration in the other direction. It is an experiment. The other Chamber has voted in favour of the experiment, and it is not for us to say whether it is done gracefully or not: I refer to the words in the second line of the 2nd clause, "or other sooner determination of the present General Assembly." In that, it is easy to recognise not merely an alteration of the Constitution, but a *coup d'état*. We so arranged matters, not long ago, that it was competent for the Government at any time to silence the voice of the Council by introducing a sufficient number of members to swamp the Council, and the Council therefore can be muzzled—they may be considered half-muzzled already, because that power exists. Now we have a similar method applied to the other branch of the Legislature. Well, Sir, the effect of this will be, it seems to me, to alter what I conceive to be the constitutional relations between the Ministry and Parliament: that is, the Ministry should be, as far as possible, responsible to Parliament; but now we transpose those positions, and make Parliament responsible to the Ministry. The Ministry can, under these two Bills that we have lately been discussing, force any measure that it pleases through both Houses. I think there is no doubt about that. Now comes the question, Is it not rather desirable that the Government should have that power? I believe, if they had, they would be in a position of autocratic power; but I do hope they would exercise that power for the benefit of the country. It is absurd for us to think that any good will be done by altering this Bill. Not the slightest good will be done. We have passed one Bill in this direction; and let us pass this, and throw the entire responsibility—not on Parliament, for Parliament is relieved of that, but—on the Ministry. The Government, for three years, will have it in their power to do an infinity of good for the country. Let us hope they will do it. For my part I shall sit quite silent in reference to this Bill, and I shall not oppose or support the amendment to relieve the other House by the excision of the words to which I have referred in the 2nd clause; but let it pass, and let us see what will happen afterwards.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I look at this Bill as the real Bill of retrenchment of the session. The Government have commenced at the top of the tree in their reduction of expenditure, and

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the country has called for reduction in this direction. In reference to what has been said by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse and the Hon. Mr. Mantell as to the power of the Government to obtain a dissolution, I say they would not have the power of a dissolution. We have seen dissolutions refused by the Governor over and over again; and it will be so again. I feel, myself—without casting any reflection on the honourable gentleman who holds the position of Governor now—that the last dissolution was an injustice. I feel that it has done harm to the country, and upset matters, and got it into a position worse than ever. It may have been a good move for the party now in power; but it was a false move on the part of the party who held power. They should have neither asked for nor got a dissolution, and it was an error of judgment on the part of the Governor: and we are all liable to that. I do not hold that the Ministry have the power of dissolution, because they have not; and it is purely for the Governor to say to any Ministry asking for a dissolution, whether he will grant it or not. He may give it, or he may not. Besides, how is this unconstitutional, as has been said by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse? I hold that the only proper way to deal with the matter is according to the Bill as it stands at present. The object of clause 3 is fairly open to argument—whether it is a right thing to leave the Act to come into force on the direction of the Governor or in the ordinary course. This is a Bill which the other House has well considered, and, as a rule, we have never interfered with Bills which concern the adjustment of its own representation.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—The honourable gentleman who has just sat down expresses his regret at seeing the Bill now before us attacked. Well, I fail to see that it has been attacked in the sense in which the honourable gentleman supposes. The statements made have simply called the attention of the Council to the fact that this Bill does give the Government a very large power, which my honourable friend Mr. Waterhouse thinks is unconstitutional. Possibly it may be so; but it does not at all follow that, because of the large power he has pointed out, those interested are in any way unfairly affected by the measure. I think that the Hon. Mr. Mantell expressed himself on the whole in favour of the Bill; and, certainly, for my part, I think, in the existing circumstances of the colony, it is a very reasonable measure. It is, no doubt, an exceptional measure—a measure which, if passed, as has been said, will give very large power to the Government. But we must remember that the Government have undertaken a very great and difficult task, and in order to carry out that task they require exceptional powers; and, under these circumstances, I think the Council may very well support the Bill as it stands, acknowledging the fact that it is a very unusual and exceptional measure, but, under the circumstances, cordially approving the action of the House of Representatives with regard to it. I may say

the same with regard to the Honorarium Bill and the other Bills we have passed. All these Bills are required in the circumstances of the country, and I only regret that there was any disinclination on the part of the Council to passing that Honorarium Bill—a disinclination that was more apparent than real, so far as reduction was concerned. But I think it was unfortunate such a difference of opinion did exist, and I hope on this occasion no difference of opinion will be expressed in regard to this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—I think this is a most preposterous Bill, and I do not believe it expresses at all the wishes of the people of New Zealand. I dare say that a number of the younger members believe they are expressing the opinions of their constituents; but it will turn out that they are doing nothing of the kind. Then, this is a most dangerous Bill; it is a sword of Damocles held over the heads of the House. How the House has submitted to it is incomprehensible to me, violating as it does the spirit of the Constitution, of which we are guardians just as much as the members of the other branch of the Legislature. I do not think we should be doing our duty in letting the Bill pass, and I should be only too glad if some honourable member moved that it be read a second time this day six months, or got rid of it in some other way.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—I think the wishes of the people were plainly declared at the recent elections, and the fact is recognised that a majority of the members of the House of Representatives were returned pledged to support such a measure. If that were not the case, is it to be supposed that a measure of this kind would be passed? I have no doubt whatever as to the extreme desirableness of reducing the number of the members of the other House. Any member of the Council will know that the smaller the number of members the fewer pulls there are on the public purse, and I think that is a much greater consideration than the mere saving of the honorarium.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK.—I think that the fact that this arrangement will only happen once ought to justify us in reading the Bill a second time.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I think it would be well that the Council should hear a plain statement of what the purport of this Bill is, and what its effect will be. My honourable friend the Hon. Mr. Mantell stated very plainly that there could be no doubt that, by means of this Bill, the Government gets as firm a grip of the House of Representatives as a former Bill gave them in respect of this Council; and, although I wholly disapprove of the course taken, I admire the dexterity with which it has succeeded in effecting this object. The manner in which was secured what was apparently a great reduction in the expenses of the other House was by securing to the old members an increase of what their honorarium would have been for this session, or what it would be under the existing Act, by the alteration which is

effected by the Bill. That this was not noticed by many members of the House, I can very well understand. But, with regard to this particular Bill, I do not in the least sympathize with the objection which has been taken to it—that it gives too great a power to the Ministers. I entirely agree with my honourable friend Mr. Mantell that such a power is calculated to have a most excellent effect in guiding the policy of the Administration, provided that the Government exercise that power wisely. Whether they will do so or not is something which we cannot say. I believe the Government does not thoroughly understand the position of the country; otherwise it would not, in announcing the policy of public works which was disclosed last night, indicate its desire to expend such large sums, in the administration of which it will be necessary to borrow further large sums. That borrowing will necessarily involve further taxation, and what I grieve to see is that the Government is not so thoroughly advised of the position of the country as to be aware that the country is already burdened to such an extent that, if these burdens continue unlightened, the country will see a day of insolvency. No one who is familiar with the position of country settlers can blind his eyes to the fact that they are at present taxed to a greater extent than even in Great Britain; that they have a great deal of difficulty in making a living; and that they are living from hand to mouth, and are unable to do more than secure the necessities of life. Under such circumstances, then, it is sheer madness to go on increasing the public burdens. I am quite certain that not one member of this Council would for a moment hesitate to give up the whole honorarium if that were to be an indication of the policy of the Government right through. It was accepted as such; but we find, unfortunately, that, while the Government is willing to lessen the expenditure in some directions and promote retrenchment in salaries and current expenses, it still goes on with unnecessary and extravagant expenditure in those very directions in which economy should be exercised to a much more marked extent. No one who knows much of the colony, and looks over the proposals of the Government with reference to public works, can fail to see that a great number of those public works, on which a large amount of money is proposed to be expended for the next three years, are totally unnecessary at present. It is proposed to complete some railways which have been started, and carry out some branches which have been surveyed, through parts of the country where the population is comparatively scanty, and in which the soil is much less fertile than in other parts of the country where the population is larger, and where the fertile soil would encourage the hope that a large traffic would follow the construction of a railway. We do not find that even in those districts which are most populous and where the country has been under cultivation for a number of years the traffic is large. We find that the railways do not give a large return for the expenditure

which has been occasioned. Therefore how can it be expected that we should continue spending money on any districts where the local traffic is less likely to afford an ample return? I do not suppose that any remarks that members may make on the subject will be of any service, but the opportunities which occur in the Council of speaking on such subjects are so infrequent that one can hardly decline the temptation of referring to them whenever the opportunity occurs. Referring to the question of the reduction of the number of members in the other House, I am not able to say that there can be any objection to the proposal. I think the proposal is an excellent one; and I am certain of this: that, inasmuch as the business of the country was conducted much more promptly and expeditiously, and quite as wisely, when the number of members of the Legislature was not larger than the Government proposes it shall be, the business will be quite as well conducted with a reduced number as it was then. The business of the country at present is subjected to a number of unconstitutional obstructions, and I am afraid that, in many instances, it is not completed wisely.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I should not have anything to say in reference to this question had it not been for the remarks which have been made with reference to the Public Works Statement. My honourable friend Mr. Menzies says the opportunities are so infrequent in this Council of discussing questions of that character that the opportunity of referring to them when it occurs should not be lost. I do not know that that is altogether the case, because I believe that there are many occasions in the course of a session when honourable gentlemen can express their opinions on matters of that sort. But I do say I am very much surprised to hear the remarks that have been made. This Government never undertook to put a full stop to the public works of the colony. From the very first up to the present time we have said that we consider it to be indispensable that the reduction in the public works should be large, but should be gradual; and that is the whole character of the proposition that has been made. I do not propose now to go into details in regard to that aspect of the matter, because I think it can be much more conveniently dealt with on another occasion than at the present time. But I must certainly say I am surprised at the remarks made, because they seem to indicate a hasty judgment on the proposals themselves. I believe, if the honourable gentlemen who expressed these opinions make a careful examination, they will, after taking into consideration the circumstances surrounding all the different cases, not keep to the opinion that they have just expressed—at all events, not wholly so. The view of the Government is that they should carry on works up to something like a paying point. That has been the burden of our song from the very first; and I submit that to stop short in the middle of all these undertakings at points where they lead to nowhere,

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and where nothing but expense would ensue, is not a course which it would be best to adopt. In concluding these few remarks on that point I would ask the honourable gentlemen to pay more attention to the particular circumstances themselves than they have done. I have only further to say that, whatever may be the possible effect of the Bill in regard to the Government exercising violent powers over the House of Representatives, certainly I am convinced there is no practical danger of anything of the kind. I am certain that the fate of any Government, in this free country, who attempted to exert any such powers in the restriction of the rights of the people in regard to the other Chamber, would very soon suffer complete extinction. That is, with me, a matter of conviction; otherwise I should not have concurred in what is contained in this measure. I trust the Bill will not be criticized in that spirit, because I am perfectly satisfied, from what I have heard, that from one end of the colony to the other it was the earnest desire of the constituencies, as a whole, that the number of members of the House of Representatives should be reduced; and I consider it must be admitted all round that this proposal of the Government is nothing more than the outcome of that view taken by the country, and is a fair and reasonable attempt to give effect to that view.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—No one denies that the public desire a reduction in the number of members of the House of Representatives. The public have no desire, however, to place such power as is proposed in the hands of the Ministry, to be used whenever they think proper—a power by which they could at any time get a dissolution, in order to carry any measures they might think proper. If the Ministers are of opinion that this power will not be used, then why do they put it in the Bill? There is no use for it, except as a threat.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—Not use it injuriously.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—If it will not be used, whether injuriously or not, they have no right to put it in the Bill. They could use that power in the case of the tariff for instance. The Government might be defeated on that, and they would have it in their hands to go to the country. I say it is rather too much to put the country to so much expense. The Hon. the Attorney-General was in a Ministry not many years ago when an increase of eight members was effected in the House of Representatives, and now, a short time afterwards, we are asked to reduce the number by twenty-one. I do not object to the reduction, and I suppose there are reasons for making it; but I object to giving into the hands of the Government the power to say when this reduction shall come into operation. To say that it is the Governor who has the power is absurd, because I have never known in this country a Governor refuse a dissolution when it has been asked for—it has always been granted. In regard to what the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn has said about introducing new matter into this subject, referring to the

Honorarium Bill, I do not know what grieves him so much about the honorarium. It does not grieve other honourable gentlemen.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—It must be so when you mention it.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—The honourable gentleman himself is put to no expense. He lives in Wellington, and has a good library to go to here, and no wonder he finds it an enjoyment.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I disagree entirely with the honourable gentleman who spoke last, that the power of dissolution rests with the Government instead of with the Governor. I think that is an entirely wrong principle to lay down in this Council, and should be contradicted. We know that the Governor has hitherto always exercised his own judgment and good discretion as to whether he will grant a dissolution. In fact, he sometimes imposes conditions in granting a dissolution, and we may rely upon him not to grant a dissolution unless the circumstances of the colony really require it. Nor do I believe that the Government will ask for a dissolution unless the circumstances of the colony really require it. It is possible that the circumstances may not require such a thing to take place; but, I say, since it is in accordance with the wish of the country that the number of the members of the House of Representatives should be reduced, and, acting on that wish, the other House thought proper to pass the Bill that is brought before us, it is necessary for us to confirm the action of the other House, and also to confirm the will of the country. It may be that this Bill will not come into force until the ordinary effluxion of time; but, if the country required it at an earlier date, the will of the people ought to be given effect to by having the number reduced, and thereby a large economy would be effected not only in the expenses of Parliament, but also, as was pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Oliver, in the demands upon the public purse made by honourable members. I do think that the larger a district which a member represents is made the less that member will be likely to be considered a local delegate, and he will feel it is his duty all the more to consider the best interests of the colony at large. I think that this Bill is for the public weal; and, this being so, I hope that the Council will pass it without any dissension whatever.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I do not think the Council will be at all wise in interfering with this Bill. I think, after what we have seen in another branch of the Legislature, it is very clear that it cannot be expected that the Council will make any amendments in this Bill. I have no fear—though I confess I have no very great confidence in the present Government—that, with respect to the power of dissolution, the Government would take advantage of their position so as to force on a dissolution unless there was some real necessity for it. I am not sure whether it would not be the best thing to dissolve immediately after this session, because it would involve a saving of £12,000 in honorarium alone. At the same time, I do not advo-

cate such a thing; I merely point out that such a saving could be effected if the Government took advantage of their power of a dissolution after this session. But no Government would endeavour to do so. I intend to support the Bill: and, with reference to what has been said about the Public Works Statement, I do not think that this is a proper time to review that question. There is one matter, however, that I would call the attention of the Council to. There are other savings which might be made with very great advantage. It is not enough simply to provide for a reduction of the honorarium; there are other reductions in the Legislative Department which should receive the consideration of the Government. We have the folly here of having two watchmakers to keep the clocks in order. That is a mere trifle, no doubt; but it shows how these things are managed. There is a watchmaker who attends to the clocks in the Legislative Council rooms and the library, and there is another watchmaker who attends to the clocks in the House of Representatives rooms. The Government should resume the entire control over the Legislative Departments, and take it entirely out of the hands of the Speakers, and see that these anomalies do not exist. That is simply one case; but I could name many more of a similar character. It is for the Government to take this matter into consideration. There is no doubt that we have too many employés in connection with the Legislative Department.

The Hon. Mr. DIGNAN.—I say with great satisfaction that I support this Bill, and I hope the Council is convinced by the voice of the country that there is a necessity for both retrenchment and reform in the administration of the government of the country. Therefore, if such retrenchment as the public require can be effected by the passing of this Bill, or by a Bill that has been previously passed affecting this Council, I think we have done our duty in passing that Bill, and that we shall be doing our duty in passing this measure. I regret to hear so many references to the Honorarium Bill. It is to be regretted that such expressions should have been made use of from time to time against the Government and the Parliament for passing that Bill. It is the only means, in my opinion, in which a sincere and true retrenchment can be brought about. There was one point referred to by the Hon. Mr. Stevens in his remarks on that subject that was sufficient to convince me of the necessity for voting for these measures, and that was that these Bills are part and parcel of a great scheme which the Government have in contemplation for effecting retrenchment in the affairs of the country. Therefore I voted for the Honorarium Bill, as I shall vote for this Bill. However it may affect us personally, I shall give it my hearty support.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—I think the effect of the Bill will be quite different from what honourable members have supposed. I take it for granted that if we pass this Bill a dissolution is less likely to occur, as the granting of

a dissolution would involve the country in a great deal of expense and confusion. On the last two occasions on which dissolutions were granted, in my opinion they were not necessary in the interests of the country. I cannot conceive that any man performing the functions of Governor would so strengthen the hands of a Ministry against the will of the House of Representatives as to grant a dissolution under this Bill. We are bound to rely on the performance of its duty by the Crown. In the next place, I hold that we are bound to look with the greatest respect on the desires of the House of Representatives in relation to a measure of this kind. And I venture to remind the Council that eight or nine members walked out of this chamber on a former occasion when they were entirely opposed to a Representation Bill—to the policy of the Bill, to the details of the Bill, opposed in every particular to the Bill; walked out of the chamber rather than furnish a majority against the Government in a matter which referred solely to the other Legislative Chamber, though the measure deprived the Province of Nelson of its proper representation, and tore down the landmarks which had been preserved for years. The Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker was then in charge of the measure, and I challenged it in every detail, as I felt it my duty to do. I do not think we have any right to interfere with important provisions in the present Bill, and I shall support it. In addition, I sincerely hail the diminution in the number of members; and the next measure I shall be glad to welcome in this Council will be an alteration in the law to the old system of quinquennial Parliaments. I think it will be admitted that we have paid sufficiently for our democratic experiences. I have always opposed these measures, which I foresaw would lead only to crudity and extravagance.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I will not digress by going into the question of the Public Works Statement, which has been referred to by the Hon. Mr. Menzies, who says that we have very few opportunities of discussing such questions as that, and that therefore we should take advantage of such opportunities when they occur. I say we have many opportunities, and that there will be a few opportunities during the remainder of this session when honourable members may legitimately go into this question. I do not intend, therefore, to go into that part of the question at present, more especially as my honourable colleague the Hon. Mr. Stevens has already referred in a measure to it. The Hon. Mr. Waterhouse has suggested two reasons why we should deal with this matter carefully: one, that it might not be desirable that this change should be made; and the other, that it was unconstitutional. In regard to the unconstitutional part of the question, I say there is nothing whatever unconstitutional in it. It seems to me perfectly constitutional and perfectly right. I think, under all the circumstances, and looking at what took place during the recent elections, and at the view taken by the constituencies

*Hon. Dr. Gruce*

that there should be a reduction in the number of members of the House of Representatives, the House could do nothing less than pass a Bill of this kind; and had they not done so they would have violated all their pledges and what was expected of them. In regard to the words of the clause objected to by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse—that is, the first portion of section 2: "or sooner determination of the present General Assembly"—I think he does not see the effect which would follow by striking out those words. It would then be competent on all occasions to prevent the Bill from coming into operation at all; and, if I recollect rightly, there has been no occasion, certainly not more than one, on which the Assembly has ceased by the effluxion of time—it has always been dissolved. And, supposing, at the end of the three years for which the present Parliament was elected, the present Ministry or other Ministry in power did not want this Act to come into operation, all they would have to do would be to dissolve Parliament a day before it would expire by effluxion of time. There are two checks upon the Government: one is that the Governor has power to refuse to grant a dissolution; and that power he exercises without the advice of the Ministry—he need not take the advice of his Ministry upon that subject. It is for him to judge between the parties, and it is for him to decide the matter according to his own judgment. In 1879 Sir Hercules Robinson took a long time to consider the matter, and hesitated very much as to whether he should grant a dissolution or not; but, after all, he came to the conclusion that he should grant it. But during the time this power has been in existence the Governor has refused a dissolution on several occasions. In regard to what has been said about other parts of the Bill, there are other occasions on which we can discuss them. I think, under all the circumstances, the Council would be quite justified in agreeing to the second reading of the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

The Council adjourned at twenty-five minutes past four o'clock p.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

*Tuesday, 13th December, 1887.*

Second Readings—Third Reading—Wairoa Resident Magistrate's Court—Rabbit-exterminator—French Reciprocal Trade—Stock Conference—Imported Material for Public Works—Postal Question with France—Standing Orders—Local Government—Assays—"Unemployed" on Catlin's River Railway—Auckland Islands Light-house—Education—Public Libraries—Torpedo lost—Hutt County Tolls—Motueka Native Trust Lands—Railway Freight on Pressed Straw—Persons imprisoned for Debt—Teremakau Bridge—Lincoln Agricultural College—Discharged Warders—Canterbury Education Board Office—Privilege: Words used by Sir J. Vogel—Legislative Councillors—Education—Land Bill—Government Railways Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

## SECOND READINGS.

Auckland Girls' High School Bill, Pharmacy Bill, Public Reserves Sale Bill.

## THIRD READING.

Christchurch Hospital Bill.

## WAIROA RESIDENT MAGISTRATE'S COURT.

On the motion of Mr. GRAHAM, it was ordered, That there be laid upon the table a return showing the cost to the country of the visit of the Napier Resident Magistrate to the Wairoa District during the last three years.

## RABBIT-EXTERMINATOR.

On the motion of Mr. DODSON, it was ordered, That there be laid before this House copies of Inspector Blundell's report upon the efficacy of Stenhouse and Smith's rabbit-extermi-  
nator, as shown by public trial in August last at Dumgree and Woodbourne, in the Marlborough District.

## FRENCH RECIPROCAL TRADE.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Government, Whether they have any information of the result of Sir Francis D. Bell's visit to Paris, whither he intended to go, about May last, to discuss with the French Customs authorities certain reciprocal trade advantages, especially the question of New Zealand frozen meats, a trade for which has sprung up in France, and is capable of large extension but for the heavy duty recently imposed by the French Government?

Major ATKINSON said the Government had no information upon the subject; but he would make further inquiries. Perhaps the honourable member would indicate where he obtained his information?

Mr. JOYCE said he found it in the proceedings of the Colonial Conference, in a memorandum written by Sir Dillon Bell on the 27th March last.

## STOCK CONFERENCE.

Mr. LANCE asked the Government, Whether they will adopt the resolutions passed at the Stock Conference held in Sydney in October, 1886, and inform the Government of New South Wales thereof?

Major ATKINSON understood that this matter was before the Stock Committee at the present time; but the Government would look into it. There was no doubt that there ought to be a common law on the subject.

## IMPORTED MATERIAL FOR PUBLIC WORKS.

Sir J. VOGEL asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will take into favourable consideration the question of abandoning the practice, in future contracts for public works, of allowing cement and other materials to be introduced free of duty? He would briefly state that a practice had grown up of inserting in contracts a proviso that material, especially cement, required and imported specially for the works under contract should be admitted duty-free.

The Customs Department had been asked what they thought of the arrangement, and replied that they thought very badly of it. It was difficult to follow material and ascertain whether the material was actually used for the purpose of particular contracts, or whether some of it was not sold and payment of duty on it escaped. Obviously, this was a disadvantage to the importer who paid the duty; but he would not disguise the fact that the greater objection he had to the practice was that it bore very hardly upon local producers. In the case of cement, there was cement produced at Mahurangi, and also near Dunedin, of first-class quality; and, if the duties by law leviable were charged, contractors would be much more inclined to use the local article than they now were. He might say that Mr. Wilson, of Mahurangi, had communicated with the Industrial Association of Auckland, that Association communicated with a similar one in Christchurch, and through the Christchurch Association the matter had been brought before him; and he recollected that on its being brought before him the Customs Department, during the time he had presided over it, had come to the conclusion that it would be desirable to put an end to any such provisions in the contracts. He hoped the Minister for Public Works would be able to tell him that he would consider the matter favourably, for by doing so he was sure to give a great deal of satisfaction to local producers.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the Government had considered this question very carefully, and had decided that all cement and other articles which could be produced in the colony that were used for the purpose of public works would have to pay the ordinary duty. He did not consider that cement should be admitted free, as he was informed by the Public Works Department that there was a great deal of difficulty in tracing these articles from the ship to the works. Although they could not alter the arrangements made under existing contracts, they would take care that in future the practice of admitting contractors' materials free of duty should be discontinued.

## POSTAL QUESTION WITH FRANCE.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Government, Whether they will inform this House—(1) The date when the Agent-General was, upon a postal question, accredited to Lord Lyons, the British Ambassador in France, and placed in direct communication with M. Coehery, who at that time controlled the French Postal and Telegraph Service; (2) what were the particulars of such postal question, and the result of the Agent-General's mission thereon? This was suggested to him on reading a memorandum from Sir Dillon Bell as to negotiation with foreign Powers in matters of trade. He found in this memorandum the following passage:—

"More recently, when it was decided to reopen negotiations upon certain trade questions pending between Canada and Spain, Her Majesty's Government were pleased to grant to Sir Charles Tupper joint plenipotentiary powers with the Ambassador at Madrid for

negotiating the proposed treaty. Sir Charles Tupper alluded to this on a public occasion in the City (London) in the following terms: 'So far as the foreign commerce of Canada is concerned, Lord Derby and Lord Granville have responded in the most generous spirit to the wish of Canada that her representative should be charged, as plenipotentiary, with the duty and responsibility of negotiating treaties in regard to foreign Powers; and they did me the higher honour of at once placing me on equal terms with Sir Robert Morier in the negotiation of a treaty with Spain.' In a recent speech in Canada Sir Charles Tupper announced his intention of going soon to Madrid to resume the negotiations."

It appeared from this that the Dominion of Canada had been in communication with foreign nations with regard to treaties respecting her natural products, and Sir Dillon Bell referred to a journey he proposed to make in relation to the frozen-meat trade. He thought this was a question which should come before the House, and that the House should know what had been done in respect to it; and therefore he asked the Premier if he could give them any information upon the subject.

Major ATKINSON was sorry he could not give the honourable gentleman any information on this point, either. All the original papers were burned in the Post Office when the fire occurred.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Premier whether he would communicate with the Agent-General, so that he might be supplied with fresh information or duplicate papers.

Major ATKINSON said he would make inquiries about it; but he thought nothing would come of it, because, if the negotiation promised success, probably they would have heard about it again.

#### STANDING ORDERS.

Major STEWARD asked the Premier, Whether he will take steps to give effect to the recommendations of the Standing Orders Committee, as contained in the report presented on Friday, the 9th instant?

Major ATKINSON said the Government would take this matter carefully into consideration during the recess, and hoped to be able to propose something that would be satisfactory to the House.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Mr. LARNACH asked the Premier, Whether the Government will place a sufficient sum of money on the estimates to provide bonuses to be paid for the three best essays on a thorough system of local government specially suitable and adaptable to the well-being of the inhabitants of both Islands of New Zealand? He put the question on the Order Paper with the view of assisting the Government. He thought they would be glad to receive useful hints upon the question of local government—the Premier had said as much—and he believed that the best way of acquiring them was to pay for them. A sum of, say, £300 would be money very usefully spent in this direction.

*Mr. Joyce*

Major ATKINSON said he thought there were so many local-government men in the House that he hoped to receive some hints without payment. The Government would take the matter into consideration, and if they thought it desirable—and he considered that very likely—they would perhaps ask the House to put a small sum on the estimates for this purpose.

Mr. SEDDON hoped that this reward would not apply to members of either House of Parliament.

Major ATKINSON said he would be inclined to give them double.

#### ASSAYS.

Mr. LEVESTAM asked the Minister of Mines, Whether he will give instructions to have assays made free of charge at the Government Laboratory?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON might inform the honourable gentleman that instructions had been issued fixing the cost of assays at the nominal sum of 5s. in every case. It had been considered desirable to have some nominal charge made, to prevent quantities of valueless ores from being sent.

#### "UNEMPLOYED" ON CATLIN'S RIVER RAILWAY.

Mr. R. THOMPSON asked the Minister for Public Works, In the return of the "unemployed" laid upon the table it is stated that seventy men are engaged upon the Catlin's River Railway, yet the local paper circulating in that district asserts that the County Council cannot obtain labour to carry out ordinary roadwork: will the Minister make inquiries as to whether the services of the "unemployed" cannot be dispensed with? His reason for asking this question was as follows: The *Clutha Leader* stated that, while the Government were providing relief-works for many hundreds of men, the County Council could not get their works carried out for want of men to do them. At a late meeting of the Clutha County Council a number of works had to be postponed from this cause.

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that the men referred to as working upon the Catlin's River Railway were doing very good work, and were doing it, he understood, at a cheaper rate than it would otherwise be done for. The following paragraph from the *Otago Daily Times* showed that a mistake had been made in inserting the paragraph in the *Clutha Leader*, which now turned out to have been incorrect:—

"As secretary to the Dunedin Labour Exchange, Mr. Colin Allan addressed the following letter to the Chairman of the Clutha County Council: 'I enclose a paragraph from the *Clutha Leader*; and, if it be true that works cannot be proceeded with for want of men, I will take in hand to supply good honest labourers at the shortest notice, to take pick-and-shovel work either by contract or by day-labour, as may be agreed upon. The Board of Advice has no desire to send men to relief-works as long as other work can be obtained.' To which



the following reply was received yesterday: 'The paragraph in the *Clutha Leader* with regard to works is misleading. What was implied at the last meeting of the Council was, that there seemed to be a scarcity of contractors to carry out the works of the county.—HENRY S. REUNERT, County Clerk, Balclutha.'

From this it would appear that the Clutha district was in want of contractors, and not of labourers.

#### AUCKLAND ISLANDS LIGHTHOUSE.

Mr. WARD asked the Government, if they will open negotiations with the Australian Colonies with a view to establishing a lighthouse on the Auckland Islands? He asked this question at the request of the Invercargill Chamber of Commerce, and of other residents of Southland. It would be in the recollection of the Minister that a number of wrecks had taken place on the Auckland Islands, and a great many lives had been lost, and it was thought desirable that the colonies should have a lighthouse erected on either the Auckland Islands or Enderby Island, the Snares, or one of the adjacent islands. He would be glad to hear that negotiations with the other colonies would be entered into regarding this matter.

Mr. FISHER said the question related to a matter that almost entirely affected the trade of the Australian Colonies. Some time ago there were negotiations with reference to the establishment of a light on the Auckland Islands; but those negotiations came to nothing. However, he would promise the honourable gentleman that the negotiations should be renewed. The necessity must be admitted, from the number of wrecks that took place; but, as he had said, the matter more affected the shipping trade of Australia than that of New Zealand.

#### EDUCATION.

Mr. TURNBULL asked the Premier, Why the Order in Council of the 7th instant, issuing regulations under "The Education Act, 1877," was published, the House of Assembly being in session, and no opportunity having been afforded them of expressing their opinion thereon previous to its issue; and also if they had obtained the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown before issuing the regulations in question? He would not detain the House for more than a few minutes; but he wished to call attention to it, because he believed it to be a very serious matter, and one which was calculated to bring the Governor into collision with the House: in fact, he had been actually placed in the position of superseding the powers of the House, by saying what should be done. There was no getting behind that fact. It was all very well to say that this was only a tentative measure; but the fact was that the Governor had superseded the powers of the House by issuing the regulations as to what should be done. And not only did this affect the Governor, but it also affected the privileges of the House. The matter was a very serious one, and he hoped to receive a satisfactory answer.

Mr. FISHER, in reply, said he would take the latter part of the question first. On the 10th of November, rather more than a month ago, the honourable member for Greymouth put a question on the Order Paper asking whether the Government had taken the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown upon the point. The answer he gave was, that the Government at that time were in possession of the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown on the subject. With regard to the larger part of the question, as to the possibility of the House being brought into collision with the Governor, he might say—with all respect for the honourable gentleman, for he did not wish in any way to wound his feelings—that he thought that was straining the position a little too much. The position of the Government in the matter was this: They had intimated in the Financial Statement their intention to make certain changes with regard to the education vote, and consequent upon that statement the Government had been besieged with applications from Education Boards and other persons interested in education in all parts of the colony desiring to know what the exact proposals of the Government were; and they thought it better to put their views clearly and distinctly in the form in which they appeared in the Order in Council. The Government had no desire to force their views upon the House; and, as the Premier had stated on the previous day, the whole question would come up for discussion upon a future occasion. The sole object of putting the views of the Government in the form of an Order in Council was that the Education Boards, and all other persons affected by these changes, should have definite and exact information on the points to which these changes related. He thought the matter had been made pretty clear by what the Premier had said. The whole subject would again come up for discussion, and it was hardly desirable that the debate on this subject which would shortly take place should be anticipated in this way.

Dr. FITCHETT wished to know if it would be competent to discuss the subject on the estimates.

Mr. SPEAKER thought it would be.

Dr. FITCHETT.—Supposing the House wished to increase the vote, and the Government indicated their intention not to do so, could the wish of the House be given effect to?

Mr. SPEAKER said the Committee of Supply could not increase the votes.

Major ATKINSON said he would undertake to put some vote in such a form that an expression of the opinion of the Committee should be given as to the action of the Government in this matter.

Mr. SEDDON wished to know if the Government had considered whether they would put the House in possession of the opinion of the Crown Law Officers on this point. Sir Robert Stout had given an opinion to an Education Board to the effect that the Order in Council was illegal. As the House had to discuss this, in fairness to the Crown Law

Officers and to the Government he thought it would be well if the opinion of those officers were placed on the table. He hoped the Government would accede to that request, and would allow honourable members to have the opinion which the Law Officers had given.

Major ATKINSON could not think of laying the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown on the table. The Government had issued an Order in Council, of the legality of which they had no doubt at all. If it was not legal, of course it was not worth the paper it was written on. But he took it the House would decide this question on the education vote. The question as to whether the Order in Council was illegal or not was irrelevant. The real question was, whether the House would make other provision; if so, the Order in Council would be cancelled.

#### PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Government, Whether they will forward to each of the public libraries in the colony copies of all public Bills introduced to Parliament during each session? He wished to explain that the object in getting Bills forwarded to each public library was to enable those persons who read *Hansard* and took an interest in the proceedings to have the Bills before them, in order to see the discussion that took place in the House on the wording of particular measures. There were not many public libraries in the colony, and therefore a very trifling expense would be incurred.

Mr. HISLOP said the Government did not see their way to give this direction, as it was competent for each member of the House to send Bills to public libraries if he felt disposed.

#### TORPEDO LOST.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Defence, —(1.) If it is true that at a recent date, during torpedo-practice, one of the three mines laid was lost, and cannot be found? (2.) If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister cause inquiry to be made into the circumstances under which the mine was lost, and, if through carelessness, neglect, or incompetency, will he compel the responsible parties to pay to the colony the cost of the said mine? Honourable members would remember that at the commencement of the session, during the torpedo-practice, one of two valuable torpedoes had been lost, and had not since been found. It had been seen by a steamer crossing the Straits a short time ago, but had not yet arrived at Lyttelton. Probably the Defence Department had given instructions to the torpedo corps there to look out for it. About three weeks ago, by direction of Sir George Whitmore, or, at all events, with his consent, a torpedo-practice took place in the presence of Captain Duncan, of the Wellington Naval, and three mines were laid down. On going to take up these mines, two of them were there, but the other was missing. There had been a constant search for the last three weeks for this missing one, and he believed it had not yet been found. They had found the sinker; but, as to finding the mine itself, it

had not yet been discovered, unless that had taken place within the last twenty-four hours. He might say, for the peace of mind of mariners visiting this port, that the mine was not charged. He believed the "Ellen Ballance" was out last Sunday morning in search, and it was then the sinker was found. Between losing torpedoes and mines a considerable loss was entailed on the colony, and this loss pointed to carelessness or incompetence, and did not say much for those who were responsible. He asked this question with a view of having full information given to the House, as he believed it was not a very satisfactory state of affairs, considering the cost to the country.

Mr. FERGUS understood that some little time ago four mines were put down, in order to test the force of the currents and strength of the tides. The currents happened to be very strong, and one shackle gave way; but he understood that the most valuable portion of the mine had been found. It was quite necessary that those in control of the defences of the colony should have some tests made, to be of some use in time of invasion or scare, so that they should know exactly what they were doing. The mines were not loaded. With regard to the torpedo which was lost, he was informed that it was now on shore at the Heads, and would be brought in in due course.

#### HUTT COUNTY TOLLS.

Mr. FITZHERBERT asked the Government, If they will make good to the Hutt County Council the amount of tolls which were uncollected during the time between the judgment of the Supreme Court in the recent Hutt toll-gate case and its reversal by the Court of Appeal?

Major ATKINSON could see no ground why the Government should pay this sum of money.

#### MOTUEKA NATIVE TRUST LANDS.

Mr. KERR asked the Native Minister, —(1.) Will he cause inquiry to be made into the position generally of the Native trust lands, Motueka? (2.) Will the Minister recommend the trustees, on the expiry of existing leases, to have a right of renewal granted to the present lessees, and to have future rents fixed by arbitration, in like manner to that which obtained in fixing rents of the Bishop trust lands? (3.) Will the Minister obtain from the trustees a detailed statement of the said trusts, and showing the amounts received and disbursed in relation thereto?

Major ATKINSON did not know what sort of inquiry the honourable gentleman meant. The Government were possessed of full information upon all questions relating to these reserves. As to the second part of the question, there was a Bill now before the House to deal with this matter. With regard to the accounts, if the honourable gentleman turned to the Appendix to the Journals he would find full particulars with regard to them in G.-5.

#### RAILWAY FREIGHT ON PRESSED STRAW.

Mr. ANDERSON asked the Minister for

*Mr. Seddon*

Public Works, If he will reduce the railway freight on pressed straw by 25 per cent., so as to equalise it with that on chaff, which weighs and bulks about the same as pressed straw?

Mr. MITCHELSON said he had made inquiries into this subject, and found that it was quite true that the weight of pressed straw was equal in bulk to the same weight of chaff; but the fact was that the chaff rate was exceedingly low, being about the same as that charged for firewood, and it was now a question of whether the straw rate should be reduced to that charged for chaff or the latter raised to the price charged for the former. He was now considering which of these courses to adopt. The reduction of the straw rate would mean a considerable loss of revenue: still, the fact remained that there was an anomaly which required remedying.

#### PERSONS IMPRISONED FOR DEBT.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Justice, If it is true that persons imprisoned for debt are, at the Wellington gaols, placed in the same cells with prisoners who have been convicted of criminal offences? In reference to this question, he had before him a letter which appeared in the leading journal of Wellington, in which the writer said,—

“SIR,—According to the law as at present in force in this colony, any person can be imprisoned for debt. I may be told that it is not so—that imprisonment follows the disobeying an order of Court for payment of a debt, or, in other words, contempt of Court. Well, put it so. Still, it remains imprisonment for debt. For instance, a man is committed to gaol for disobedience, and after being lodged there his friends pay the amount of the claim, and he is liberated. This surely shows that he has been imprisoned for debt. But my object in writing upon this subject is not to find fault with the present law in relation to imprisonment, but to point out that, if persons are to be imprisoned for debt, at any rate let the gaol of the Empire City of New Zealand be provided with a debtors' ward, and not have poor but honest men thrust into cells occupied by criminals. A case has just been brought under my notice. A respectable resident of Wellington was sent to gaol the other day for making default in payment of a small debt, and upon arrival at the gaol was placed in a cell occupied by three criminals—namely, a murderer, Lord Tyler, and another burglar. I hope that, now I have called attention to the matter, abler pens than mine will take the matter up, until a howl of indignation will be heard throughout the country against a Government of which the late Minister of Justice was a member.—I am, &c.,

“DISGUSTED.”

He objected, himself, to recovery of small debts, because he thought it should not be a charge upon the country. He objected to imprisonment for debt; and, reading that persons so imprisoned were mixed with criminals, when he knew that the gaol regulations strictly forbade it, perhaps this letter might be written with a view of doing an injury to those in

charge of the Wellington Gaol. By bringing the matter up it gave fair-play to the authorities: if, on the other hand, it was true that debtors were mixed with criminals, as alleged, then there was a gross breach of discipline, and he thought it would do no harm to call the attention of the Minister to it, so as to exonerate the gaol officials. At the same time, if there was any want of room, it would be better that proper accommodation should be provided. He thought he was perfectly justified in putting the question, and hoped the answer would be a satisfactory one.

Mr. FERGUS said he was informed that there was no truth whatever in the statement.

#### TEREMAKAU BRIDGE.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will take into consideration the advisability of having the railway-bridge over the Teremakau River, on the line of the Greymouth-Hokitika Railway, altered so as to make the bridge suitable for dray traffic?

Mr. MITCHELSON said the cost of the alteration of this bridge so as to make it a combined one would not be very great, the estimate being £750; but the Government could not recommend this expenditure, as the department had furnished a report stating that a bridge at this place for combined traffic would be exceedingly dangerous, seeing that the approaches were not open to view.

#### LINCOLN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked the Government, Whether, during the recess, they will consider the necessity of a complete reform in the system of management of the Lincoln Agricultural College, in the direction (1) of placing the control in the hands of an experienced and practical body of agricultural experts, instead of the Board of Governors of Canterbury College; (2) of providing regulations to render the institution suitable to the requirements of the colony, and available for the farmer or yeoman class, and not confined, as at present, by the high rate of fees charged, to the use of the wealthy alone; also to render the farm, so far as possible, self-supporting; and that the public be supplied with a minute detailed statement of accounts of annual income and expenditure? And whether they will bring in proposals next session to effect the above-mentioned objects? He wished to ask this question in order to place before the Government and the House the necessity that existed for reform in the system of management of the Agricultural College at Lincoln. The directions in which he wished to see that reform take place were as follow: that the institution should be made a more popular one, and should be placed within the means of the whole of the farming class. The fee of £65 per student rendered the institution not available for that class. Another direction in which he desired to see reform was, that a detailed statement of accounts should be placed before the public every year. Hitherto there had only been a statement laid before the

House of receipts and expenditure for each year — a rough statement. That statement for the last year was as follows: Receipts: Rents, £1,007 17s.; fees, £1,226 10s.; sales and produce, £1,512 17s. 6d.: total, £3,747 4s. 6d. Then, there was the expenditure under the different items of salaries, board of students and staff, travelling - expenses, farm - labour, stock, seeds, &c., and maintenance; amounting, in all, to £4,894 8s. 4d. This showed a debit balance to the amount of £1,147 8s. 10d. for the year ending the 31st of March last. This showed that the institution, with the large amount it received from the rents of the endowments, was not self-supporting; and he thought it was only right that the public should be made aware of that fact. Now, at a late meeting a motion was tabled by a member of the Board of Governors to the following effect: "That the Superintendent should be instructed to furnish an account of the work done at the school during the past year." One of the Governors stated that he doubted the wisdom of placing their accounts before any person who chose to ask for them; and the motion was withdrawn on account of the opposition of the Board of Governors to it. The Chairman stated that a full statement of receipts and expenditure was laid before the House, and was audited in Wellington. But this was not the mode of keeping and publishing the accounts that he (Mr. O'Callaghan) desired to see adopted. He thought the public had a right to see a detailed statement laid before them of all the work done in the institution, and the expenditure that took place. The institution as it was now being carried on was certainly not fulfilling its proper functions, and it certainly was not adapted to the requirements of the country. This was his only opportunity of bringing the matter under the notice of the Government; and he hoped that during the recess they would cause full inquiry to be made, and that the result of a thorough examination will be the effecting of very considerable improvement in the future.

Mr. FISHER said the honourable gentleman was, no doubt, aware that his observations opened out an entirely new phase of the question relating to the management of the institution. The College was under the management of the Board of Governors of the Canterbury College, a body established by Act, and therefore a body over which the Government had no control. He quite agreed with the general tendency of the honourable gentleman's remarks in regard to the Agricultural College not being managed in the most advantageous way; but the general answer to the honourable gentleman's question must be that the Government had no power to interfere. As to making the fees of the College more moderate, so as to bring the benefits of the institution within the reach of persons of moderate means, to give effect to that would mean an entire revolution in the management of the institution, because, as the honourable gentleman himself had said, the fees charged at the present time had resulted in a debit balance of

*Mr. O'Callaghan*

£1,150. He fully agreed with the honourable gentleman that some effort should be made to popularise the institution, and he thought the most satisfactory way in which he could conclude his remarks would be by saying that the Government would, with a view to popularising the institution, take the whole question into consideration during the recess.

#### DISCHARGED WARDERS.

Mr. ANDERSON asked the Minister of Justice, The reason why Chief Warder Ferguson and Warders Scott and Corrigan were discharged from the Government service; what compensation was granted to them; and was the compensation granted in conformity with the then-existing law?

Mr. FERGUS said Chief Warder Ferguson was discharged from the Government service for misconduct; but, as he had served upwards of nineteen years, and it was only towards the end of that long service that his habits became such as to necessitate his discharge, the Cabinet granted him a compassionate allowance of £66 13s. 4d. Warder Scott and Assistant Warder Corrigan were discharged on account of failing health, and received compensation as under: Scott, £135 8s. 3d.; Corrigan, £40. In each of these cases the compensation granted was in conformity with the then-existing law.

#### CANTERBURY EDUCATION BOARD OFFICE.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked the Minister of Education, Whether he has been informed that a Registration Officer, who holds also the appointment of schoolmaster, has been warned by the Canterbury Education Board that he must resign one or other of these offices; and whether the Government approves of such interference with an officer in the public service?

Mr. FISHER said the Government knew nothing whatever of the matter beyond the fact that there was an electoral officer in the district who, in addition to being Registration Officer, was a teacher in the employ of the Education Board. He received £15 a year as Registration Officer. If the officer had received such an intimation, he (Mr. Fisher) thought the interference somewhat unreasonable. If the services of such an officer could be utilised for the benefit of the public in this way, he thought it a somewhat unreasonable straining of official intervention if what the honourable gentleman had stated had been done.

#### PRIVILEGE: WORDS USED BY SIR J. VOGEL.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, with regard to certain amendments I have given notice to move, on the motion for going into Committee of Supply, I wish to say that it appears to me that there is a strong desire on the part of honourable members that the session should be ended by Christmas, and that therefore any particular subject other than Government business, no matter what it may be, can hardly be brought forward without limiting the time available for discussing the Government measures. There

is another point which has a great deal of influence with me in the course I propose to take; and it is this: that I feel it is not desirable to interpose any obstacle, so to speak, in the way of considering—and giving the greatest amount of consideration to—the appropriations on the estimates of public expenditure. I can well understand that, with a large number of notices of amendments to the motion for Committee of Supply given by honourable members, the Government may feel less inclined to give to honourable members a number of opportunities by adjourning the Committee of Supply—in other words, may allow not so large an amount of consideration to questions relating to public expenditure. I would not on any consideration let any matter personal to myself act in the way of an obstacle to the full consideration of questions relating to public expenditure, and I may say that that consideration influences me in the largest degree. I have therefore come to the conclusion that I shall not bring this matter before the House this session, and when the time comes I shall withdraw these notices; so that the Government may feel, in the first instance, that I shall not take up time which may be devoted to other subjects of larger public importance, probably, and also that, as far as I am concerned, there will be no reason for their refusing to adjourn Committee of Supply from time to time, to give the largest amount of attention which can be given, under the circumstances of our very limited time, to questions relating to the public expenditure.

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS.

Mr. SAMUEL.—Sir, I wish to make a statement to the House on a matter of great importance which, I think, ought to be brought under the notice of the House and the Government. I believe that some six gentlemen who are now in the habit of taking seats in the Legislative Council have no right to take such seats there, and that their seats have been vacated. The gentlemen to whom I refer are the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn, the Hon. Mr. Oliver, the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, the Hon. Mr. Holmes, the Hon. Mr. Menzies, and the Hon. Dr. Pollen. The reason that causes me to believe those gentlemen have lost the seats they formerly held in the Legislative Council is that, so far as I have been able to discover from the Journals of the Council, they have been absent for two successive sessions without the permission of the Governor, signified in accordance with section 36 of the Constitution Act. That section provides,—

“If any Legislative Councillor shall, for two successive sessions of the General Assembly, without the permission of Her Majesty or of the Governor, signified by the said Governor to the Legislative Council, fail to give his attendance in the said Legislative Council, . . . his seat in such Council shall thereby become vacant.”

Now, all those gentlemen have been, as far as I have been able to discover, absent during the whole of two successive sessions without per-

mission for more than one session. The Hon. Mr. Pharazyn was absent during the whole of the session of last year and the first session this year, having had permission only for the year 1886; the Hon. Mr. Oliver was absent during the whole of the sessions of 1885 and 1886, having had permission only for that of 1885; the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse was absent during the whole of the sessions of 1885 and 1886, having had permission only for the year 1885. That honourable gentleman, too, if I have made no mistake in my search, and if my reading of the law is correct, had previously vacated his seat, as he was absent during the sessions of 1882 and 1883, having had permission only for the year 1882. If he vacated it the first time, he had, of course, no right to take his seat again in the Council. The Hon. Mr. Holmes was absent during the two sessions held in 1884; the Hon. Mr. Menzies was also absent during the two sessions of 1884; and the Hon. Dr. Pollen was absent during the sessions of 1870 and 1871, having had permission only for that of 1870. That honourable gentleman also, I believe, had previously vacated his seat, having been absent during the sessions of 1866 and 1867, with permission only for 1867. There might possibly have been some doubt about the interpretation of section 36 of the Constitution Act, but whatever doubt there might formerly have been appears to me to have now been set at rest by the decision of the Privy Council in the case of The Attorney-General of Queensland *versus* Gibbon. In that case a member of the Queensland Legislative Council had been absent during three sessions, but had obtained leave of absence for a period covering the whole of the first session and a part of the second; and the question arose whether, having been absent the whole of three sessions, including one session and part of another not included in the period for which he had permission, his seat was vacated. The Constitution Act of Queensland is almost identical with that of New Zealand in these respects; and a Committee of the Legislative Council decided, by a majority of three to two, that the seat was not vacated. Against this decision the Attorney-General appealed to the Privy Council, and there it was decided that the seat had been vacated. The Bench deciding the appeal was a strong one, consisting of the Right Hon. Lords Bramwell, Hobhouse, and Herschell, Sir Barnes Peacock, and Sir R. Couch. The judgment of Lord Hobhouse sets out the facts of the case clearly, and I will read it from the *Law Times* report (23rd April, 1887, Vol. LVI., N.S., 239):—

“The difficulty in this case arises from the circumstance that Mr. Gibbon received permission to absent himself, not during any specified sessions of the Legislature, but for a definite period of time, not coinciding with the sessions that have been held. His leave of absence was for one twelvemonth—viz., from the 23rd December, 1882, to the 23rd December, 1883. He was actually absent, first, during the session which began in June and ended in July, 1883; secondly, during the session which

began in November, 1883, and ended in March, 1884; and, thirdly, during the session which began in July and ended in December, 1884. In the course of the next session the question arose whether his seat had become vacant. He had thus been absent during the whole of three sessions, but his leave of absence covered the whole of the first and a portion of the second, so that it cannot be said that he was absent during two successive sessions without a permission extending to some portion of those sessions. The question is, whether such a permission prevents Mr. Gibbon's seat from becoming vacant. The question was referred by the Legislative Council to a Committee of five, who sifted it very carefully, and, by a majority of three to two, decided that the seat was not vacated, and reported in that sense. The Council adopted the report, which therefore comes to their Lordships with all the weight due to that decision. The effective words of the statute are that 'If any Legislative Councillor shall for two successive sessions fail to give his attendance, without permission, his seat shall thereby become vacant.' The word 'fail' is not applicable only to instances of wilful or negligent failure. It would apply also to the case of failure wholly blameless—*e.g.*, from the illness of the Councillor. 'Fail to give his attendance,' then, is equivalent to 'be absent from;' and the section therefore is to be read, 'If any Legislative Councillor shall, for two successive sessions, be absent from the said Legislative Council without permission.' Without permission for what? Why, absence for two successive sessions. Mr. Gibbon has had no permission to be, and has been, absent for two successive sessions. To say that permission to be absent for one, or a period including one, prevents the application of the provision, is in effect to say that permission cannot be given to be absent for one session without its operating in effect for two sessions. In their Lordships' opinion the statute treats the non-attendance which entails a penalty as an entire thing, and they consider that the permission which is relied on to avoid the penalty must be for that entire thing. They think the object of the enactment is attained by this construction. Absence, short of two sessions, even by one day, is attended by no consequences. But absence for two successive sessions vacates the seat, unless leave is given for a period covering such absence as a whole. It is the absence on the last day added to the prior absence that has to be justified by permission, and that permission must be for the entire absence. They must therefore humbly advise Her Majesty to allow the appeal, and declare that Mr. Gibbon's seat became vacant."

It seems to me that there can be no doubt whatever that this decision is binding in the present case, and that therefore the seats of the honourable gentlemen whom I have named have become vacant. I have thought it right to bring this matter before the House, as the House seems to me to be the proper medium for me, as one of its members, to make known

*Mr. Samuel*

the discovery, if I may call it so, which I have made. I have no doubt the Government will consider the subject, and cause a careful search to be made of the records of the Council, and cause proper steps to be taken as pointed out by the Constitution Act—that they will have the matter investigated, and find out whether the seats are vacant. I may express a hope that, if they do find that the seats have been vacated, they will lose no time in bringing in an Indemnity Bill, to prevent these gentlemen being subjected to possibly very heavy pecuniary loss. I have taken the earliest opportunity of bringing the question before the House, for the session is considerably advanced, and it may be necessary to take some legislative action in the matter.

Mr. LARNACH.—Is there any penalty or fine for honourable gentlemen in that position holding seats which are really vacant?

Major ATKINSON.—I cannot inform the honourable gentleman definitely. Of course it will be the duty of the Government, now that the matter has been brought under its notice, to look into the question, and see what steps should be taken, if any.

#### EDUCATION.

Mr. WILSON.—I am sorry that I was absent yesterday when the discussion took place with regard to the education question. I understand from some honourable members who were present that there was an impression on the minds of some honourable gentlemen that the Education Committee lately appointed is shielding the Government in some way; and I wish to disabuse the minds of honourable members upon that point. I am sure the Government can perfectly well shield itself. And I am certain that all the members of the Committee take the same view as I do on this matter. A great deal of valuable evidence has been taken by the Committee. On the 19th of last month I asked for an extension of time for a month, not for the purpose of shelving the question, but simply that we might get evidence from all parts of the colony, and in order that I might not have to ask for an extension of time from week to week. We have sent all over New Zealand asking various people for evidence, and of course it will take a long time for this evidence to come in. I think the Committee are quite satisfied that they cannot make an exhaustive report this session; but they will bring up an interim report, and hope the House will consent to the Committee being set up again next session in order that they may pursue their inquiries further. As education is such an important matter in this colony, I think it would be a very good thing if a standing Committee were set up, so that matters relating to education might be referred to it. The members of that Committee would then have a better knowledge of the education question than any fresh Committee that might be set up for that purpose. The proposal which I now make will increase the cost of printing very considerably; but, as it seemed to be the wish of honourable members during the dis-

cussion yesterday that they should have this evidence before them, I thought it right that I should give them an opportunity of voting on the question, at any rate. There is still a considerable amount of evidence to come in. I beg to move, That the evidence, so far as it has been taken by the Education Committee, be laid on the table and printed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. TURNBULL.—In personal explanation, I beg to say that I understand that the honourable member for Caversham felt aggrieved at some remarks which I made yesterday. If the honourable gentleman was aggrieved at anything I said I am very sorry. I understood that the papers from this Committee were laid on the table, but not the report, and that that could not be brought down for a month, and I said that it would be useless then; and I accused him rather of having misled the House. I beg to express my regret for having said so, and withdraw the remark.

Mr. WILSON.—The reason why I asked for an extension was, as I have explained, that the Committee knew that the evidence could not be brought in for a long time, and I thought it would save time to ask for a month's extension of time instead of coming to the House every week.

Mr. BARRON.—I did not feel personally aggrieved at anything which the honourable member for Timaru said; but I thought that the statements of the honourable member for Timaru and the honourable member for Dunedin South were very unfair to the Education Committee: and the House will now see that those statements were altogether unwarranted.

#### LAND BILL. IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. MARCHANT moved a new clause providing that, where two or more persons have taken up or become holders of a section of deferred-payment or perpetual-leasehold land as joint tenants, it shall be lawful for the Governor, on request of such persons, and on such terms as he shall think fit, to order subdivision of such section or sections into as many parts as there are joint holders.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

#### AYES, 23.

Barron	Lawry	Steward, W. J.
Beetham	Moat	Taylor
Buchanan	Moss	Thompson, R.
Carroll	O'Connor	Thompson, T.
Fraser	Peacock	Walker.
Hislop	Perceval	Tellers.
Kelly	Richardson, E.	Guinness
Larnach	Samuel	Marchant.

#### NOES, 44.

Allen	Feldwick	Hodgkinson
Anderson	Fergus	Izard
Ballance	Fisher	Jackson
Buxton	Fish	Jones
Cadman	Fitchett	Joyce
Cowan	Goldie	Lance
Dodson	Graham	Loughrey

Mackenzie, M.	Ormond	Stewart, W. D.
Mackenzie, T.	Pyke	S.-Menteath
McGregor	Reeves, R.H.J.	Tanner
McKenzie, J.	Rhodes	Valentine
Mills	Richardson, G.	Ward.
Mitchelson	Ross	Tellers.
Monk	Seddon	Blake
O'Callaghan	Seymour	Hutchison.

#### PAIR.

For.	Against.
Vogel.	Russell.

Majority against, 21.

Second reading negatived.

Mr. MARCHANT moved the following new clause: "Where any block of land exceeding one thousand acres in extent has been in possession of any person or persons for a period exceeding three years before the first day of December, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-seven, and no *bonâ fide* occupation or improvement has taken place on such land, then it shall be lawful for the Governor, upon payment of the property-tax valuation of such land, and an additional amount equal to ten pounds per centum thereon, to take possession of such land, and to proceed to administer it as if it were, and such land shall thereon be deemed to be, waste lands of the Crown. The Governor in Council may make such regulations for giving due effect to the provisions of this section as to him may seem fit."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

#### AYES, 27.

Ballance	Grimmond	Reeves, R.H.J.
Barron	Guinness	Richardson, E.
Blake	Hutchison	Samuel
Buxton	Joyce	Smith
Feldwick	Kelly	Thompson, T.
Fish	Loughrey	Turnbull.
Fitchett	McKenzie, J.	Tellers.
Fraser	O'Callaghan	Marchant
Goldie	O'Connor	Taylor.
Grey		

#### NOES, 32.

Allen	Hodgkinson	Pyke
Anderson	Jackson	Rhodes
Buchanan	Lance	Richardson, G.
Cadman	Lawry	Ross
Carroll	Mackenzie, T.	Seymour
Cowan	McGregor	Tanner
Dodson	Mills	Thompson, R.
Fergus	Mitchelson	Ward.
Fisher	Moat	Tellers.
Graham	Monk	Pearson
Hislop	Ormond	Valentine.

#### PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Steward, W. J.	Atkinson
Vogel.	Russell.

Majority against, 5.

Second reading negatived.

Mr. WALKER moved a new clause providing that, notwithstanding anything contained in sections 237 and 240, the Governor in Coun-

oil, if requested so to do by the Waste Lands Board of the district, may, by Proclamation, declare that any education reserve or reserves, or any part thereof, shall, at the expiry of any existing lease, license, or other tenure, be dealt with, under the provisions of the said Act or any amendment thereof, in such manner as shall be set forth in such Proclamation.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

#### AYES, 41.

Ballance	Hutchison	Pyke
Beetham	Jackson	Reeves, R. H. J.
Blake	Joyce	Richardson, E.
Buchanan	Kerr	Richardson, G.
Buxton	Lance	Samuel
Carroll	Larnach	Smith
Cowan	Loughrey	Steward, W. J.
Dodson	Marchant	Thompson, R.
Duncan	Mitchelson	Walker
Feldwick	Monk	Ward
Fisher	O'Callaghan	Withy.
Graham	Ormond	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grey	Parata	Turnbull
Grimmond	Pearson	Valentine.

#### NOES, 25.

Allen	Guinness	Seymour
Anderson	Hislop	S.-Menteath
Barron	Hodgkinson	Tanner
Bruce	Lawry	Taylor
Cadman	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson, T.
Fergus	Mills	
Fish	Moat	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	Moss	Fitchett
Goldie	Ross	McGregor.

Majority for, 16.

Clause read a second time.

Mr. BARRON moved, That progress be reported, and that it be referred to Mr. Speaker to decide whether the amendment now moved by Mr. Walker is the same in substance as one already negatived during the present session, and therefore contrary to Standing Order No. 100.

The Committee divided.

#### AYES, 26.

Allen	Hobbs	Reeves, W. P.
Anderson	Joyce	Ross
Bruce	Macarthur	Samuel
Duncan	Mackenzie, M.	Taipua
Fergus	McGregor	Taylor
Fitchett	McKenzie, J.	Wilson.
Fulton	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Goldie	Moss	Barron
Hislop	Newman	Fish.

#### NOES, 37.

Atkinson	Graham	Parata
Ballance	Grey	Rhodes
Beetham	Hutchison	Richardson, E.
Blake	Jackson	Richardson, G.
Buchanan	Kelly	Seymour
Cadman	Lance	Smith
Cowan	Larnach	Steward, W. D.
Dodson	Levestam	S.-Menteath
Feldwick	Monk	Tanner
Fisher	Ormond	Thompson, R.

Mr. Walker

Turnbull  
Walker  
Ward

Whyte  
Withy.

*Tellers.*  
Peacock  
Valentine.

Majority against, 11.

Motion negatived.

Mr. BARRON moved, That, after the words "Waste Lands Board of the district," there be inserted the words "and the bodies in whom such reserves are vested."

The Committee divided.

#### AYES, 34.

Allen	Hodgkinson	Perceval
Anderson	Jones	Reeves, W. P.
Blake	Joyce	Rhodes
Bruce	Mackenzie, T.	Ross
Duncan	Marchant	Samuel
Fergus	McGregor	Stewart, W. D.
Fitchett	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Fulton	Mitchelson	Thompson, T.
Goldie	Moat	
Grey	Moss	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Newman	Barron
Hislop	Peacock	Fish.

#### NOES, 40.

Ballance	Levestam	S.-Menteath
Beetham	Macarthur	Taipua
Buchanan	Mackenzie, M.	Tanner
Buxton	Monk	Thompson, R.
Cadman	O'Conor	Turnbull
Cowan	Ormond	Valentine
Dodson	Parata	Walker
Feldwick	Pearson	Ward
Fitzherbert	Pyke	Whyte
Graham	Reeves, R. H. J.	Wilson.
Grimmond	Richardson, E.	
Hobbs	Richardson, G.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly	Seymour	Hutchison
Kerr	Smith	Steward, W. J.

Majority against, 6.

Insertion of words negatived.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be added to the Bill."

#### AYES, 31.

Ballance	Hobbs	Thompson, R.
Beetham	Kerr	Turnbull
Buchanan	Mackenzie, M.	Valentine
Buxton	Monk	Walker
Cowan	Parata	Ward
Dodson	Reeves, R. H. J.	Whyte
Feldwick	Richardson, G.	Wilson.
Fitzherbert	Seymour	
Graham	Smith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grey	S.-Menteath	Hutchison
Grimmond	Tanner	Steward, W. J.

#### NOES, 35.

Anderson	Guinness	McGregor
Blake	Hislop	McKenzie, J.
Bruce	Hodgkinson	Mitchelson
Duncan	Jones	Moat
Fergus	Joyce	Moss
Fish	Kelly	Newman
Fitchett	Levestam	O'Conor
Fulton	Mackenzie, T.	Peacock
Goldie	Marchant	Perceval



Reeves, W. P. Samuel *Tellers.*  
 Richardson, E. Taylor Allen  
 Ross Thompson, T. Barron.

Majority against, 4.

Clause negatived.

Sir G. GREY moved the insertion of a new clause constituting a Land Court to determine fair rents of holdings.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be added to the Bill."

AYES, 21.

Ballance	Joyce	Smith
Brown	Kelly	Taylor
Buxton	Loughrey	Ward
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Wilson.
Feldwick	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fitchett	Perceval	Moss
Grey	Richardson, E.	O'Connor.
Grimmond		

NOES, 41.

Allen	Hodgkinson	Richardson, G.
Anderson	Levestam	Ross
Atkinson	Macarthur	Samuel
Beetham	Mackenzie, M.	Seymour
Blake	Mackenzie, T.	S.-Menteath
Bruce	Marchant	Taipua
Buchanan	Mitchelson	Taiwhanga
Carroll	Moat	Tanner
Cowan	Monk	Thompson, R.
Dodson	Newman	Turnbull
Fergus	Ormond	Whyte.
Fulton	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	Pearson	Hobbs
Hislop	Rhodes	McGregor.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Fitzherbert	Fisher
Seddon.	Withy.

Majority against, 20.

Clause negatived.

Mr. MONK moved the addition of a clause providing for village-homestead settlers acquiring the freeholds of their sections.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 26.

Allen	Mackenzie, M.	Taipua
Anderson	Mackenzie, T.	Taiwhanga
Barron	Mitchelson	Tanner
Bruce	Moat	Thompson, R.
Goldie	Ormond	Whyte
Grey	Parata	Wilson.
Guinness	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Levestam	Stewart, W. D.	Hobbs
Macarthur	S.-Menteath	Monk.

NOES, 34.

Atkinson	Fitchett	Mills
Ballance	Fulton	Moss
Blake	Graham	O'Connor
Buchanan	Hutchison	Pearson
Buxton	Joyce	Richardson, E.
Cowan	Loughrey	Richardson, G.
Duncan	Marchant	Samuel
Feldwick	McGregor	Seymour
Fish	McKenzie, J.	Steward, W. J.

Taylor	Walker	<i>Tellers.</i>
Thompson, T.	Ward.	Perceval
Turnbull		Smith.

Majority against, 8.

Second reading negatived.

Mr. GUINNESS moved a new clause providing that the Governor in Council may reserve Crown lands for endowments for such boroughs as he may think fit.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 33.

Allen	Joyce	Reeves, W. P.
Ballance	Kelly	Richardson, E.
Barron	Loughrey	Steward, W. J.
Brown	Macarthur	Stewart, W. D.
Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	Taiwhanga
Buxton	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Dodson	Mills	Walker
Fitchett	Moss	Wilson.
Goldie	Ormond	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grey	Parata	Guinness
Hobbs	Perceval	Ward.
Hutchison		

NOES, 29.

Anderson	Hislop	Seymour
Atkinson	Jones	S.-Menteath
Beetham	McGregor	Thompson, R.
Bruce	Mitchelson	Thompson, T.
Cowan	Moat	Turnbull
Duncan	Monk	Valentine
Feldwick	Pearson	Whyte.
Fergus	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fish	Richardson, G.	Graham
Fulton	Samuel	Tanner.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Levestam.	Marchant.

Majority for, 4.

Clause read a second time.

The words, "County Councils, Town District and Road Boards, Harbour Boards, River Boards, Drainage Boards, Charitable Aid Boards, and public libraries," having been inserted,

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 16.

Ballance	Macarthur	Ward
Brown	O'Connor	Wilson.
Cadman	Parata	
Grey	Smith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison	Thompson, R.	Guinness
Kelly	Thompson, T.	Levestam.

NOES, 42.

Anderson	Fergus	Mackenzie, M.
Atkinson	Fish	Mackenzie, T.
Barron	Fulton	McGregor
Beetham	Goldie	Mills
Buchanan	Grimmond	Mitchelson
Buxton	Hislop	Moat
Cowan	Hobbs	Monk
Duncan	Jones	Newman
Feldwick	Joyce	Ormond

Peacock	Samuel	Tanner
Pearson	Seymour	Turnbull.
Reeves, W. P.	Steward, W. J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Rhodes	S.-Menteath	Perceval
Richardson, E.	Taiwhanga	Whyte.
Richardson, G.		

Majority against, 26.

Clause negatived.

Mr. PARATA moved the following new clause: "The Governor may set apart certain Crown lands for Natives in the South Island, in compliance with the promises made to the Maori people by the Commissioner purchasing land on behalf of the Queen."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 26.

Allen	Hutchison	Taiwhanga
Anderson	Kelly	Taylor
Ballance	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, R.
Cadman	Rhodes	Walker
Fitchett	Richardson, E.	Ward
Grey	Smith	Wilson.
Grimmond	Steward, W. J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Stewart, W. D.	Brown
Hobbs	Taipua	Parata.

NOES, 42.

Atkinson	Jones	Ormond
Barron	Levestam	Peacock
Beetham	Loughrey	Pearson
Blake	Macarthur	Perceval
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Richardson, G.
Cowan	Mackenzie, T.	Russell
Feldwick	Marchant	Seymour
Fergus	Mills	Tanner
Fisher	Mitchelson	Thompson, T.
Fish	Moat	Turnbull
Goldie	Monk	Whyte.
Graham	Moss	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Newman	Buchanan
Hodgkinson	O'Connor	McGregor.
Jackson		

Majority against, 16.

Second reading negatived.

Bill reported, with amendments, and read a third time.

# GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

## IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 5.—Constitution of Commissioners.

Mr. FISH moved, That progress be reported.  
The Committee divided.

AYES, 14.

Blake	Joyce	Taylor
Buxton	Loughrey	Walker.
Fitchett	Moss	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Seddon	Reeves, W. P.
Jones	Steward, W. J.	Ward.

NOES, 38.

Allen	Goldie	Lawry
Atkinson	Graham	Macarthur
Beetham	Hislop	Mackenzie, T.
Buchanan	Hobbs	Marchant
Fergus	Izard	McGregor
Fisher	Jackson	Mills

Mitchelson	Richardson, E.	Thompson, T.
Moat	Richardson, G.	Whyte
Monk	Russell	Wilson
Newman	Seymour	Withy.
O'Connor	S.-Menteath	<i>Tellers.</i>
Peacock	Tanner	Levestam
Rhodes	Thompson, R.	Pearson.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Ballance	Anderson
Feldwick	Ormond
Fish	Hutchison
Grey	Mills
Kerr	Fulton
Lance	Taiwhanga
O'Callaghan	Valentine
Perceval	Taipua
Parata	Bruce
Turnbull	Ross
Vogel.	Pyke.

Majority against, 24.

Motion negatived.

Mr. W. P. REEVES moved to amend the clause by inserting in the first line, after the word "he," the words "two Boards, each consisting of."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be inserted."

AYES, 16.

Buxton	Loughrey	Walker
Fitchett	Moss	Ward.
Grimmond	Rhodes	
Guinness	Seddon	<i>Tellers.</i>
Jones	Steward, W. J.	Blake
Joyce	Taylor	Reeves, W. P.

NOES, 35.

Allen	Levestam	Russell
Atkinson	Macarthur	Seymour
Beetham	Marchant	S.-Menteath
Buchanan	McGregor	Tanner
Fergus	Mitchelson	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Moat	Thompson, T.
Graham	Monk	Whyte
Hislop	O'Connor	Wilson
Hobbs	Peacock	Withy.
Izard	Pearson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Jackson	Richardson, E.	Mackenzie, T.
Lawry	Richardson, G.	Newman.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Ballance	Anderson
Feldwick	Ormond
Fish	Hutchison
Fitchett	McKenzie, J.
Grey	Mills
Kerr	Fulton
Lance	Taiwhanga
Loughrey	Izard
O'Callaghan	Valentine
Parata	Bruce
Perceval	Taipua
Turnbull	Ross
Vogel.	Pyke.

Majority against, 19.

Amendment negatived.

The Committee divided on the question,  
"That the clause stand as printed."

## AYES, 34.

Allen	Marchant	Richardson, G.
Atkinson	McGregor	Seymour
Beetham	Mitchelson	Tanner
Buchanan	Moat	Thompson, R.
Fergus	Monk	Thompson, T.
Fisher	Newman	Whyte
Hislop	O'Connor	Wilson
Hobbs	Peacock	Withy.
Jackson	Pearson	
Lawry	Reeves, W. P.	Tellers.
Levestam	Rhodes	Russell
Macarthur	Richardson, E.	S.-Menteath.

## NOES, 11.

Blake	Jones	Ward.
Buxton	Joyce	Tellers.
Grimmond	Moss	Seddon
Guinness	Walker	Taylor.

## PAIRS.

## For.

Anderson  
Bruce  
Fulton  
Hutchison  
Izard  
Mackenzie, T.  
Mills  
Ormond  
Pyke  
Ross  
Taipua  
Taiwhanga  
Valentine.

## Against.

Ballance  
Parata  
Kerr  
Fish  
Loughrey  
Fitchett  
Grey  
Feldwick  
Vogel  
Turnbull  
Perceval  
Lance  
O'Callaghan.

## Majority for, 23.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 34.—Commissioners may grant licenses to sell liquors.

Mr. HOBBS moved to insert the words  
"with the approval of the Licensing Bench."

The Committee divided on the question,  
"That the words be inserted."

## AYES, 26.

Allen	Moat	Taylor
Atkinson	Monk	Thompson, R.
Beetham	Newman	Thompson, T.
Hislop	Peacock	Ward
Hobbs	Pearson	Whyte
Jackson	Rhodes	Wilson.
Lawry	Richardson, G.	Tellers.
Marchant	Seymour	Joyce
Mitchelson	Tanner	Withy.

## NOES, 7.

Buchanan	Levestam	Tellers.
Fergus	Macarthur.	McGregor
Fisher		S.-Menteath.

## Majority for, 19.

Words inserted.

Clause 35.—How license-fees dealt with.

Mr. HOBBS moved to strike out "Commissioners for the purposes of this Act," with a view to insert "local bodies."

The Committee divided on the question,  
"That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

## AYES, 17.

Atkinson	Mitchelson	Tanner
Buchanan	Monk	Thompson
Fergus	Rhodes	Withy.
Fisher	Richardson, E.	Tellers.
Marchant	Richardson, G.	Jackson
McGregor	Seymour	Levestam.

## NOES, 12.

Allen	S.-Menteath	Whyte.
Beetham	Taylor	Tellers.
Lawry	Thompson, T.	Hobbs
Macarthur	Ward	Joyce.
Moat		

## Majority for, 5.

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 9.—Chief Commissioner.

This clause, being an appropriation clause, was specially referred to a Committee of the whole House.

Mr. MITCHELSON moved, That the blanks be filled up by the words "one thousand five hundred pounds" for the Chief Commissioner and "one thousand pounds" for the other Commissioners.

Mr. TAYLOR moved, That the item of £1,500 be reduced by £500.

The Committee divided on the question,  
"That the item be reduced."

## AYES, 2.

## Tellers.

Taylor  
Joyce.

## NOES, 24.

Allen	McGregor	Seymour
Atkinson	Mitchelson	S.-Menteath
Beetham	Moat	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Monk	Thompson, T.
Hislop	Newman	Ward.
Jackson	Pearson	Tellers.
Lawry	Rhodes	Buchanan
Macarthur	Richardson, G.	Levestam.
Marchant		

## Majority against, 22.

Amendment negatived, clause agreed to, referred to Committee on the Bill, and agreed to.

Bill reported, and amendments agreed to.

The House adjourned at five o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 14th December, 1887.

First Readings—Second Reading—A. Owen—Pacific Mail Service—Native Land Administration Bill—Hon. Dr. Pollen—Government Business—Reporting Debates—Mortgages of Public Reserves—Privilege—Native Land Administration Act Repeal Bill—Native Land Court Bill—Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill—Local Bodies' Loans Bill—Representation Bill—Wellington College and Girls' High School Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

## FIRST READINGS.

Land Bill, Christchurch Hospital Bill.

## SECOND READING.

Civil Service Reform Bill.

## A. OWEN.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR presented a petition from A. Owen, praying that certain blocks of land, in which he claimed to have an interest, might not be dealt with under the Native Land Administration Bill. He (Mr. Bonar) presented this petition at the request of the petitioner, but he did not hold himself responsible for any allegations made in it, without further inquiry.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL asked if it was competent for an honourable member to make any remarks on the question that a petition do lie on the table; because he had read this petition, and it appeared to him to contain charges of fraud against different officers of the Native Land Court, and charges of collusion on the part of the Judges, which should, he thought, preclude it from being received at a period of the session when no time remained for its proper investigation.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said, if this petition was similar to one which appeared in the newspapers, he entirely agreed with the Hon. Mr. Mantell. It appeared to him that if the petition were brought into Parliament it might prevent parties going into a Court of justice.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR might say that he felt some difficulty in regard to the petition, as the allegations made in it were certainly of a very strong character, and reflected seriously on persons holding high positions. At the same time, it appeared to him that no person should be debarred from the right of bringing a grievance before Parliament. Of course it would be for the Public Petitions Committee to inquire into the matter, and deal with it as they thought proper. He knew nothing of the petitioner at all, or of the facts of the case; but he thought the right of approaching Parliament should not be denied to any one.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN asked if the petition was couched in proper language. He had not seen the petition. He would suggest that the debate be adjourned in order to allow the Hon. the Speaker to look at the petition and see if it was a proper petition to present to the Council.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said he saw nothing in the language, however grave might be the charges, which would debar the petitioner from approaching Parliament.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE thought where petitions contained charges against Judges they were not allowed to be presented unless there was an undertaking on the part of the person presenting them that he would take further action in the matter. If the honourable member was prepared to take further action in reference to this petition, it appeared to him (Mr. Waterhouse) right that the petition should be presented. But, unless the honourable gentleman was prepared to take further action,

it seemed to him that the course proposed might be attended with dangerous consequences, inasmuch as they might have persons rushing the Legislature, calling in question the decisions of the Judges not only of the Native Land Court, but of the Supreme Court. He thought the course suggested by the Hon. Mr. McLean was the better one to adopt, in order that the Hon. the Speaker might look into the matter.

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND said he had looked over the petition. It certainly impugned the integrity of the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court. The matter was otherwise quite proper to be received by the Council. The petition ought to be withdrawn and amended. The matter could not now rest where it was.

The Hon. Captain FRASER hoped the Council would agree to the Speaker's ruling. If there was nothing objectionable in the petition he thought it should be received. They would be denying justice to people if they refused to accept petitions, as was proposed.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN did not know anything about the petition. If it was determined to prosecute the matter further, he, for one, would not refuse to accept the petition. But it was a very serious thing to receive such petitions, making charges against Judges. When the petition was received it then became privileged, and was telegraphed all over the colony.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said the Hon. Mr. McLean had already spoken on the question.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said Standing Order No. 23 read as follows:—

"No petition containing serious charges affecting the integrity of individuals shall be ordered to lie on the table unless the member presenting the same shall intimate that he will propose to the Council a resolution in support of the charges."

So far as he had seen, the petition under consideration contained serious charges.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said that was a question for the honourable gentleman who presented the petition. In his capacity as Speaker he could not interpose his authority to prevent any petitioner approaching the Council with a grievance, however serious any charge in it might be, so long as the terms of the petition were respectful to the Council.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said honourable members had not heard what the name of the petitioner was, or what the petition was about. If this petition was the petition of Mr. Owen, a similar petition had been presented to the other Chamber, and had been made public.

The Hon. Captain BAILLIE said Standing Order No. 21 provided that the only question which should be put on a petition being presented was, "That this petition do lie on the table."

The Hon. the SPEAKER did not think that that would preclude the question of adjourning a debate. It appeared to him to be reasonable that any question that was put should be capable of being delayed.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL asked whether

the Standing Order referred to by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse did not strictly apply to such a petition as this. This petition contained serious charges affecting the integrity of individuals—not of private individuals only, but of public officers. He thought the Standing Order pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse applied to a case of the kind under consideration. If that should be so, and the honourable gentleman who proposed to lay the petition on the table desired to reconsider his responsibility, if the debate were adjourned he would then have time for further consideration of that point.

Debate adjourned.

#### PACIFIC MAIL SERVICE.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES asked the Hon. the Attorney-General, Whether the Government, before entering into any new contract for the Pacific Mail Steam Service, will take into consideration the propriety of making Vancouver the terminus instead of San Francisco? He wished to say, in explanation, that, as he believed that before the end of the session the Government would take into consideration the question of a new contract for the carriage of these mails, he would like to ascertain whether they would take into consideration the fact that by an alternative route which was now open to it those mails could be carried through the Empire overland across the Continent of America—a course which might be attended with many advantages.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER might inform his honourable friend that no new contract would be entered into without fully considering the circumstances of the whole of the routes available, and he assured the honourable gentleman that the Government would not come to any decision which was not for the best interests of the colony.

#### NATIVE LAND ADMINISTRATION ACT REPEAL BILL.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI moved, *That all the lists of persons interested in the passing of the Native Land Administration Act Repeal Bill be laid upon the table.*

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER could not allow this motion to go in the form in which it was proposed. It was absolutely impossible. The honourable gentleman wanted a list laid on the table of all persons interested in the passing of this Bill. He did not know to what the honourable gentleman particularly referred; but, if he referred to anything specific, that was right enough, and he (Sir F. Whitaker) should have no objection to it; and, if the honourable gentleman meant that certain documents which were laid before the Committee should be laid on the table, he would also consent to that course.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said that was exactly what he wanted.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said, then there could be no objection to that course. The documents were in the hands of the Com-

mittee, and he had no control over them, but would see what could be done.

Motion agreed to.

#### HON. DR. POLLEN.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT moved, *That leave of absence be granted to the Hon. Dr. Pollen for the remainder of the session, on urgent private business.*

Motion agreed to.

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER, in moving the motion standing in his name, said it was a usual motion to submit at this period of the session; and, as no objection had been taken to it on former occasions, he presumed none would be taken to it on this occasion.

Motion made, and question proposed, "*That the Standing Orders be so far suspended for the remainder of the session as to allow Government business to take precedence, and, if deemed necessary, to enable Bills to pass through all their stages at one sitting.*"—(Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.)

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS would like to add to the words of the motion the following: "*upon motion made in each case to that effect.*" He did not do this in any spirit of opposition to the Government; because all Governments had acted alike in regard to this matter since he had been in the Council—rushing down with the business during the last few days of the session; and he had actually seen Bills coming down from the printer when the second reading had been moved, and sometimes carried before the Bills had been circulated among honourable members. He did not think there should be any objection to this amendment, as, according to it, it would only be for the Government to move that each particular Bill which was then being dealt with by the Council should pass through all its stages at one sitting.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said the amendment brought the thing to an absurdity, if a motion was to be made in each case. He presumed that the object of the amendment was to nullify altogether what was asked for in the motion itself; and it was the first time he had ever heard of any opposition to a motion of this character. Every Government, as far as he recollected, had moved it, and he did not understand why any opposition was made to it now.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS would like to explain that he did not mean to nullify the effect of the motion by the addition of the words he had moved. All he wished was that the Standing Orders might be suspended, but that no Bill should be allowed to go through all its stages as was proposed. This amendment had nothing to do with the Standing Orders, which were to be suspended for the rest of the session.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said the Hon. the Attorney-General had pretty well stated what he wanted on this point. However, he did not like the statement of the Hon. Mr. Reynolds to go forth uncontradicted, that in the Council Bills were read a second time without being circu-

lated. He did not remember any occasion on which a Bill went through without being circulated, unless it was one of a most unimportant character, and one which every honourable member knew all about before it came forward. He thought that honourable gentlemen were particularly careful as to how Bills went through that Chamber, and took great care to look after every Bill that came there. He did not think they did their business in the slipshod way which might be inferred from the amendment of the honourable gentleman. He quite believed, however, that that amendment would nullify the effect of the motion.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said it was true that Bills had been circulated before the second reading came on; but it was a question whether time had always been given to consider the Bills in order to discuss them. He only knew of one case—which occurred thirteen years ago—of a Bill which had been passed without being circulated. He recollected that occasion, because it was a Bill of a most important character. He hoped that his honourable friend the Attorney-General would take care not only that Bills were distributed before they came on for the second reading, but that time would be afforded for honourable members to fairly consider them before they came on for discussion. Referring to the Land Bill, that was a measure of the utmost importance, and he might point out that it would not be in their hands, probably, before the following morning. And yet the second reading of that Bill was ordered for the following afternoon. He thought that that was a motion they ought not to be called upon to agree to. Another Bill was the Special Powers and Contracts Bill, a measure which always required close investigation; and he hoped that his honourable friend would give the Council a distinct assurance that, as regarded this Bill, they should have it in their hands at least twenty-four hours before it came up for discussion.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES concurred very much with what had fallen from the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse. But he begged to remind the Council that the matter was entirely in its own hands, and even though it agreed to the proposition of the Hon. the Attorney-General it could still arrest the progress of a Bill if it were satisfied that there had not been sufficient time to consider it. If the Council took that course no Bill could go through without being fully considered. He would be glad to see the Council, even at the end of the session, take such a decided step that it would not be hurried through its business. In regard to the Special Powers and Contracts Bill, he trusted the Government would not find it necessary to bring in a Bill of such a character this session.

Amendment negatived, and motion agreed to.

#### REPORTING DEBATES.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he put it on the Order Paper with the view of calling attention to some circumstances which he thought the Council should properly understand. It was

*Hon. Mr. McLean*

with the view of ventilating the subject more than with any desire to get the Council to agree to the proposal made that he now moved the resolution. And, in order that the Council might understand the nature of his motion, he would just indicate in a few words the subject-matter. In a report of one of the early debates in the session a mistake appeared in the printed slip, which attracted the attention of the honourable member who spoke. Attention was called to it in the Council, the mistake was corrected, and, on looking at the *Hansard* that was afterwards published, it appeared that no notice was taken of the correction. But, as the mistake attributed certain words to an honourable member whose other remarks found in the context expressed exactly a contrary opinion, the attention of the Reporting Debates Committee was called to the circumstance; and, after some correspondence with the reporting staff, the honourable member who communicated with the Reporting Debates Committee was asked to attend a meeting of the Committee, when the chief of the reporting staff was also present. Some conversation occurred. The reply of the chief of the reporting staff in this matter was not such as one might have expected after the member of the Council had called attention to the mistake, but was one which the honourable member who communicated with the Reporting Debates Committee conceived was altogether inadequate as coming from the agent who was employed by Parliament to present a correct report of what occurred in the Council. The correspondence which had been laid on the table included a letter from the chief of the reporting staff, to which he would now refer. It appeared in the course of the inquiry that not only had these remarks in which the corrections had been made been omitted from the number of *Hansard* in which they should have appeared, but, by some accident no doubt, the report of the proceedings of the Council on that day was also omitted. The chief of the reporting staff explained that that was in consequence of an accident: the copy was mislaid, and it was not noticed for some time afterwards. Mr. Barron went on to say,—

“The *Hansard* staff is, numerically, inadequate to report everything that takes place in the Council as well as in the House of Representatives. Consequently, when I undertook the duty, in 1867, of establishing an official reporting staff, I was clothed by Sir Edward Stafford's (then Mr. Stafford) Government, who initiated the system, with the power of exercising my judgment as to what portion of the proceedings should be reported in a condensed form, and what should be omitted, so that full reports could be given of questions of greater importance. I have exercised this discretionary power for the last twenty years.”

The Council would observe that the chief of the reporting staff claimed discretion as to whether the reports he gave of the proceedings of the Council should convey the whole of the record, or only that part of the record which he saw fit. This part of the claim of the chief of the *Hansard* staff was based on instructions

which he received twenty years ago. The report of the Committee simply intimated that the Committee had reported on the subject, but made no reference whatever to the incidents which were the subject-matter of the correspondence; and he (Mr. Menzies) thought that the Committee might have given some expression of opinion upon the matter. He did not know what the order of reference to the Committee might be; but it seemed to him that a Committee which had a subject of this character under its consideration should have instructions ample enough to admit of its expressing some opinion on the subject. If the Committee did not feel at liberty to express any opinion, he was at a loss to see what useful purpose the Committee could serve. He did not wish to press the motion. Having brought the subject under the consideration of the Council, he was quite willing to let the motion drop.

Motion made, and question proposed, "*That the report of the Reporting Debates Committee and correspondence connected with it, laid upon the table on the 9th instant, be printed.*"  
—(Hon. Mr. MENZIES.)

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER said the Committee, investigating circumstances which had been brought before the notice of honourable members by the Hon. Mr. Menzies, found, in the course of examining a complaint which he had made as to some omission or some misreport, that one day's proceedings of the Council had been altogether omitted from *Hansard*, and the Committee called on the Chief Reporter to explain how that had taken place. His explanation was a candid confession of having made a mistake. He could not explain why the notes of the proceedings of the Council on that date had disappeared: all he could say was that they had disappeared, and he was very sorry for it. He, having made that candid admission, placed himself at the mercy, as it were, of the Committee; and the Committee thought it would be strictly performing its duty if it reported to the Council in full the whole of the proceedings—the questions which were asked the Chief Reporter, and his explanation. He (Mr. Oliver) might say that the Hon. the Speaker, as Chairman of that Committee, directed a search to be made through the *Hansard* report of the proceedings of this session, in order that it might be ascertained whether any similar omissions had previously taken place. It appeared to the Committee that, generally speaking, the proceedings of the Council had been faithfully reported in *Hansard*. He did not know whether the Committee had failed in its duty in omitting to do more than report in full as they had done. The matter was before the Council now. The Council had the report of the Committee before them. Honourable members had had the report of the Reporting Debates Committee before them for several days, and the question had been brought up again by his honourable friend opposite. But, as mistakes might occur under the most careful supervision, it seemed to him (Mr. Oliver) that no

great good would result from pursuing this subject further.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON thought the Council was indebted to the Hon. Mr. Menzies for having drawn attention to the matter. There was one point which seemed to him of greater importance, perhaps, than this which had been more particularly referred to, and that was that, from the Chief Reporter's reply to the question that had been put to him, it appeared that he used his discretion as to what should be reported in *Hansard* and what omitted; that he was guided, apparently, by instructions, as he stated, which had been given him many years ago, when Mr. Stafford, now Sir Edward Stafford, was in office. He (Mr. Johnson) was not aware that any such rule existed with regard to reporting the debates of the Council. He did not know whether honourable members were aware of it, nor did he know whether much importance should be attached to it—that was to say, whether it was ever carried into effect; but he thought that it should be clearly understood. He, for his part, thought that it was a discretion which should not be placed in the hands of the Chief Reporter. He thought that the reporters should give full and clear reports of everything that took place, and not simply omit what the Chief Reporter might deem to be insignificant and unnecessary to be reported.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND desired to point out that Mr. Barron had taken upon himself to introduce another innovation this session. On the second reading of a Bill, where no debate took place, he noticed that what the honourable member who moved the second reading said was not reported at all.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES was quite satisfied with having drawn the attention of the Council to the matter. He trusted honourable members would not fail to see that it was a matter of very considerable importance to the Council to know whether they could rely on the reports of the proceedings being given or not. The power he had referred to ought to rest with the Council, and not upon the discretion of the Chief Reporter. If *Hansard* was to be regarded as of any value whatever, the reports should be an accurate account of what took place.

Motion negatived.

#### MORTGAGES OF PUBLIC RESERVES.

The Hon. Mr. HART.—Having seen in the copy of a Bill—which may not have come up to this Council, but will come before it—a proposal to give a power to a certain body to mortgage, with power of sale, a public reserve in this town, I thought it desirable to amend my motion by inserting, after the words "in any public reserve," the words "in any city, town, or township." The object of my motion is to obtain an expression of opinion on the part of the Council upon a subject of very considerable importance. There can be no doubt that, in the laying-out of towns in this colony, in most cases there has been an absence of due provision for the wants of the public in the way of public re-

serves; and it becomes therefore a matter of the utmost importance that what reserves there are for public purposes should not be disposed of and become private property. It occasionally happens that such reserves become vested in some trust for the public purpose approved of by the State, and with the intention and in anticipation that the reserve vested in the body for that public purpose will continue in perpetuity to be used for that purpose. Then, it is discovered that the body, in order to make it more useful, requires certain buildings to be placed upon it; and, for the purpose of obtaining the money for erecting such buildings, it seeks from the Legislature authority to execute a mortgage on the reserve, with the power of sale, so that, if the body fails to pay interest on the mortgage, this reserve is sold, and becomes private property. I think the Legislature is unwise in giving such powers, when, by giving another power, it can authorise arrangements to be made which will probably answer every purpose—that is, by authorising a mortgage for a term of years only, so that at the end of that term of years the land so mortgaged will again be deemed the public property of the colony. I think the Legislature should regard the interests of the future inhabitants of our towns, and not give the power of sale outright of property which should be a perpetual endowment for the public benefit. Under these circumstances, I move the motion standing in my name, *That, in the opinion of this Council, every power to mortgage land included in any public reserve in any city, town, or township under the authority of an Act of the General Assembly should be limited to the execution of such mortgage for a term of years not exceeding sixty-three years, with power of sale for such term of years only.*

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I think it would be unwise of the Council to pass this resolution in the form in which it is proposed. It appears to me, as my honourable friend has stated, that there is very great difficulty in reference to these mortgages of property of the character to which he refers; because, no doubt, in the case of sale they would pass away altogether from the purpose for which these reserves were intended. I should like very well to see mortgages made on property of this description simply enabling them to be taken possession of for the time, and that there should be no power of sale given at all. I am afraid, however, that that would amount to a prohibition of mortgaging. No one, unless the power of sale is given, will lend money upon mortgage, and especially upon buildings such as my honourable friend refers to, because these buildings would not be available for letting for many purposes. I apprehend that the honourable gentleman is alluding to the Wellington Girls' High School Bill. Whether it is desirable that the Board of Governors should be able to mortgage that property or not will be a matter for our consideration presently. The Bill is down for second reading, and will come on later. I think to pass a general resolution of this kind would not do at all, for every year, of

course, the property would decrease in value, and I do not think it would be found that any persons would be willing to lend money on it. The question will come more properly before us when we come to consider the Bill in which such a power to mortgage is given. Then it will be a matter for consideration whether any limitation should be made in this case or not. I think it very unwise for the Council to lay down any general rule. Each case should stand on its own merits. In the case of the Wellington Girls' High School Bill, if my honourable friend desires to limit the power of sale in that instance he could move an amendment when the Bill comes before the Council. I think that is a very much better way of dealing with the matter than passing a general resolution of this description; because the question will come up again when the motion for the second reading of the Bill is made, and this resolution will only prejudice the consideration of it to a certain extent. I shall therefore oppose the motion.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I do not agree with the motion, but I propose to amend it, and to amend it in such a way that it will follow the course which the Council has always taken on similar occasions—namely, to refuse to give the power of sale altogether. As surely as we give a power of sale so surely will these reserves go some day or other. In the cases of other high schools this power has not been given: then why should Wellington be specially excepted? I know cases in which there has been no difficulty in raising the money without the power of sale. To any one who wants to lend money this is one of the best securities he could lend upon. There is an income from the property; and as long as he gets the interest what does he care about the principal? There are many people who keep on receiving interest, and who do not think of the principal at all. I propose to amend the motion as follows: *To strike out the words "with power of sale for such term of years only," and to insert the words "without the power of sale."*

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I hope the Council will accept neither the motion nor the amendment, but will allow each particular case as it comes before the Council to be dealt with on its merits.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—It seems to me that there would be an inconvenience in passing a general resolution like this. I think it would be much better to deal with each question as it arises. If we pass a resolution in either of the forms proposed the Council will not be bound by it. Therefore I think it is not desirable to pass such a resolution.

Motion amended, and motion, as amended, negatived.

#### PRIVILEGE.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—Before you call on the orders of the day, Sir, I wish to draw attention to a paragraph which I saw in one of the newspapers this morning.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—Is the honourable gentleman speaking to a point of order or a question of privilege?

Hon. Mr. Hart



The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—Sir, I believe I am speaking to a question of privilege. I think that the paragraph referred to ought to be read to the Council. It refers to the Legislative Council, and purports to be a report of proceedings in another Chamber, where Mr. Samuel raised a question.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—It appears to me that any question referring directly to a debate in the other House is quite out of order.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—But it is a paragraph which appeared in one of the local newspapers.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—But we cannot notice questions that are debated in another Chamber.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—Sir, I wish to ask for some explanation, because I have heard statements made about certain honourable members in this Council. I do not take this step because I have any enmity towards those honourable gentlemen, but because I think it is a matter which should be looked into. The honourable gentlemen referred to were the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, the Hon. Mr. Oliver, the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn, the Hon. Mr. Menzies, the Hon. Mr. Holmes, and another honourable member, whose name I cannot recollect. Sir, when I heard this reference made to the seats of honourable members in this Council, it brought to my mind the facts of my own case when I was formerly a member of this Council. My seat in this Council was cancelled without my having done anything to justify that course; and, when I heard statements which were calculated to do harm to my name, and which threw doubt on my rights in this Council, I left the Chamber. I think this is a matter that should be considered by the Council. The matter is being discussed outside this Chamber, as it has appeared in the newspaper of this morning. I wish to assure the honourable members whose names I have mentioned that it is not from any personal feelings that I bring this forward; but I think it is a question which should be inquired into. I have no ill-feeling towards them, nor any desire to do them an injustice; neither do I like to hear their names spoken of as I myself was spoken of formerly; and I hope they will not attribute any ill-feeling or discreditable motives to myself. I have no doubt they have seen what I refer to, and are just as well aware of what has occurred as I am myself. I will therefore content myself with having brought the matter under the notice of the Council.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—Perhaps I should quote the authority generally acknowledged to be a standing authority on this question. May, in his "Parliamentary Practice," says: "Whatever matter arises concerning either House of Parliament ought to be discussed and adjudged in that House to which it relates, and not elsewhere."

#### NATIVE LAND ADMINISTRATION ACT REPEAL BILL.

On the motion for the committal of this Bill,  
The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said,—Before the

Bill is committed, I wish to ask the honourable gentleman in charge to adjourn the further consideration of the measure till to-morrow, to enable us to look at the lists to which I have previously referred, as the Council may be in total darkness as to the objects which I have in moving for them. This measure, it is true, is a very small one, only consisting of a few clauses; but the object of the Bill is of very great importance, and I hope the Government will see their way to postpone it till to-morrow, in order that we may see the lists referred to.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—The only objection I have to that is the shortness of time that is now at our disposal in which these Bills have to go through the Council and also through the House of Representatives. I presume the list referred to is among the papers of the Committee, and can be obtained from the Chairman of that Committee. But I am anxious that these Bills should go on. There is much business before the Council. Probably it will answer my honourable friend's view if we go into the Bill to-day, and then allow it to stand over till to-morrow. He can obtain all he wants this afternoon or this evening, and if he will agree to that I will take care that the Bill shall not be passed till the honourable gentleman has had every opportunity of perusing the lists.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I am sorry to say that I cannot accept the proposal of the honourable gentleman, because the Bill deals with very important matters, and many transactions, some of which, no doubt, are very just and proper, though, as to others, I am doubtful as to their nature. The measure also changes the legislation regarding dealing with Native lands which was passed in 1886, prohibiting the dealing with Native lands; and now a measure is summarily introduced, and its second reading has been passed, and it has been proposed that it should go into Committee, without our having an opportunity of satisfying ourselves with regard to the object and the effect of the Bill. I think this is a very serious thing, and I say that I do not take this action with the slightest intention of obstructing the Government in the conduct of their business; but we come here to discharge our duty; and I desire, before the Bill is proceeded with further, that the papers I have referred to shall be laid on the table, so as to show who are interested in these transactions. A former Attorney-General barred the way which has been opened by the present Attorney-General, by which means these transactions can be carried out.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—I agree with the Hon. Mr. Shrimski in asking that this Bill be postponed till to-morrow. I think, however, there is no objection to go on with the Native Land Court Act Amendment Bill. But the Native Land Administration Act Repeal Bill is a matter which requires considerable attention before passing it. I understand that the intention of the Bill is to allow certain transactions to be continued or completed which were prohibited and put a stop to by the Act which this repeals.

I have been told that this Bill is to allow transactions to be completed which transactions were the very ones which were intended to be closed by the Act of 1886. I have only just realised the effect that this measure will have, and that this Bill is to enable transactions to be completed which were refused and put a stop to under the Act of 1886. It was for that reason that I moved that this Bill should not apply to Native lands in the Middle Island and Stewart Island. I think I am quite justified in making this motion which appears on the Order Paper, seeing that I am the person who manages and directs nearly all the transactions of these lands; and when I agreed to the passing of the Act in 1886 I did so on the supposition that it only applied to transactions and dealings with Native lands in the North Island. I am convinced of this, because the Natives of the other Island have to take care of themselves, as the Government do not in any way make any provision for them; and I protest against my own people being treated in this way, as though they were not human beings. I trust that the Government will allow the amendment which I propose to be passed; otherwise I should feel compelled to oppose the passing of this Bill in all its stages. I do not think it is right that we should legislate only for the benefit of the Europeans, and not do so for the Natives, to whom the lands belong. I think, if any dealings are to be allowed at all, the whole matter of purchase should be allowed to be open and free to all, and that, if anybody should be allowed to deal, the Natives should also be free; otherwise everything should be closed. When the Hon. the Premier made his Financial Statement in the other Chamber he mentioned that the lands held by the Natives in severalty who were living among Europeans should be exempted from these restrictions. Now, I say that in this Bill he still prevents this very dealing with their property, and that he has only opened the door to certain Europeans whose purchases are incomplete. Now I will compare the speech made by the Premier with the Bill now before us. When that speech was delivered the Natives understood that the lands held by them in severalty might be dealt with, and the Premier also made that statement to the deputation of Natives who waited upon him; and the object of the Natives who this year applied for the restrictions imposed by the Act of 1886 to be removed was more in reference to the land held by themselves. I think that the lands in reference to which the Government should exercise much caution would be the land held by a number of Natives, and lands which have not yet had the Native title extinguished. When the Bill was first introduced I intended to support it, thinking that it imposed no restrictions upon the lands held in severalty, and would not apply to the lands in the South Island; and I urged that it should be referred to a Select Committee in order that the amendments which I desired might be inserted could be considered. I find that the amendments made in Committee only

*Hon. Mr. Taiaroa*

amount to certain verbal amendments, which do not meet my wishes. They only authorise the completion of deeds and leases which have been begun before a certain date; and the Government have not made any amendment to meet the case to which I refer, in which the Natives desire to be allowed to renew existing mortgages. That is one matter which is causing the Natives great trouble. And there is no provision made for Natives who have purchased land from other Natives, which was formerly the case, as though they were European holders. The only lands which they can now deal with are lands which they have purchased from the Crown or Europeans, and, further, there is no provision for lands which Natives have bought from other Natives by permission of His Excellency. Under the Acts which were formerly in existence such lands were considered to be on the same footing as European lands. I do not think that the Council can say that the Natives would be losers if that were permitted, because the Native is paid by money belonging to another Maori, and such Native would have to purchase with his own money: it is not as though any money was given to him by the Government. I do not see how the Government can possibly say that the prohibition of such dealings is for the benefit of the Natives, and I think the Council should insert a provision that any land bought by a Maori from another Maori should be treated as though it were European land. I think the Europeans completely misunderstand the case, and think that the Natives are not in the habit of purchasing each other's lands; but that was the course pursued by them for many years before the Europeans came. They of course did not make such purchases with cash, but bought with greenstone and other articles. I do not wish honourable members to misunderstand what I am alluding to. I refer to lands where a Native may have obtained a Crown grant from the Native Land Court, and when another man makes him an offer they conclude a purchase. And when such transactions are authorised by the Governor or Commissioner I think such land should be treated as European land. The Natives have always been told that when they hold their land individually they can do as they choose with it. And in the Crown grants that are issued to the Natives are inserted the words, "the Crown has granted to the individual named and his heirs for ever." In the *Gazette* notices it also states that when the title is ascertained the land shall belong to such persons. I will now speak more particularly with reference to the amendments standing in my name. I will give my reason for supporting the motion for the adjournment of the debate. I would ask leave to read a memorandum written by Judge Mackay with reference to this matter:—

"Re your letter of even date, enclosing a copy of certain words you propose to move should be added to clause 9 of 'The Native Land Administration Act Repeal Act, 1887,' to exempt the Native reserve lands in the Middle Island from the operation of the Act, in

which you request me to furnish an expression of opinion touching the effect of the words referred to if added to the Act—that is to say, as regards the advantage or disadvantage that might ensue if your object was affirmed, as well as the disadvantage that will occur if the Act is not amended so as to exclude the Middle Island. As regards the first point referred to by you, no disadvantage can occur, as the land in the Middle Island is held under an entirely different tenure from land owned by Natives in the North Island. In the Middle Island the land is held under restricted title, the owners being confined to granting a lease for twenty-one years. No other disposition can be effected without the consent of the Governor; consequently no injurious effect can take place through the Natives being allowed to deal with their lands so far as the nature of the title permits. With reference to the question asked as to the disadvantages that will occur if the Act is made to apply to the Middle Island, the consequence will be that Natives owning land in severalty, who have hitherto had the privilege of leasing these lands without fear of transgressing the law, will now be debarred from doing so, to their detriment and pecuniary inconvenience. No harm can come of the Middle Island reserves being exempted from the operation of the Act, for the reason already pointed out—that the owners have only the right of disposing of these lands by lease for twenty-one years. The position of the matter in the North is very different: there the land is held under many different conditions; and circumstances that would justify a measure of this kind being passed for such lands would have no applicability in the other Island, owing to the Natives' property there being held on a different basis."

I therefore support the Hon. Mr. Shrimski in his motion that the consideration of this Bill be postponed.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—If we are allowed to go into Committee on the Bill I will move that progress be reported, after the first clause is passed. The Bill will then come on to-morrow; and if I can obtain it I shall produce the document which has been referred to. I am anxious to advance the Bill a stage, so that we may be making some progress. As to the other two Bills, I apprehend that there will be no objection to them. We can move the three Bills into Committee, and then report progress on the Native Land Administration Bill.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—The second readings of these Bills were moved formally, without debate. It was understood that the debate on the whole matter would be taken after the Bills came from the Committee. I think the honourable gentleman should state the reasons which have induced the Government to bring forward the Bills.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—The honourable gentleman is under a misapprehension. I made a speech of considerable length in explaining the provisions of the Bill on the motion for the second reading. No debate

took place, I am aware; but I fulfilled my duty to the letter. I then said all that I had to say with regard to the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—When the Native Land Administration Bill was put on the Statute Book I assisted to put the measure through, notwithstanding that I had considerable objections to the Committees constituted under the Bill. I felt that they would not work. I assisted the Bill for the purpose of getting back the right of pre-emption, and for the purpose of getting the whole of the dealing with Native lands out of the hands of private people and into the hands of the Government. I have looked into this Bill, and I have endeavoured to see how we could cut out all the provisions in the existing Act relating to Committees, which are useless, and can never work. If we could cut those clauses out, and leave the rest of the Act in operation, thus allowing all the land to be sold through the Waste Lands Boards, then we should still have something on the Statute Book. I see a difficulty in doing that, however. I should like the Attorney-General to take this matter into consideration and see if he could effect the object I refer to. He might probably find some way of doing it, and still keep the law on the Statute Book, but omitting these Committees. So far as this Bill goes, I have no objection to it, because it keeps the whole thing in the hands of the Government. It retains the right of pre-emption entirely in their hands—a right which I do not wish to see them part with. In fact, this Bill brings us back to stand as we did after the Treaty of Waitangi. I see that till next July is given within which certain transactions are to be completed. I see also, by another clause, the celebrated Mr. Jones of Mokaui is to be not limited to time in which to complete his title. I do not see why he should be placed in a different position from the others.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—It is only a lease.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—It does not matter. The others have a certain time given to them in which to complete their leases or freeholds. It is not right that seventy or eighty thousand acres should be tied up for an indefinite period, to the detriment of all settlement in the neighbourhood. From what I hear, the district is a good place for settlement. This party, who may have good claims, should be put on the same footing as the others. I have no objection to the Hon. the Attorney-General taking the course which he proposes to take in reference to these Bills, but would like him to consider if the clauses in the Act relating to Committees might not be struck out, leaving the rest of the Act on the Statute Book.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—All that we can discuss much better in Committee. If we go into Committee, then the whole thing can be gone into. I move, Sir, *That you do leave the chair in order that the Council may go into Committee on these three Bills.*

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I was in fault in saying that the honourable gentleman gave no

explanation of this Bill. I ought to have said that he gave no explanation of the necessity for repealing the Native Land Administration Act.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I made a full explanation.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—It seems to me that, having carefully and deliberately altered the whole policy of Native-land administration which has been current for many years by the Native Land Administration Act of 1886, which it is now proposed to repeal, we should be acting rashly and inconsiderately in seeking to repeal that Act before its value has been ascertained, and before the Maoris can comprehend the value of the law. I believe that the measure is a most valuable one itself, and contains the true principle of our legislation in regard to the Maoris; and I am grieved to think that there is a desire on the part of a party in Parliament, who possibly may be strong enough to carry it, to put an end to that state of things, and to revert to what no doubt will by-and-by lead to a reversion to the right of private individuals dealing with Maori lands. I think such a thing would be most injurious to the interests of the Maoris. I cannot conceive of a better principle to be maintained in dealing with the Maori lands than that which is embodied in the Native Land Administration Act. I say the Hon. the Attorney-General gave no sufficient reason for laying aside that principle and reverting to what may be considered a modification of it—that is, reverting to the resumption of pre-emption, which is certainly safer than allowing private individuals to deal with Native lands freely. But I maintain that that is neither so safe nor so sound a principle as that embodied in the Native Land Administration Act. I feel at a loss what course to take in this matter. I am quite willing to follow in the division any one who will move that this Bill be read a second time this day three months, but I do not understand the subject so thoroughly myself as to make that motion.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—To my mind the great recommendation of this Bill is contained in the 11th clause. It is a new clause which has been suggested by the Committee, providing that this Act shall continue in force until next session of Parliament, but no longer. The effect of this clause is to necessitate the complete revision of the Native Land Administration Acts during next session. That complete revision of the Native-land-administration arrangements is necessitated by what took place last year in the passage of the Administration Act of that year. My honourable friend Mr. Menzies labours under a very different idea as to the value of that Act from the opinion which is generally held. I am satisfied that, if the honourable gentleman had lived in this Island, and had been associated in any degree whatever with persons who have dealings with the Maoris, he would have recognised at the time that the Bill passed that it was bound to be a dead-letter, that it would stop all transactions with the Natives, would lock up Native land entirely, and be a

bar to further settlement. This view of it has been realised by the course of events. It is a fact that there has not been a single transaction under the Act. The whole of the Native lands have been tied up, and the progress of settlement has been arrested. The provision recommended by the Committee says this state of things shall last for another six months and no longer. Consequently, full and complete legislation on this subject must take place next session in the manner proposed by the Government in the Speech from the Throne. This Bill provides that certain cases that were not completed, and that were intended to be covered by the Act of 1886, but which have been proved not to be so covered, and remained in the position at which they were when the Act of 1886 was passed, shall remain in that position at any rate for a year longer. By that time there will be ample legislative provision, and, if the time allowed for the disposal of those cases is not sufficient, there will be an opportunity afforded Parliament of reconsidering the whole affair. I can see no reason why this Bill should not pass at once, although I am inclined to think that the view taken by the Hon. Mr. Taiaroa is a correct one, and that it might be desirable to withdraw Native transactions in the South Island altogether from the operation of this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I am quite sure the Hon. the Attorney-General will not lose anything by a short delay. A petition of an important character has been presented to-day, affecting one portion of the Native Land Administration Act, the difficulty about which may be probably all cleared away by the time the Council meets to-morrow. I have just received notice that the Native Affairs Committee will meet at half-past ten a.m. to-morrow, when no doubt the matter will come under our consideration. It is quite true that the Hon. the Attorney-General did make a speech on the second reading of this Bill; but I agree with the Hon. Mr. Menzies that the honourable gentleman made no observations which explained in any way the necessity for repealing the Act of last year. I think, if honourable members will look at the lists which the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court placed before the Committee, they will see that these lists are rather instructive, and will probably guide honourable members in reference to the course they may take in regard to this Bill. I do not wish to say anything about the merits or demerits of this Bill. My own impression is that it is not of much importance; that it will terminate at the end of next year, when it is to be hoped that some better legislation in regard to Native lands will be enacted; and I would again ask the Attorney-General to consent to the motion of the Hon. Mr. Shrimski. I am quite sure the Council will afford the honourable gentleman every facility for passing this Bill, if it is deemed a proper measure to pass.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—The only reason why I did not give way at once in this matter is that we have got so near the end of

*Hon. Mr. Menzies*

the session that I do not like to lose this opportunity of advancing the Bill a step forward. These Bills have to go through the other House when we have passed them, and, of course, the sooner they get through the better. At the same time, I do not desire to press the thing unduly. Therefore, if my honourable friend will move that the debate be adjourned until to-morrow I shall accept that motion.

Debate adjourned.

#### NATIVE LAND COURT BILL.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—Sir, I move, *That you do now leave the chair in order that the Council may go into Committee on this Bill.*

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I do not like to appear obstructive in any way, but I shall move, *That the debate on this question be adjourned till to-morrow.*

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I do not think there is any question about this Bill. The Bill that the question is about is the one which we have just had under discussion. I hope the Hon. the Attorney-General will put this Bill into Committee, and let us get on with some of these Bills, and get them out of the road. I should like to see the work progressing, and I hope the Council will put this Bill into Committee, and the following one also.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I am quite willing to let the Council settle this matter as to whether they will go on with the Bill or not.

The Council divided: on the question, “*That the debate be adjourned.*”

#### AYES, 13.

Brett	Martin	Shephard
Buckley	Menzies	Shrimaki
Fraser	Peter	Taiaroa
Holmes	Reynolds	Wahawaha.
Lahmann		

#### NOES, 14.

Baillie	Hart	Stevens
Barnicoat	Johnson	Waterhouse
Bonar	McLean	Whitaker
Dignan	Pharazyn	Williams.
Grace	Richmond	

Majority against, 1.

Amendment negatived, and Bill committed.

#### GOVERNMENT LOANS TO LOCAL BODIES BILL.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—The object of this Bill is to render more workable what is called the original Act—the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act. The 2nd clause is simply to settle the date of the issue of a loan, and to regulate the date from which the interest shall be deemed to run on the permanent loan. The 3rd clause is to preserve the responsibility to pay rates in support of the loan, practically in case the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act should cease to exist. It will be obvious that the source of revenue in this case on which loans have been founded should continue. The 4th clause is simply one to provide,

in cases where the debentures have been converted under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act to the bonds provided by the Local Bodies' Loans Act, that the rate shall continue as long as that is necessary to support the loan. The reason for this is that these debentures were issued for a shorter period than the bonds issued under the original Act, which it is proposed to amend. The period under the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act is twenty-six years, and it is clear that the rate must continue, in order to make good the change. The 38th section of the Act only authorised borrowing on debentures, but not on inscribed stock. The loans were taken, in some instances, under certain Acts of the Assembly authorising the construction or undertaking of a public work within the meaning of the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act. The 6th clause is merely to make the law at present harmonize with the Acts which govern the question under such circumstances. The only other point, and perhaps the most important point in the whole Bill, is the last clause. There it is proposed to give to boroughs having less than four thousand of population power to raise a loan of more than £800, the amount to which they are at present limited. The clause gives them power to borrow to the extent of £2,000 for a special purpose only—that is to say, for works for sanitary purposes or for water-supply. That, of course, is a new provision, and one indeed which honourable members will have to consider. These are the provisions of the Bill, and I do not think it necessary to say anything more about it at the present time.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—What about the 7th clause?

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—The 7th clause is this: It provides that, if a local body has complied with all the conditions required in the Local Bodies' Loans Act, it shall not be obliged to comply with the conditions of any other Act relating to the matter. It appears that local bodies occasionally let slip some formalities required by a number of Acts which have been in existence for years, and under which they continue to work. If they let slip any small formalities, they are liable to have to go over the whole of the ground again. There is a long list of these Acts, some of which go back as far as 1876. It is considered right, for the convenient working of the law, that this provision should be made in modification of these requirements. I have no doubt that in Committee I shall be able to satisfy honourable gentlemen as to the necessity of this Bill more completely than can be done in a discussion on the second reading. I move, *That this Bill be now read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—This Bill and the one that follows it must, for all practical purposes, be considered together. They both bear upon the same subject, and they both have in view the same object—that is, to grant additional facilities for local borrowing. The Hon. Mr. Stevens, in introducing the Bill, has followed the very commendable example set by

the Hon. Mr. Reynolds—that of informing the Council as regards the object of the Bill by simply reading the side-notes.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I did not.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—There were a few additional comments, but the bulk of the honourable gentleman's arguments in favour of the Bill were in the shape of reading the side-notes. It is well that, in both these Bills, we should recognise that the object of them is to grant to local bodies facilities for borrowing. It is for the Council and for Parliament to decide how far these additional facilities for local borrowing are in the interests of the community at large. I contend that the only reason why we have not had by this time a complete breakdown in our financial system has been that hitherto local bodies have borrowed only moderately. Had they had but full facilities for borrowing, doubtless they would have borrowed to a much larger extent, and thereby would have seriously compromised the financial position of the colony. Under the existing Act, as honourable members know, local bodies have raised already very considerable sums even within the last twelve months. We have not the return laid on the table which was moved for by the Hon. Dr. Pollen the other day; but if it were upon the table we should be able to state more decidedly what has been the total amount borrowed. It comes, however, to several hundreds of thousands of pounds. With all these facilities, however, it seems to be thought by the Government that there are not sufficient facilities already granted, and that we must give additional facilities to enable local bodies to borrow to a still larger extent. The extent to which they have borrowed already is a serious drain upon the resources of the colony, and is attended with considerable danger likewise to many financial interests. In the Financial Statement it is understood that provision is to be made for borrowing two millions, to be devoted exclusively to the prosecution of public works; and it is contemplated here that some portion of these local loans made by the Government should be charged upon that fund. But what are the resources out of which payment of these local advances is to be made? It is stated, in the 38th clause of the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act of last year, he may, out of the "Public Account, or from any fund of such account under the control of the Treasurer," make the advances in connection with these local loans. Now, the Public Account consists of two kinds: the General Revenue Account, which we know will not be in a position to enable the Government to make advances from it towards these local loans; and the Public Works Account, which will be in the position to make advances to these local bodies. If we pass this Bill we must expect that the number of applications for loans will increase, and the Government will be placed in the position that, in order to give effect to the law, and to the promises of advances made, they will have to borrow from the Public Works Fund to do so. There are some other sources, it is true, out of

*Hon. Mr. Waterhouse*

which the needful financial assistance may be obtained; but upon these sources we have been relying in the past to a degree that makes it dangerous to presume upon them for the future. These are the Savings-Bank, the Government Insurance, the Public Trust Office, and probably some other accounts. These institutions have already taken up a large amount of our local loans; and I would ask honourable members, is it wise, is it proper, that we should authorise additional Government loans to be advanced to local bodies, with the view of these loans being taken up to a still greater extent by the institutions to which I have referred? We have not only to look to the institutions to which I have referred, but we have to look to the public behind these institutions. Look at the immense number of depositors in our Savings-Bank; look at the immense number of persons interested in the Life Insurance Department; look at the number of persons interested in the Public Trust Office! Are the funds attached to these institutions to be like eggs placed only in one basket? What would be the position of the investors in the Savings-Bank, of the insurers in the Life Insurance Department, of those connected with the Public Trust Fund, if these securities were required to be realised and they could not be realised? And there is great difficulty, as every honourable member must be aware, in realising these local securities in a small market like this. It might bring about a great financial crisis, which would carry ruin into the families of hundreds and thousands of people. Then, I contend that, in dealing with this subject, we should look not only at the fact that this Bill is intended to foster local bodies borrowing, but that by passing it we should continue the dangers to which we are exposing the public at large by looking up the funds of institutions which should keep their funds readily available. It seems to me that we are incurring a great amount of danger by the course that is suggested under this Bill—that is, of facilitating the borrowing of money by local bodies; and it is worthy of consideration by the Council whether we should increase the facilities which the local bodies at present possess of borrowing money. To my mind, they have at present more facilities for borrowing money than actually is safe, in the present circumstances of the colony. I do hope that we shall not endanger the position of the colony by giving them additional facilities. There are one or two features in this Bill of a more objectionable character. There is one clause which the Hon. Mr. Stevens has not referred to so fully as I think is desirable. The proviso to the 3rd clause contains an important principle, to which, it is true, the honourable gentleman has alluded, but with the importance of which, I gather from his observations, he is not fully impressed. At the present time, these local bodies have had assured to them, under the Act of 1882, certain funds which are to be paid to them by the Crown, as representing the amount of rating to which the Crown and Native lands

would be exposed. This was given as a kind of endowment to local bodies, which was to go into their revenue, and be an asset for the payment of interest upon which they could rely. Now, it is provided in this clause that "nothing herein shall be deemed to establish any right or claim to the continuance of 'The Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, 1882,' or the powers conferred therein." After we have authorised them to borrow money upon the security of this revenue, is it justifiable on our part, in this somewhat insidious manner, to withdraw from them an important portion of that revenue to which they have looked as the means by which they were to pay their interest? There is an important principle at stake in this clause, which I do not think should be discussed with the few cursory observations, based on the side-notes, which the Hon. Mr. Stevens has made in regard to it. There is another important provision in this clause, which likewise the ratepayers—if they were as fully alive to the importance of looking after their own interests and guarding against excessive rating as they ought to be—would, in my opinion, take strong objection to. Under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act provision was made for a rate being authorised sufficient to insure the paying of the interest and principal in a period of fifteen years. Now it is proposed that these debentures shall be surrendered, and converted under the provisions of the 31st section of the Act of 1886; and then it is declared that the special rate struck in respect to the converted bonds shall be for the period not of fifteen years, but of twenty-six years. It is true the amount of interest is reduced: We know that properties have gone down throughout the colony. In nearly all cases in the country properties have gone down to one-half their original value; and under this Bill it will be necessary to continue to raise the old rate at its full amount—which was intended to pay off the additional interest for fifteen years—for a period of twenty-six years; in other words, under this Bill the ratepayers would be liable to the full burden of a rate which, under other circumstances, they thought would be sufficient to pay off their debt in fifteen years. This seems to me taking an unfair advantage of the ratepayers; and I think it is deserving of very serious consideration. Then, there is the clause which the Hon. Mr. Stevens told us was the most important clause of the whole Bill. I thought we had already given Councils and boroughs sufficient facilities for borrowing under the Municipal Corporations Act. I do not see what necessity exists for giving them powers for borrowing outside the powers which they at present possess. If they think the works referred to in the 8th clause are desirable, they have power at the present time to provide means, with the consent of the ratepayers, for carrying out those works. Here it is provided that they shall have the power of carrying out those works and imposing burdens on the ratepayers without the consent of the ratepayers. The Bill seems to me to be of an objectionable character. I am decidedly opposed

to increasing the facilities of borrowing to local bodies. I believe that they have already sufficient power—as much power as is safe under the present circumstances of the colony—and that, consequently, the Bill itself is unnecessary and undesirable. I beg to move, as an amendment, *That this Bill be read the second time this day six months.*

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I was in hope that the Government would have seen their way to do without these measures. I think that they have taken them up too suddenly. They are the old Bills which were here last session. I think they have been taken, too, without consideration, and without that thought which might have been given them before they were introduced. In looking over the Bills, it certainly does seem that they are opening the door to more borrowing, and far more borrowing than it is desirable should be undertaken by these local bodies. Under that Bill—the Local Bodies' Loans Bill—it is proposed to extend the power of borrowing. In my opinion that power is already large enough now without opening the door wider. Last session I read out to the Council some specimens of how they could get loans under the Local Bodies' Loans Act, and I think that ought to be sufficient to satisfy the Council that the door was open wide enough. There is a provision in this Bill which the Council has over and over again positively refused to pass. I take the two Bills together, because they are connected with each other. Coming to the clauses, I think the municipalities and counties have plenty of power for borrowing in their own Acts without giving the power that is proposed in clause 8, where it is proposed that Borough Councils in towns of more than four thousand inhabitants may borrow any sum not exceeding £2,000 in one year. I think that was a mistake, and that it is meant to be "not less than four thousand."

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—May I ask the honourable gentleman which Bill he is discussing?

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I am discussing one Bill with the other. But I will keep to the Bill before us. We have gone into these clauses at different times; but, in order to give the Government an opportunity for further consideration of the matter, and to ascertain whether or not the Government still wish to go on with the Bill, I shall move, *That this debate be adjourned.*

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I propose to make a few remarks on the question of adjournment. The criticism which has been bestowed on the Bill makes me think that it would be better that I should speak now to the adjournment in preference to replying to the remarks that have been made. Any remarks that I may have to make in defence of the Bill I will take another opportunity of making. My honourable friend Mr. Waterhouse has been good enough to suggest that when I was introducing this Bill I did so by merely reading the side-notes. It may be a satisfaction to my honourable friend to know what I read was not a side-note

at all, but my own notes, compiled after careful comparison of the statute law, in reference to this question. My honourable friend speaks of this Bill as giving additional facilities to local borrowing, and as a sort of encouragement to local bodies to borrow. There never was a greater illusion than the one which my honourable friend labours under. Nearly the whole of this Bill is merely of a machinery character, and it is not in the slightest degree aimed at assisting local bodies to borrow.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I was referring to this Bill and the following Bill in that respect. I dealt with the two Bills together.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—Then, I will say this: Of course, if I am not to discuss my honourable friend's remarks on the two Bills now, it is a little difficult to make the reply which I had intended to make, nor do I see that I shall have an opportunity of doing so; but I was going to remind my honourable friend that it is only a short time ago that he made a pathetic appeal to me to use my influence to prevent extravagant borrowing by local bodies under the present Act. This seemed to imply that my honourable friend contemplated more or less extensive borrowing in the future, and he looked to me to do what I could to restrain it.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—Hear, hear.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—Quite so; but the long and short of the matter is this: that, if we are going to discuss this Bill fairly on its merits as a Bill, and apart from any other matter which may come under our consideration, we shall require to deal with it strictly on the question of what it is going to do itself. And I ask honourable gentlemen not to be led away by the discussion on another Bill; because this Bill is absolutely wanted in order to confer the facilities of machinery. I think that will be sufficient on the present occasion to induce honourable gentlemen to suspend their judgment in regard to the motion for adjournment, and to let us proceed with the Bill strictly on its merits.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT.—I should like very much to know from the Government whether the interpretation put by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse upon section 8 of this Bill is correct. If so, I shall vote against the Bill. I read it in the other way. The honourable gentleman has observed that the rates accruing to local bodies under the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act were of the nature of a subsidy to local bodies, and I understood the 3rd clause to mean that so long as debentures issued by the local bodies, partly on the security of such rates, remained unpaid, the rates in respect of Crown and Native lands would continue to be raised, collected, and received. If this is not the intention of the clause, I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill. This clause appears to anticipate the approach of the day when the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act will be repealed, but securing temporarily to local bodies the rates derivable therefrom till the payment of the debentures secured on these and other rates.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I can only say that

*Hon. Mr. Stevens*

I read this clause exactly the same way as the Hon. Mr. Barnicoat does. But I would point out that there is also a proviso "that nothing herein shall be deemed to establish any right or claim to the continuance of 'The Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, 1892,' or the powers conferred thereunder." I hope that some provision will be made to carry on the government of districts that will be affected by the repeal of this Act. It has been said that this Bill is practically a machinery Bill. With regard to clause 4, I do not look at it in the same way as the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, and I do not quite see his argument in connection with it, that, because these debentures are to be extended over twenty-six years instead of fifteen years, therefore the rate is to be maintained at the full rate for twenty-six years instead of fifteen. The effect will be that only sufficient rates will be raised in order to meet the interest on these debentures, and that the lesser amount of money will require to be raised annually; because in the Local Bodies' Loans Bill I see provision is made by which the rate may be reduced from time to time if the full amount is not required; and therefore I think, under ordinary circumstances, the charge would fall lighter annually if it were stretched over a longer period. I do not think there is anything more I need say about this matter.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I do not think that the decision of the Council on this Bill should rest upon such a minor consideration as a mere question of detail which is really a question of machinery, and is not the question at issue, which is, whether it is advisable to extend the facilities to borrow from the Government already given to local bodies. I think we have been doing a great amount of injury to the local bodies by giving them facilities for borrowing, and by leading them to live on borrowed money instead of depending on local rates for carrying on the improvements of the locality. And it must be remembered that, at the present time, the Government have the intention to attempt to float a loan on the London market; and there is a degree of uncertainty as to how such an attempt will be received. This being so, I think the local bodies ought not to be in a position to go to the Government to obtain a loan. On those grounds, therefore, I think it would be better not to pass this Bill. It would suit us better, I think, to repeal the Acts already passed in the same direction. I think it would lighten our labours if we rejected the amendment of the Hon. Mr. McLean, and dealt with this question at once—to-night—in accordance with the amendment moved by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—There is one special reason against granting facilities to local bodies for further borrowing just now, and it is this: There can be no doubt that there is a tendency for wages to fall, and we are constantly hearing an outcry made about the unemployed; and it will very probably be found that in districts where there are a considerable number of persons who, as wages



begin to fall, will object to take the lower wages, and will necessarily swell the ranks of the unemployed, a cry will be got up about these people, and all kinds of pressure will be brought to bear upon the local bodies to keep up wages. If the local bodies raised a loan settlers would be paying twice for this borrowed money—in rates and in artificially-raised wages—and we should find a good deal of reckless borrowing ultimately, intended to keep up wages, in order to satisfy the cry that had been raised.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—Clause 3 simply provides that the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act of 1882 shall continue in operation as far as it has been pledged as a security for loans; but it further sets forth that no guarantee for the extension of the operation of that Act shall be construed as being given by this clause under this Act. I do not agree with the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse that the mere fact of extending the payment of interest to twenty-six years instead of fifteen increases the liability of the ratepayers, because, if the rate leviable under the present valuation did not prove sufficient to pay the interest on the loan for a term of fifteen years, it would be necessary, in justice, to increase that rate rather than make default of the payment of interest. I therefore hold that the extension of the period from fifteen years to twenty-six years, by making each annual payment less, is a relief to property, seeing that, the real value of the property having fallen, its power to bear the incidence of taxation is lessened. I am prepared to support the whole of this measure, with the exception of clause 8, which, inasmuch as it gives borrowing powers, I propose to strike out in Committee. I quite agree with the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn that we should take care that the local bodies do not rush into extravagance to provide work for the unemployed, now that the General Government has been forced to restrict its expenditure. I cannot help seeing that in thickly-populated parts of the country a cry will be set up to induce local bodies to provide work, to encourage the maintaining of the rate of wages. As I think this Bill is a machinery Bill, with the exception of clause 8, to which I totally object, I shall support the measure.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I should like to make one or two remarks. I was not able to reply, in speaking to the adjournment, to the arguments that have been adduced since then. There are one or two points which have been raised in regard to which I think I ought to make some reply. With respect to the alleged breach of faith, which I understand it to be from the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse in regard to the suggested repeal of the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, I do not intend to discuss now the policy of that Act; but, in the observations I made in introducing the Bill, when I was supposed to be reading the side-notes, I specially called attention to the fact that it was necessary to save the rights of the ratepayers under the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—What would be the effect of the proviso?

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—The proviso would, no doubt, leave the rights of the bondholders and ratepayers, as far as the loan-money is concerned, perfectly unaffected; and, as regards all others, we shall have an opportunity of discussing that question upon another measure which will come down here to repeal the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act. My honourable friend says ratepayers would suffer by paying for twenty-six years instead of fifteen years under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—My honourable friend misunderstands me. I said they would be quite open to pay the same rate during the twenty-six years as they had undertaken to pay during the fifteen years.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—Yes; but the honourable member forgot to say that they had undertaken to pay 9 per cent. under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, instead of the low rate which they have undertaken to pay under this Act. Surely my honourable friend would not say that the ratepayers should not be allowed to take care of themselves. They had the right to come under this Act and relieve themselves financially. And surely they would prefer to come under the new system. It seems to me that the honourable gentleman's argument, in that respect, falls to the ground. I am also told by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse that he thinks the loans in question fall either upon the Public Trust Office or to a large extent on the Post Office Department. I am informed, however, that in reference to the Post Office Department such loans have only been made to a very moderate extent, and that the Public Trust Office does not take these securities on special rates. I would ask the Council to allow the Bill to go into Committee, when we may discuss the clauses seriatim.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—If honourable members think this is a mere machinery clause, I will withdraw my amendment in regard to this Bill, with a view of proposing it in the next.

Leave to withdraw amendment refused.

The Council divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be struck out stand part of the question."

AYES, 20.

Acland	Johnson, G. R.	Pharazyn
Baillie	Kenny	Scotland
Barnicoat	Lahmann	Stevens
Bonar	Miller	Swanson
Dignan	Oliver	Whitaker
Grace	Peacock	Williams.
Hart	Peter	

NOES, 8.

Holmes	Reynolds	Wahawaha
McLean	Shrimski	Waterhouse.
Menzies	Taiaroa	

Majority for, 12.

Bill read a second time.

## LOCAL BODIES' LOANS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—Sir, the original Act, of which this is an amendment, is no doubt generally familiar to honourable gentlemen. I will simply pass over lightly the minor clauses of the Bill, and discuss the main principle at greater length. The 2nd clause really amounts to this: It enables part of a district desirous of floating a loan specially intended for that part of the district to dispense with certain provisions which now have to be complied with. It, in point of fact, brings them into the position of districts which contain only one hundred of population. The 21st section of the original Act allows a loan to be raised without a poll being taken in a district which contains not more than one hundred ratepayers. Instead of their having a poll, which I understand, because of their small numbers, would be inconvenient, they may obtain a loan by memorial. That is a part of the Bill which is quite independent of the rest of the Bill, and stands absolutely by itself. Section 3, I apprehend, is not one which is at all likely to cause any discussion, because it simply provides that, while the loan is raised for the benefit of part of the district, the part of the district for whose benefit that loan is to be raised shall be continuous and unbroken. The 4th clause contains a proposal of a very important character. In point of fact, I will frankly tell the Council, it really means an entire change of the present system in regard to polls upon which special rating is to be founded for the support of special loans. The Council has taken a view opposite to this in former years. The view which is embodied in the present Act is that, in order to carry what is called "the proposal for the loan," a majority in number of the ratepayers must vote for it, and the number so voting must be entitled to more than half in number of the votes which can be exercised by the whole number of the ratepayers. That, of course, means the whole number pollable but not polled. Honourable gentlemen will see that the proposal here is that the loan shall be carried if three-fifths of the total number of votes given at the poll are given in favour of it. I do not wish to be in the least misunderstood on this point. I call honourable members' attention to that great change in order that they may be perfectly well aware of it, and not be able to say that I have passed the thing over without calling sufficient attention to it. As to the 5th clause: I dare say I shall be forgiven if I do not go into an elaborate disquisition of those points. They are not at all of a vital character, nor do they involve any principle whatever, and they can be much more conveniently dealt with in Committee. At the same time, I shall call the special attention of the Committee to the first subclause. The 6th clause simply extends the Rating Acts in force to rates raised under the original Act—a matter which I do not think is likely to cause much discussion. The 7th clause, or a greater part of it, is old; the new portion of it, which is in the last five lines,

is really, I think we may say, one of a very unimportant character. The 8th and last clause is solely devoted to providing for a penalty for forging of bonds, coupons, *et cetera*. Honourable gentlemen are no doubt quite familiar with the Bill, and I will simply conclude by moving, *That the Bill be now read a second time.*

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—This, Sir, at any rate, is not a machinery Bill, and I do not think that any one will call in question my statement that it does materially encourage local borrowing. On that subject, when the former Bill was under consideration, I said so much that it is unnecessary to repeat here the arguments then employed. I would only say this: that it is useless to talk of tapering off borrowing if we are to encourage facilities being given to local bodies to follow an example which we have set them, and which we have set to our very serious cost. This Bill contains three radical vices. First of all, it is retrospective in its operation. The 2nd clause goes much further than my honourable friend Mr. Stevens states. There are to the 2nd clause added these words: "This enactment shall be deemed to have been passed at the date of the passing of the original Act." My honourable friend Dr. Pollen—whom, I am sure, we all regret not to see in our midst this evening—in dealing with Bills of this character, used to observe that in order to understand a clause aright it was often desirable to know the special cause which originated it; and I think, if we want to have a distinct understanding of the meaning of this clause, we should inquire what is the underlying cause—which has not been referred to—that really renders the clause necessary. It is this: Some time ago, in one of the Wairarapa Districts, an application was made for a Government loan. The Law Officers of the Crown, to whom this application was referred, declared that it was illegal, and that the Treasurer ought not to comply with it. In spite of this opinion distinctly expressed by the Law Officers of the Crown, the advance was made; and here by this clause we are asked to pass a covering Act. I do not think we should pass a covering Act without such expressions of regret at the occurrence as we have a right to demand. As to these persons who have wilfully and deliberately broken the law, we should let them be responsible for their proceedings. We shall have no end of covering Acts if every time a Minister violates the law we cover his laches without any demur on our part. I have no hesitation in declaring the retrospective character of the 2nd clause to be the radical vice of this Bill, and such as would necessitate its not being favourably considered by the Council. Then, the second objectionable feature in the Bill is with regard to the majority whose assent is required to the sanction of a loan. I need not say much upon this point. The Council has so frequently and so decidedly expressed an opinion that these local loans should be authorised by the sanction of a distinct majority of the ratepayers on the roll that I am satisfied honourable members will not consent now, at

the request even of the Hon. Mr. Stevens, to depart from that rule which they have seriously laid down for their guidance in former years. There is a third radical defect in the Bill, to which my honourable friend has not referred. That is contained in the 5th clause. In subsection (4) it is provided that the existing provision regarding the setting-aside of sinking funds may be done away with. I regard it as a matter of vital importance in local loans that there should be a sinking fund. These works are not of a permanent and durable character, and in many parts of these roads they are of a particularly perishable character. For instance, where a road is carried over wooden bridges, these bridges do not last more than twenty-five years, I believe, as a rule. It is a matter, it seems to me, of vital importance that in all these cases we should maintain that there shall be a sinking fund. Unless provision is made for a sinking fund, depend upon it what has happened in the past will frequently occur in the future: local bodies will go on with local works as long as they can, and when these works get out of repair they will authorise fresh loans to renew the works. This is the third radical vice in the Bill; and these are the main features of the Bill, and I think they are of so objectionable a character that the Council will not refuse to accede to my request when I ask their consent to read this Bill a second time this day six months. I therefore move, *That the Bill be read the second time this day six months.* At the same time, as there may be some amended Bill introduced in the course of another year, I would call attention to the fact that, even were this Bill desirable on other grounds, there are omissions that would render it undesirable that it should be proceeded with as at present drawn. My honourable friend has laid great stress upon the 21st clause of the existing Act, which provides that special districts may be constituted, and that rates may be imposed and loans may be raised without any poll upon the assent of three-quarters of the ratepayers of the district being first obtained. If that is not to work very injuriously, it will be absolutely necessary to provide some checks towards preventing the inclusion in the proposed districts of properties not liable to be benefited by these works. At the present time there has been shown in several districts a desire to make separate districts under the Act which would be liable to a special rate, and to include in these districts the properties of persons who have no interest whatever in the works sought to be carried on, and for the simple reason that these properties would contribute a large proportion of the rates required to pay the interest upon the debt. I have before my mind at the present time the case of a gentleman well known to honourable members—if I thought it desirable to mention his name—whose property was deliberately added to a district with a view of getting the rates attachable to the property in reduction of the rates of other persons. The works were not of a specially-urgent character. There was great objection taken to them on the part of

many of the ratepayers; it seemed probable that the works would not be sanctioned at a meeting of the ratepayers; and, consequently, by agreement, the promoters let off the owners of properties who were opposed to the project by excluding them from the district, and then, trusting to their numerical strength, added to the district a large property just outside the bounds of the district. This property, against the will and knowledge of the proprietor, was inserted in the new district, and a tax was imposed upon it that was altogether unwarranted. It is quite clear that there is in this power of constituting separate districts a power of abuse such as I have mentioned. Such a power of abuse was contained in some of our original District Railway Bills. That was provided against by its being rendered compulsory that plans of the proposed district should be published in the papers, and that every person claiming that he was injuriously affected should have the right of appeal against his property being inserted in the district to be rated. It is quite clear that some such provision should be introduced into this Bill; and if the Council should consent to read the Bill a second time, as I hope they will not, I trust a provision of this sort will be introduced. I do not intend to say anything more in regard to the facilities for borrowing, and the danger attendant upon these facilities, which are sanctioned by this Bill. I cannot, however, refrain from making one remark which bears not only on this subject but upon the general subject of borrowing for local works throughout the colony, especially for roads for so-called purposes of opening the country. The road-communication of the colony is to a great extent, at the present time, supported by subsidies from the Government, and helped out of loans. But the roads of the colony at the present time are so extensive that I believe—nay, I am certain—it will be utterly impossible for the ratepayers to maintain these roads whenever they are deprived of the assistance derived from loans and from the Government. The more roads we sanction making by local loans the more, I am sure, this difficulty will be felt in future, and the greater the danger of the roads falling into disrepair. I will not occupy the time of the Council any longer. I sincerely hope the Bill—which is, to my mind, of so objectionable a character—will not be sanctioned by the Council, but that the amendment which I have moved will be unanimously adopted.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I trust I shall be acquitted of any intention of covering breaches of the law by bringing forward a Bill containing the last two lines which appear in the 2nd clause of the Bill. This is the first time I have heard that this Bill is intended to cover a special case in the Wairarapa, and it is a great surprise to me that it is so. It does not, however, appear to me that that need be considered a vital principle of the Bill, inasmuch as nothing can be more easy than to strike out the provision if it appears objectionable. Precisely the same remarks apply to the objection raised to subsection (4) of clause 5, with regard to doing away with the necessity of attaching the sinking fund

to the loans being raised. It appears to me to be a very small thing, if my honourable friend does not agree with that provision, to move in Committee that it be struck out, and then we shall take the sense of the Committee on the point. Then, there is the main point of the honourable gentleman's objection to the Bill. I think it is right, before the division is taken, that it should be clearly understood what is the allegation in regard to this system. It is alleged that the ratepayers cannot be found to come to the poll in sufficient numbers to support these proposals for loans, however necessary they may be; and that they are in the habit—some of them, at all events—of staying away and thereby making it absolutely impossible for the object sought to be attained. It is said that large numbers of districts are in this position: that they can get nothing in the way of improving their roads, and that these roads are in such condition during the winter as to prevent goods from being carried over them; and that all this is caused by the want of a little assistance of this kind. I think it right to state the argument in favour of the change proposed, in order that honourable gentlemen, before giving their votes on this subject, should be in possession of it.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—The 2nd clause of the Bill refers to a well-known case. Correspondence relating to it has been published. It refers to a case in the Wairarapa in which the Colonial Treasurer overrode the advice of the Solicitor-General, and a loan was granted in spite of that advice. No doubt it was getting near an election, and I suppose it was necessary to be a little lax in these matters.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I do not know whether the honourable gentleman refers to a late colleague of mine; but, if so, I think it is unworthy of him that he should make these statements in a place where the gentleman referred to has no possibility of defending himself.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I think the honourable gentleman should withdraw the observation.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I shall be very happy to withdraw anything offensive which I have said. I do not see, myself, that unless there is some extraordinarily strong reason why these acts should be condoned, the Bill should be passed. These Bills are coming daily before this Council. There have been several Bills this session, and some one really must be made a woful example of. There are several indemnity Bills coming forward this session, and I think it will be necessary for the Council to make a stand somewhere. I look upon clause 3 as a little safeguard against the action which has to be taken under the Act, because the district must now be a continuous district, whereas under the Act it need not be so. I showed last session how half a dozen men might join together and borrow money in order to make roads to their own doors. I do not think it was intended when the Act was passed that such a thing as that should be permitted. Then, we come to clause 4, which is a clause

*Hon. Mr. Stevens*

that the Council has frequently discussed, and given two decisions upon. The Hon. Mr. Stevens said there were cases in which loans could not be obtained. I have no doubt that improper loans cannot be carried; but will the honourable gentleman point to any special case in which a loan has not been carried—that is to say, a deserving case? There are several cases in which the "majority" mentioned in the Act have carried loans without any trouble. I am not aware of any case where there has been a failure. I do not know of a case in Otago where the party in favour of borrowing have failed to get a majority. I should like to ask the Hon. Mr. Stevens if that is a vital principle of the Bill; because it would determine how one might vote on the measure. I need not say anything further. The whole Bill is opening the door to further borrowing.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—If you take out that clause the remainder of the Bill is really not required. The crucial test of the fairness of the "majority" demanded by the Legislative Council for the purpose of sanctioning these loans was applied in the case of the Napier Harbour Board's Loan Bill when the necessary majority, as defined by the Council, was secured by the Harbour Board. I hold that the people of New Zealand are far too speculative where borrowed money is concerned, and I maintain that we are strictly bound to consider these matters, to insist upon thinking for those whom we are representing, and to insist that steps shall be taken to ascertain the real mind of the people before their property is pledged for the loans raised by local bodies. I shall certainly vote that the measure be read the second time this day six months, and I am sure that in doing so I shall be acting in the best interests of the colony.

The Council divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be struck out stand part of the question."

#### AYES, 8.

Baillie	Dignan	Whitaker
Barnicoat	Peacock	Williams.
Bonar	Stevens	

#### NOES, 20.

Acland	Lahmann	Pharazyn
Buckley	Martin	Reynolds
Grace	McLean	Scotland
Hart	Menzies	Swanson
Holmes	Miller	Tiairoa
Johnson	Oliver	Waterhouse.
Kenny	Peter	

#### Majority against, 12.

Word "now" struck out.

Bill ordered to be read the second time that day six months.

#### REPRESENTATION BILL.

On the motion for the committal of this Bill,

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said,—Before you leave the chair, Sir, I should like to say a few words with regard to this Bill, as I had not the opportunity of speaking when the second reading of the Bill was before the Council.

My remarks will be very short, and will be made not with the intention of opposing the Bill, but of suggesting one or two amendments which I wish to move in Committee. And I take this opportunity of giving my honourable friend in charge of the Bill notice of these amendments. I have a lively recollection of the care and attention that were bestowed on me in connection with the Bill that was introduced last session—care and attention which probably no one has ever received in this colony before, and I believe no one ever will receive. It appears to me that the expressions which were used by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse on the second reading of this Bill are true in every sense of the word, though it is possible they will not be strictly correct within the meaning of what is known as the Constitution Act. That the Bill is unconstitutional I have very little doubt; and, while I desire to afford representatives of the people all the facilities which they deserve for their own purposes, I think I should not be doing my duty if I were not to point out that, in my opinion, this Bill is unconstitutional. And I intend to move an amendment, that it shall not come into operation earlier than the 8th October, 1889. A similar amendment was moved in another place, and I believe that those who voted against it will have cause to regret it. Section 2 proposes to give to the Government a power which, in my opinion, should not be given to them. My honourable friend the Attorney-General, in referring to this matter yesterday, pointed out that this would also affect the members of the Government themselves—that their seats might also be affected. That is quite true; but nevertheless I do not think they should be allowed to have the power which is proposed to be given under this section. In regard to clause 3, I intend to move an amendment to this effect: to strike out the words “within such time as he shall determine,” and to insert the words “before the next session of the General Assembly.” It will be obvious to honourable members that that is an amendment which is essentially necessary. We all remember the manner in which the present electoral districts were constituted, and the hurry and confusion which occurred on that occasion, and the difficulty which occurred with regard to the formation of the electoral rolls. These difficulties, I think, were shown to have been very great. I may say that the electoral rolls of the colony now are in a worse state of confusion than they were ever in before. And it is with a view of enabling the Commissioners to make the divisions of the electoral districts that I propose sufficient time should be given under this Bill. It is only right that they should have that opportunity. This Bill is introduced for the purpose of effecting retrenchment, and I shall be glad to afford every facility in passing it through the Council. I hope the amendment of which I have given notice will be carried by the Council.

Bill committed.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—House of Representatives to consist of seventy-four members, whereof four to be Maoris.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY moved, That the word “sooner” be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, “That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause.”

#### AYES, 25.

Acland	Kenny	Pharazyn
Barnicoat	Lahmann	Reynolds
Bonar	McLean	Richmond
Chamberlin	Menzies	Stevens
Dignan	Miller	Swanson
Grace	Oliver	Taiaroa
Hart	Peacock	Whitaker
Holmes	Peter	Williams.
Johnson		

#### NOES, 5.

Buckley	Scotland	Wahawaha.
Martin	Shrimaki	

Majority against, 20.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported without amendment, and read a third time.

#### WELLINGTON COLLEGE AND GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL BILL.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS moved, *That this Bill be read the second time.* He said it proposed to alter the constitution of the governing body of the College to some extent. There was one provision in the 2nd clause which was a little unusual. The Mayor and the Chairman of the Education Board of Wellington were to be members of the governing body, and then the other nine members were to be divided into three equal groups—three to be appointed by the Government, three to be appointed by the graduates of the University of New Zealand on the books of the Wellington College, and three by the parents of the pupils who had been attending the College for not less than one quarter. He understood that this last was adopted from an arrangement of the same kind which existed in Auckland. The greater portion of the Bill consisted entirely of the usual provisions for the procedure of the Board, and as to the conduct of its business, the proper auditing of its accounts, and the regulating of its meetings—in point of fact, the usual clauses affecting institutions of the kind. There was, however, a provision in relation to a portion of the reserves, power being given to borrow in a different manner from that under which the trustees could borrow under the existing law. The trustees were unable to raise money by way of mortgage with the power of sale. They could raise it without a power, but not with one. And this Bill enabled them to do that which they were at present unable to do. He understood that the trustees had already, in some manner, borrowed under mortgage—that was to say, they had given to some persons a mortgage, and that, of course, without a power of sale; and it was only desired that that should

be put into a more satisfactory shape so far as those who lent the money were concerned. The building had been erected, he believed, by the individuals who at present held the mortgage.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—A short-dated loan.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said it was desired to raise the money on mortgage with the power of sale in order to pay the loan off. There was nothing beyond that, he thought, which was of an unusual character in the Bill; he should probably, therefore, be consulting the wishes of honourable gentlemen if he did not take more time in moving the second reading. He should be happy to give any further information to any honourable gentlemen who desired it.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND said this Bill afforded a beautiful illustration of the manner in which public bodies go to work in New Zealand, and a great many private individuals also, for the matter of that. The Girls' High School was built upon what was commonly called "tick." They had a discussion about this matter in the Council last year. He went over the building before it was finished. Everything in it was of a sumptuous character. It was perfectly collegiate, and was far in advance of the requirements even of the important City of Wellington. He ventured to say that a building costing £600 or £800 would have been ample and more than ample for the money at the command of the governing body. He now understood why these gentlemen, last year, were so anxious to get hold of 10,000 acres of land at Taranaki. They had a keen eye for that fine reserve. They wanted to do what was vulgarly called "raise the wind." Honourable members managed to thwart the object last year, and he was glad to see that a lesson had been taken by the rough handling which the Bill received on that occasion. He supposed the Bill must be passed; or how was the poor contractor to get his money?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Vote against the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND did not think he would be justified in voting against the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said the tradesman would not be done out of his money. He would far sooner see the building paid for by the colony than allow the Bill to pass as at present framed. The first part of the Bill was simply an altered constitution of the Board. That clause provided that three members should be elected by the graduates of the University of New Zealand on the books of the Wellington College. There was no occasion to provide for the election of three members by the graduates of a University College which did not exist. If they passed this Bill without striking out these words they were virtually relegating to a body which did not exist the election of three members. In the 18th section there were the words "the lands of." In the Act of 1878, to which this referred, there was a clause similar to this, with the exception of the words "the lands of." Under it it was provided that persons might lend money in one or more mortgages upon the rents or profits of all or any part of the lands vested in the governing

body. According to the Bill now before the Council they could borrow money not only upon the rents or profits, but by giving power of sale over the freehold. The rents or profits at the present time were only £35 per annum. What they desired to do was to borrow £6,000 at 7 per cent.: that would involve an annual payment for interest of £420. The reserves only brought in £35, and if they were all let they would only bring in £150. Such being the case, he thought the Council would not be justified in allowing the Board to give a mortgage over the land. The Act of 1873 provided that in borrowing they were to do so without the power of selling the freehold of the land. This Bill gave the power to sell the freehold. Supposing they gave a mortgage upon the security of their endowments, and also upon the site of the building in Wellington, and upon the building itself, it was very clear that the income of the governing body would not be sufficient to pay the £420 a year interest; and if they failed to pay the interest the mortgagee would come down upon the whole of that property. Then there would be an outcry against allowing the school to be sold; the Government would be interviewed by all the Wellington members, and pressure brought to induce it to step forward and pay the money. They would say, "Oh, you can never allow the sale of our Girls' High School!" If the Government considered the colony liable, it would be far better to pay the money at once and have done with it. If it were the desire of Parliament to set the governing body free, let the money be paid and have done with it; but do not seek to do it in an underhand way, like that which was proposed in the Bill. It was only a deception to allow members to suppose that the governing body would try to pay their interest or principal. He had heard quite sufficient in the street to convince him that the governing body would not distress themselves to pay either principal or interest. It was very clear that they could not do so, and it would be better to meet the question at once. If the Government thought it absolutely necessary to acquire the building they should put a sum on the estimates for it.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE said that if the Hon. Mr. Reynolds's statement was a correct one the person holding the security at present had got rather a comfortable thing. As soon as ever the Government contemplated throwing the maintenance of charitable institutions on the rates it put a clause in the Special Powers and Contracts Act making over the valuable endowments of the hospital to the High School. He (Dr. Grace) did everything he could to persuade the Council that a gross injustice was being committed; but, in spite of his efforts, the Council without any hesitation gave the hospital reserves to the Girls' High School. It amounted to this: that at the present moment the rates of the people were paying for the land that was taken for the Girls' High School: that was to say, if this gross act of injustice had not been perpetrated the ratepayers of Wellington would be now receiving £300 or £400 a year ground-rent from that property in

*Hon. Mr. Stevens*

diminution of their charitable-aid expenditure. The next thing was, having performed that act of spoliation, the Premier of the day, with that enthusiasm for education which he exhibited, wrote a memorandum, upon the basis of which the Governors of the College erected the building. The building was put up, the contractor asked for his money, and there was no money, of course. A Bill was brought down to Parliament to ratify that expenditure. Parliament last year threw the Bill out. This Bill was practically a Bill to remedy evils such as he had described. Let honourable gentlemen go to the root of the evil and let them bring in a Bill reimbursing the citizens of Wellington for the endowment which had been taken from them and applied to this purpose.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Nonsense.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE said the honourable member might call it "nonsense," but he called it simple justice. His honourable friend Mr. Scotland had an idea that the measure brought in last year for the establishment of the Wellington University College, which proposed to take an endowment of 10,000 acres of land within the Taranaki District, was the same Bill as this. The honourable gentleman supposed that one of the objects of that Bill was to get hold of that endowment for the purpose of the Girls' High School. The two things had no relation whatever. There was no kind of relationship between the two purposes. His only object was to point out to honourable members how very little these things were really understood. He did not think the Council would blame the Hon. Mr. Stevens for his want of enthusiasm in recommending the measure. The money was due to the contractor. A short-dated agreement had been made, but how the money at the end of the short-dated agreement was to be found he did not know. Honourable members ought to be fair and straight in these matters with each other. He was perfectly sure that the money expended on the Girls' High School was far away in excess of the needs of the place.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN remarked that, whatever any one might think of portions of this Bill, there were clauses in it which he hoped the Council would never allow to pass. This practice of entering into engagements and requiring confirmation of those engagements afterwards was becoming too common, and it was time, now, that some one was taught a lesson; and probably this would be a case to pick out in order to make an example of it. He understood from what he had heard that the contract for this building was entered into with the contractors without competition, and the parties were to take a mortgage on the building and rents. On that understanding the contractors, as contractors always do—and he believed it was reasonable that they should do so—put on a large price for the risk they undertook. But if they took a risky security they made their bargain, and had the extra price for the building. Therefore he thought they should be left with their bargain as they made it. As to giving the power of sale over the reserves,

he hoped the Council would never agree to such a provision. They had hitherto taken an even course in such matters as that, and had declined to give such a power. He hoped they were not going to give it now. In the first part of the Bill, as had been referred to by the Hon. Mr. Reynolds, it was proposed to establish a University College in Wellington. He hoped the Government were not going to bring forward a University College Bill again. The number of universities in New Zealand was far in excess of what the people should be asked to pay for. If New Zealand had been content with one university, it would have been a good university, and would have given proper teaching; but every province must agitate for one, and most of them had been successful in getting one—Dunedin had one, Auckland had one, and Wellington wanted one, and Napier would want one. They had had enough of universities, and he was not going to agree to the establishment of another one. He thought that the best way to deal with the Bill was to vote against it. He thought it was a very wrong thing to take away the reserve for the purpose of handing it over to the College Governors.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE did not agree with his honourable friend altogether, and thought the proper way to treat this Bill was, not to vote against it, but to move that it be read that day six months. He accordingly took that course. He was much interested in the remarks of his honourable friend Dr. Grace. As honourable members were aware, he was away from the colony for some time, and on his return he was astonished to see that steps had been taken towards the building of a high school on a reserve which had been set apart for charitable purposes. He had made inquiries as to how that had been done, and until the Hon. Dr. Grace mentioned the circumstances he was not aware that it had been done under the Special Powers and Contracts Act. He considered that that was a cruel measure of injustice to the poor people of Wellington,—to deprive them of an endowment that was set apart for charitable purposes. He had seen with some surprise about twelve months ago that efforts were being made towards erecting a school upon the site of that endowment. It was then that he first became aware of the fact that this endowment had been handed over to the Board of Governors of the Wellington College. He had watched their proceedings with a good deal of interest, and more especially when the Board decided to erect a building on this property. They had not the funds, nor had they the means of raising the funds; so that they put themselves into communication with one or two private contractors, and asked these contractors upon what terms they would build a high school, payment to be made in debentures to be issued under the High School Reserves Act, an Act which authorised Education Boards to borrow money on the security of the rents and profits of land temporarily mortgaged. The contractors offered to undertake this work and

to receive payment in debentures. Of course, under these circumstances it was a second-class security, and the contractor would require to compensate himself by an increased price for the performance of the contract. The contractor performed the contract, and got paid in debentures; and, having got payment for the work in debentures of second-class security, it was now sought to turn these debentures into debentures of first-class security and to give the contractor power of sale over the land itself, in addition to the rents and debentures. The contractor, whoever he might be, had entered into this contract with his eyes open, and he knew that he was to receive, in payment for the work, debentures upon the security of the rents and profits of this land. It was open to him to either take the contract or reject it. He took the contract, and in doing so he undertook the risk that accompanied it; and the colony was no longer pledged to him. It was open to very great objection that engagements of this character entered into openly and wilfully should be sought to be reversed, and that the Legislature should be expected as a matter of course to cover those who engaged in them with its protecting shield. It was time, as the Hon. Mr. McLean had said, that they should teach these men a lesson. He thought it would be a benefit in all respects that the Bill should be rejected, and he begged to move, *That the Bill be read the second time that day six months.*

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said he hoped the Council would not come to a conclusion to throw out the Bill. The whole of the discussion had taken place upon one clause—the 18th; but that could be dealt with in Committee; and therefore it would be a pity to throw out the Bill on account of the 18th clause. There were three Acts in operation in reference to this matter—the Wellington College Act of 1872, the Act of 1877, and the Act of 1878. This Bill consolidated these Acts, and put the whole into one measure. There was no doubt that the provisions for the management at the present time were not of the best description. The provisions in the Bill in regard to management were of great importance, and, whether the Council threw out clause 18 or left it in, there must be something done about the management of the institution. The Bill gave better opportunities of management than the existing laws, and he hoped the Council would not throw out the Bill, whatever they might do in regard to particular clauses in it. He was not now going into the question as to whether that clause was proper or improper, as he thought that was entirely a Committee question. It was only one clause out of twenty clauses, and nineteen out of the twenty clauses were useful; and it would be a pity to throw out the nineteen clauses on account of this objectionable one. When they went into Committee they could discuss the question about the 18th clause. In the meantime, he hoped the Council would allow the Bill to be read a second time.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON said he certainly

*Hon. Mr. Waterhouse*

was very much surprised at a good deal that had fallen from honourable members with reference to this Bill, and he could not congratulate honourable members on the liberality of their views in regard to this matter. He did not think honourable members knew the position of these things. If they looked at Dunedin, or Christchurch, or Auckland they saw how their schools were supported; they found that they were not obliged to come and adopt measures such as the Wellington people had to adopt in order to keep the school going: nothing of the kind. There were endless endowments for these places for aiding their schools; but in Wellington there was nothing whatever to assist the trustees, and they were obliged to do what they possibly could to keep this institution going. It was absolutely necessary to have this institution going on in a town of this description. It had been stated that the building was a very extravagant one. What did they say of the buildings in Dunedin, where the buildings of one establishment alone were said to have cost £30,000? What did the buildings cost in Christchurch or Auckland? There was no such disproportion between the population of Wellington and these towns as to warrant any great difference in their scholastic requirements; and he would point out that the school itself was increasing very rapidly. It would have been absurd for them to have put up a building which the Governors would have been obliged afterwards to add to or partially pull down in order to provide the necessary accommodation.

An Hon. MEMBER.—How many pupils are there?

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON replied that he did not exactly know. He was sorry that honourable members had taken this view of the matter. As regarded the transfer of the hospital reserve, he only wished there had been any other ground which the school could have been built upon. But there, again, there was an immense difficulty to contend with. There was no site in Wellington, unfortunately, that could have been useful for the purpose. He did not know exactly how it had come about that the reserve was transferred. That he would not argue at all. But the fact remained that the reserve had been handed over to the trustees, and they were perfectly justified in making use of it. It was not their fault that it was handed over to them, and yet they were now charged with making an ill use of the land. The suggestion which fell from the Hon. Mr. Reynolds was the only practical suggestion that had been made,—that the expenditure should be met by a direct vote. Was there any chance of that sort of thing happening? No. If a vote were brought up it would be rejected at once. The question was, How could that institution be carried on? and he knew that at the present moment it was a very great question whether they could continue it even as it now was. In all other towns the grants for educational purposes of this kind were larger than here. Indeed, every penny that had been spent here had been obtained with the greatest



difficulty. Then, with regard to the reserves in the hands of the trustees, these had been looked up in such a manner that the trustees were not able to deal with them so as to obtain money upon them. While the reserves in other districts were larger than those of Wellington, he believed it would be found, upon looking up the Act, that the Otago trustees had far greater powers over their property than the trustees in Wellington had.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—The trustees of the Otago reserves have merely the power which was given in the Act, the same as to Wellington, that they can dispose of their property for the purpose of putting up buildings; but the cost of the buildings must not exceed one-eighth of the whole value of the reserve.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON remarked that, having erected a building which cost £30,000, their property must then be worth £240,000.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said he did not wish to interrupt the honourable member, but, when the honourable member said that the building cost £30,000, he (Mr. Reynolds) felt bound to inform the Council that this was not so.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON stated that some educational buildings in Dunedin cost upwards of £30,000.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—No.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON said he had often heard it stated so, and he believed there was a great deal of truth in it; and if it had not cost quite £30,000, he believed that was close upon it. But there was nothing to compare with that extravagance here; for extravagance it was. He trusted that honourable members would look with some favour upon the proposals brought forward; and, if they objected to the particular proposal in this Bill for borrowing money to get rid of this liability, some other means should be found of doing it. If members only looked into the circumstances of the case they would see that no other part of the colony was placed in the position that Wellington was in. The reserves which had been given to them were not of such value as could enable the Governors to carry on the duties falling to their lot. And, as he had said before, unless some assistance were given he believed matters would be very much complicated. He did not know whether the Governors would be able to continue the institution at all. At the present moment, as had been rightly stated, the interest on the money was 7 per cent. If means were provided by which this money could be obtained on proper security, that large interest would be reduced to 5 or 4 per cent., and the difference would enable them to make ends meet. A reduction of the interest would enable them to still carry on the school, though he heard the other day that the question of reducing the number of teachers had been taken into consideration. It was therefore absolutely a question of whether the Governors would be able to carry on the institution or not. He hoped, therefore, the Council would look with some favour on the proposal to place this institution on a proper footing.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN said the honourable member who spoke last seemed to take it as a matter of course that the colony was obliged to keep up these establishments for higher education. However, the colony had enough to do in providing the means for primary education, without providing for the high schools, whether of girls or boys. He thought the parents of these children could very well afford to pay for the education of their children, and that the colony could not afford to do so. He had not heard a word said about that during the debate. If this had been State-education no doubt they would not have heard a word about it. He thought there was another view to be taken in connection with that matter, and that was the more businesslike view that they might increase the fees of the pupils in order to pay the interest on the money, the more so as the Hon. Mr. Johnson had said that the interest was to be considerably reduced. There were 120 pupils, he believed, in that institution, and the fee they paid was £12 a year. If they paid £15, that would not be too much, and would enable the establishment to find means to pay the interest. Therefore, for his own part, he should not vote against the Bill, but he should vote in favour of the management being put on a more satisfactory footing, and of enabling the authorities to raise the necessary funds in order to pay the interest on the money.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS remarked that his honourable friend Mr. Reynolds had made some reference to the provisions relating to the electoral power being exercised by graduates of a college not in existence. If he went further on in that clause, however, he would see that there was a provision made for conducting the election only when the graduates were up to the number of thirty. He would seriously ask honourable gentlemen to consider whether, because they disapproved of one part of the Bill—and no doubt with considerable justice, so far as want of caution in going to a large expenditure was concerned—it was wise to deprive that institution, and the other one connected with it in the Bill, of a constitution in regard to management; and he thought that, in spite of what had been said, this would be a very unwise and, to a certain extent, a very unjust thing. He therefore trusted that the Council would consent to read the Bill a second time; and if there were any points regarding which they wanted an explanation these could be discussed in Committee on the clauses.

The Council divided on the question, "That the word 'now,' proposed to be struck out, stand part of the question."

AYES, 14.

Acland	Laumann	Richmond
Baillie	Menzies	Stevens
Barnicoat	Miller	Whitaker
Bonar	Peacock	Williams.
Johnson	Pharazyn	

NOES, 15.

Buckley	Hart	Martin
Grace	Holmes	McLean

Oliver	Scotland	Taiaroa
Peter	Shrimski	Wahawaha
Reynolds	Swanson	Waterhouse.

PAIR.

For.	Against.
Barnicoat.	Shrimski.

Majority against, 1.

Word "now" struck out.

Bill ordered to be read the second time that day six months.

The Council adjourned at eleven o'clock p.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 14th December, 1887.

First Readings—Third Reading—South Canterbury Railway Reserves—Auckland Lunatic Asylum—Napier Mariners on Juries—Eketahuna—Alfredton Mail Service—Property-tax Valuation—Point Resolution—Rabbit Nuisance—Sheep Inspectors' Reports—Public Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill—Auckland Girls' High School Bill—Government Railways Bill—Loan Bill—Property-tax Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### FIRST READINGS.

Municipal Corporations Bill, Sounds County Hospital Representation Bill, Sheep Bill, Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill, Public Revenues Bill.

### THIRD READING.

Pharmacy Bill.

### SOUTH CANTERBURY RAILWAY RESERVES.

Mr. DUNCAN asked the Minister of Lands, If the reservation of lands set aside for railway purposes in South Canterbury has been withdrawn, or will shortly be withdrawn; and, if so, will the Government take steps to have regulations put in force so that persons already having large holdings may not acquire this land to the detriment of settlement?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON might state that it was intended to open this land shortly, but three months' notice was required to be given; and, after the land was opened, it would then be dealt with under the existing land-law.

### AUCKLAND LUNATIC ASYLUM.

Mr. PEACOCK asked the Colonial Secretary, Whether he is aware that one of the inmates of the Auckland Lunatic Asylum, who had some money when admitted, is still confined there although cured, because the doctor is unwilling to discharge her owing to her being entirely without means? If so, will he endeavour to relax the harshness of the rule with regard to maintenance, and arrange that in such cases some discretionary power will rest with the Superintendent to return a small amount of money where he is satisfied that the discharged patient is penniless?

Mr. HISLOP said the woman referred to,

having suicidal tendencies, was not considered by the doctor fit to be trusted at large unless looked after by friends. As she had no friends, she had been retained in the Asylum. The rule as to maintenance-money was not so harsh as indicated by the question. The agent of the Public Trustee arranged with the Asylum authorities what amount should be retained, and how much of the money which reached their hands should be given over to the patient when discharged. This often depended upon the ability of the person discharged to procure a situation or home.

### NAPIER MARINERS ON JURIES.

Mr. ORMOND asked the Government, If they are aware that mariners employed on coasting vessels trading from the Port of Napier are called on to act on petty juries; and will the Government cause instructions to be given not to summon persons so engaged? He was informed that in other ports mariners on coasting vessels were not called on to serve on juries. At Napier, however, they were called on frequently for such service, and it entailed considerable loss on them, as their vessels might have to be detained while the seamen were absent from them. What he asked was that seamen at that port should be put on an equal footing with those in other ports.

Mr. FERGUS said this question was the only intimation the Government had had in regard to the matter. Seamen were not exempted by the Juries Act, and therefore the Government had no power to exempt them. The matter should be considered, and if it was thought advisable to amend the Juries Act it might be done.

Mr. ORMOND said all he asked was that the same should be done as in other ports. The police might be instructed not to summon seamen as jurors.

Mr. FERGUS said the Government would instruct the police not to summon seamen.

### EKETAHUNA-ALFREDTON MAIL SERVICE.

Mr. SMITH asked the Postmaster-General, If he will arrange to have the present weekly mail service between Eketahuna and Alfredton made a bi-weekly one? A good many complaints were caused by the infrequency of these mails, and a great deal of inconvenience was caused. He did not know if the service might be altered now without much increased cost; but, at all events, when the present contract expired the new one might be for a twice-a-week service—probably at no increased cost.

Major ATKINSON said the Government could hardly see their way to doing what was suggested at present, but when tenders for the service were next called he would see if what the honourable gentleman asked could be done.

### PROPERTY-TAX VALUATION.

Mr. COWAN asked the Government, Whether, in consideration of the depreciation in the value

of property which has been occurring since the last official valuation, it is proposed to make a fresh valuation for the purposes of the Property-tax Act? This was a matter of great importance to those who had to pay the property-tax, as the depreciation in values of property had been very rapid, great, and general, and therefore taxpayers were called on to pay much more than they equitably should.

Major ATKINSON said there would be a revaluation next year; but the next tax must be levied on the present valuation, as the money was wanted before a new valuation could be made. Unfortunately there could be no doubt that there had been a great falling-away in the value of property. He thought, however, the reduction in value was pretty equal all over the colony, and therefore, though levying on the present valuation was apparently unfair, still, as the fall was equal, it was not so unfair as it appeared to be. He should be very glad if there could be a new valuation before the next collection, but that, he feared, was impossible.

#### POINT RESOLUTION.

Mr. SEYMOUR brought up the following report of the Public Petitions Committee (A to Z) on the petition of Sir George Grey, K.C.B. :—

"The petitioner states that the Government took for defence purposes the whole of an estate of over four acres at Point Resolution belonging to the St. Stephen's Orphanage Trust, and let by the trustees on lease: that only three-quarters of an acre was eventually used for defence purposes, and that the remainder, instead of being restored, as the law directs, to the trustees, was unlawfully conveyed to the lessee. The petitioner prays that the Government will make inquiry and restitution. I am directed to report as follows: The evidence before the Committee appears to show that the Government, by arrangement with the lessee, took a larger area of land than was actually needed for defence purposes, and that the balance not wanted was conveyed to the lessee, whereby the trust lost the whole of the property, receiving in compensation the sum of £632. The Committee is therefore of opinion that the Government should inquire further into the case, with the view of restoring the trust, if possible, to the position it would have occupied if the Government had taken only so much of the land as was absolutely necessary for defence purposes."

Sir G. GREY.—I ask the Government whether any arrangement can be made by which speedy consideration can be given to this question. My object is to see if a clause could be put in the Special Powers and Contracts Bill by which what the Committee suggests might be done. The matter should be dealt with before the lessee has taken any action which would make it more difficult to restore the land to the trust. Probably the Government will refer the matter to the Law Officers of the Crown, and in that case they might allow me

to lay the papers before them, and try, if possible, to get the matter settled this session—that is to say, to prevent anything further being done which would make it more difficult hereafter to get the property back to the position from which it has been taken.

Major ATKINSON.—I will read the report during the afternoon, and will tell the honourable gentleman as soon as possible what I think should be done in the matter. I shall be very glad to take any action possible to set matters right.

#### RABBIT NUISANCE.

On the order of the day being called for the consideration of the report from the Joint Rabbit Nuisance Committee,

The CLERK read the report, as follows :—

"The Joint Committee of both Houses appointed to inquire into the best means of dealing with the rabbit pest have the honour to report that they have passed the following resolutions, which they now submit to the consideration of the House :—

"1. That a rabbit-proof fence be erected in the Tasman Valley, commencing at Tasman Glacier, and running about forty miles down Tasman Valley towards Hakateramea, and that, considering the early winter in that part of the country, the work should be proceeded with forthwith.

"2. That material for a further length of forty miles of fencing towards the Hakateramea River be ordered by the Government, so as to provide for its arrival in the colony not later than September, 1888.

"3. That a compulsory rate, not exceeding 1d. per head upon all sheep (exclusive of flocks of less than five hundred) depastured upon the land between the Waitaki and Waipara Rivers, be levied for the purpose of meeting the expenditure upon the maintenance of the eighty miles of fencing referred to in the above resolutions, with power to differentiate as under 'The Rabbit Act, 1886.'

"4. That the Committee recommend the Government to join with New South Wales and other colonies in offering a bonus to the scientific world for the discovery of means for eradicating rabbits, in accordance with a resolution passed at the Stock Conference held at Sydney in October, 1886: Provided that no payment shall be made by this colony until the discovery has been proved to be successful for the purpose and adapted for practical use throughout New Zealand, and until the subscribing colonies have agreed that it is a success.

"5. That the Government be requested to place the sum of £10,000 on the estimates for a discovery of a means of exterminating the rabbit, on similar conditions as to payment of reward as those offered by New South Wales.

"6. That this Committee desires to impress upon the Government the necessity of introducing, with as little delay as possible, a large number of stoats, weasels, and martens, both for sale to settlers and for turning out on Crown lands."

Major ATKINSON.—I am sorry to say that the Government have not had time to give this

matter much consideration owing to the press of business, but they think it would be impossible for such a rate as proposed to be levied; but what they propose now to do is this: that as the wire has been ordered the fence should be put up; but they are not disposed at present to order further wire. They will, however, take steps in the matter, so that, if at the beginning of next session of Parliament it is decided to proceed with more fencing, wire may be got out for an additional length by sending a cable-message Home, if necessary. That was not what the Committee wanted exactly, but probably it will meet their wishes so far. With regard to offering a reward of £10,000, I do not see any objection to that; but I am afraid it will not do much good. I am sorry to say that I have overlooked the sixth paragraph, and I am not prepared to give a distinct answer, but I have no doubt that the Government would be ready to do anything in that direction which can be done.

Mr. LANCE.—I should like to ask the Premier whether, considering the urgency of the case, and the fact that the material for the fence has actually arrived in the colony, he will give instructions for its immediate transshipment to Timaru and transport to the places where it is to be used.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; I will see to that matter.

Mr. LARNACH.—I am very glad that the honourable gentleman has met this question in the spirit in which he has met it. I may say that, although the time has been so short for considering the matter, the Committee have given the whole question the most careful consideration; and, while they felt the question was a very difficult one, they yet came to the conclusion that no one of the alternative antidotes proposed would be sufficient by itself to cope with the difficulty where the rabbits have been allowed to thoroughly establish themselves; and that it is necessary not only to fence, but to poison, and import natural enemies as well; and that all three methods should be used in conjunction by a kind of system of co-operation, if there is to be any hope of exterminating the rabbit. I hope that during the recess the Government will prepare such a measure as will effectually deal with this pest; for there can be no question of this: that the Crown is perhaps more largely interested in dealing with the matter than individuals; and, while I admit that individuals cannot be relieved altogether from responsibility even if they are only leaseholders, yet it is clear that it has become an imperative duty on the part of the Crown to take a leading part in dealing with this very serious question. There can be no doubt that the pest has already increased, and has advanced far across the borders of Canterbury and Otago, and that, unless very prompt means are taken to run arterial or dividing fences as suggested in this report, the nuisance will become so established that no means that can be undertaken will be sufficient to cope with the enormous difficulty;

*Major Atkinson*

and the more tardily we deal with this question the greater difficulty shall we find ourselves in in the future.

Mr. ALLEN.—I should like to ask the Premier whether, if it is decided to obtain more wire, he will, instead of sending Home for it or making arrangements to send Home for it, take action to have it manufactured in the colony. I understand that it can be made in the colony as cheaply as, or even more cheaply than it can be imported. I believe that it can be manufactured by persons who are carrying on business in my constituency, and who have invented special machinery for the purpose.

Major ATKINSON.—Certainly. I was not aware that there was any manufacture of this kind in New Zealand.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—I wish to ask the Premier this: It is recommended by the third paragraph that a rate, to cover the whole of the expense of erecting and maintaining the fencing suggested, should be struck. Is that what he pledges himself to accept, or are public funds to be used for the purpose?

Major ATKINSON.—I have not committed myself in any way. That requires consideration. If a large part of the Crown lands will benefit, of course it is only fair that the State should contribute something. But I do not pledge myself in any way as to the form; but I want the landowners to understand that, in going on with this work, they are distinctly pledged to accept whatever rate may be fair.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—The third paragraph would seem to cover the whole cost of the erection and maintenance.

Major ATKINSON.—That is a matter for further consideration.

Captain RUSSELL.—A question of importance arises from the fact that the late Government promised to import a sufficient quantity of wire to do forty miles of fencing, without having previously obtained any authority whatsoever from this House. I thoroughly admit that it is necessary—absolutely necessary—that steps should be taken to cope with the evil that is threatening the Provincial District of Canterbury; but I do want to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the expenditure of money in purchase of fencing without the authority of Parliament being obtained is setting a very dangerous precedent indeed; and that, if a Government is at liberty to order without parliamentary authority wire for forty miles of fencing in one provincial district, surely any Government is at liberty to spend money in a similar manner in any other district equally without authority. Where is this sort of thing to end? I was very anxious in the Committee that before this fencing was proceeded with there should be obtained a distinct undertaking on the part of the people to be benefited by the erection of the fence that they would recoup to the country the cost of erecting and maintaining the fence, by a compulsory rate. I felt the more strongly on this point perhaps because I formerly was chairman of a committee which, by voluntary subscriptions raised in the district, erected a

fence in another part of the country, and that in spite of applications we could get no consideration from the Government at all. Although assistance was refused to those who had taken action in the matter I have described, yet the material for forty miles of fencing was ordered by the late Government just as they were going out of office, to be used in another district for Government supporters. I think that that was quite wrong. Then, I know that in the Amuri District they are rating themselves for the erection of fencing, while in another district the fence is to be erected at Government expense, and before we even have any knowledge as to whether the line of fence decided upon is a proper line to be made. We should have at least had some information on that subject, and provision should be made for the levy of an annual rate until the whole cost of erecting and maintaining the fence has been paid. I do not wish that the Crown, being a large holder of property, should not pay a fair share of the cost of erecting the fence. I hold that it should pay a fair share, either in the way of subsidy or in some other way. What I wish to especially draw the attention of the Government to is the fact that there was no evidence brought before the Committee to show that the proposed line of fence is laid off on the best line of country for such a fence. We had no evidence on that point which I consider worth the name of evidence; but I heard to-day, on what I consider very good authority, that the proposed line is by no means the best line—that the rabbits have crossed the glacier and have made their way into Westland, and are likely to come into the district through another pass. So that we might find the country put to this expense to fence the rabbits in rather than to fence them out. I therefore hope that, before the Government take any action, they will get the Sheep Department to report on the matter, and that this fence will not be proceeded with unless it is shown to be laid off on the proper line.

Mr. LANCE.—Although perfectly satisfied with the explanation of the Premier as to the course of action he intends to pursue, and although I am not in the least anxious to debate the question, knowing the value of time at this late period of the session, still I cannot allow the remarks of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay to pass absolutely unchallenged. He has stated that this fence was ordered without any authority from the House. So far the honourable gentleman is perfectly correct; but I would like to inform him and the House of what took place in the matter last session. A report was made by the Chief Commissioner of Lands in Canterbury. It was, I may say, an accidental report: that is to say, he was travelling through the country on other business, when his attention was attracted to the progress of the rabbits, and he felt it his duty to make a special report to the Minister of Lands on the subject. That report was dated the 23rd April, and, having been placed in the hands of members, it was considered absolutely necessary that a deputation

should be arranged to bring the matter under the special attention of the Minister of Lands. It was by no means a party deputation, as the House will readily admit when I mention that there was connected with it the late honourable member for Geraldine. No one will accuse him of being in favour of the late Government. He considered the matter was so important that something should be done, and the deputation was actually headed by him, and its object was to preserve this large stretch of country. We looked upon the matter in this light: It was simply a question of insurance against a great danger. The colony was very much depressed, with a falling revenue, and we put it in this way: Should we, for the sake of a very small expenditure, sit down open to the probable loss of £30,000 a year of revenue and take no action? That is what it came to. I do not wish to go into figures, but that was the loss threatening the colony; and would it have been businesslike, for the sake of a small expenditure, to go on incurring a loss of that kind? The Minister of Lands decided that it would not be; and the result was that the late Government decided that the only possible way to avert loss was to erect a fence in some place. This was strongly urged by the deputation, and the Government agreed to it. The matter would have been brought before the House had it not been for the exceptional circumstances that occurred. We all know what did occur last session. This was nipped in the bud, for there was absolutely no time to bring it before the House. But they considered it to be their duty—and I maintain that anybody who looks into it will admit that they were right in so doing—to defend the colony from a very serious loss by a very small expenditure. That is my answer to the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. Now, he has said, again, that there is no evidence as to the best line for this fence to take. I tell the House this: that this country has been carefully examined by capable men—by the men who have charge of the district; and their report is that there is one line, and only one, by which this fence can be taken with efficiency; and if there is any further delay, and the rabbits are allowed to cross that line, then an enormous tract of country will have to be sacrificed to the rabbits before we can find another line that will prove efficient. With regard to the statement by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, that the rabbits have crossed this frontier, I am in a position to give it an absolute denial. That they are exceedingly near it, at the foot of the Tasman Glacier, I am free to admit. They are very near it—possibly within two miles; but I can state that that is the nearest they are to this frontier, where it is proposed to erect the fence. I urge upon the House to grant the erection of this fence, assuring them that, if immediate steps are not taken in that direction, the very serious loss I have described will accrue.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—As a member of the Committee that has gone into this question, I

am bound to tell the House that the honourable member who has just spoken has scarcely given a fair description of the exact position of affairs. He has just told us that the erection of this fence will save to the country a revenue of £30,000. He is correct in stating that the Government have been receiving a revenue of £30,000 annually from the country which is threatened with rabbits, but he is scarcely so in stating that, even if the rabbits invaded the whole of this country, the Government would necessarily lose this £30,000. The loss would amount to perhaps one-third of that sum. Of course the estimates vary as to what the actual loss would be. The real question, then, is this: whether it is wise of the Government to spend a sum estimated at £10,000 in the erection of this fence, in order to save this diminution of the annual revenue. There can be no question that this or any other fence that may be erected will only delay the evil—that rabbits will cross the fence, and that it is only a question of time when the whole of this large tract of country will be infested with rabbits. Having paid careful attention to the whole subject, I am very much in doubt as to whether the expenditure is a wise one; but, as a member of the Committee, I gave the question, so to speak, the benefit of the doubt, and consented to the recommendation which is now before the House. But the vital point to be considered at the present moment is, whether the statement made by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay was correct when he said that the rabbits are already across the line on which it is proposed to erect the fence. If his statement is correct, then it is evident that a fresh line should at once be sought for, and the fence erected upon that line. It would be a great—a fatal mistake if the fence were to be erected upon a line already crossed by the rabbits; and I hope that the Government, before entering into any contract for this fence, will carefully investigate this question, and ascertain whether the statement made by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay on the one hand, or that of the honourable member for Cheviot on the other hand, is correct.

Captain RUSSELL.—If I may be allowed to do so, I will say that, though I was not authorised to mention my informant's name, I shall be happy to give it to the honourable member for Cheviot, and I think he will then realise that the information ought to be first-class, if it is not.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I should propose that the Minister of Lands should give us any information he may possess on this subject.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—I shall be most happy to inform the House in regard to points upon which I have information. I have asked a number of questions, and I will just give the simple facts without comment. The contract was accepted on the 6th of October last—that is, two days before the present Government took office. The amount of the contract is £3,659 5s., and the contract was let to a firm in this town and was not advertised.

*Mr. Buchanan*

An Hon. MEMBER.—What vote is it charged to?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—I think it is "unauthorised expenditure." I asked how much of the material had now arrived, and find the department has not yet been advised that any has arrived.

Captain RUSSELL.—It has arrived.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—That may be, but the department has not been informed of it.

An Hon. MEMBER.—You know it has arrived.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—I have heard so from members of the Committee. This material is supposed to be sufficient to erect forty-two miles of this rabbit-proof fence, estimated to cost about £15 a mile—total cost, £630. I am sure there is some mistake about these figures as to the cost of erection, as cartage will be a considerable item. I asked also what would be the annual cost of the maintenance of these forty-two miles, and the department reply that they have not the information. I further asked what was the additional mileage required to complete the present scheme, and learn that another forty miles would be required. I may say, with regard to this, that press of business prevented me from attending the Rabbit Nuisance Committee; but, after looking into the matter as carefully as I could, the impression on my mind is, first, that better evidence should have been taken with regard to the line to be adopted for the fencing; secondly, that, even if the utmost care is taken, this fence can only be regarded as a check, a serious check perhaps, to the rabbits, but it will not absolutely prevent their extension, because it must be apparent to any one that, as this is extremely high country, and country that is covered deeply with snow in winter-time, the fence will in places be entirely covered. It is likely to prove a serious check to the influx of rabbits into the district, and, as the material is now ordered and the liability incurred, I think it desirable that the fence should be erected, after making further inquiries with regard to the line to be adopted.

Mr. LARNACH.—Will the Minister continue his explanation, and state at what date the late Government decided that this work should be undertaken? The date is given. From the statement that has been made by the Minister he would make it appear as if the late Government only determined upon doing the work two days before going out of office.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—I have no further information on the matter.

Mr. LARNACH.—You have the papers, and you may see from them that the resolution by the Cabinet was come to two or three months before leaving office.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—I am quite willing to accept the honourable gentleman's explanation that such was the case. Privately, I understood, in common with other members of this House, that the late Government proposed to make some arrangement with the run-holders by which the Government were going to advance money to put up a fence; but this

matter appears to have been on a different footing, the Government paying the whole cost.

Mr. BARRON.—This seems to have been elicited: that the late Government, after their defeat on appeal to the country, and two days before going out of office, gave an order to a firm in Wellington, without calling for tenders, without advertising or in any way inviting public competition, for material to cost about £4,000. I think that should be made perfectly clear to the House; and, if it was so done, I submit that it was one of those irregularities which may very properly be commented upon.

Mr. ALLEN.—I should like to say that I think it is obviously unfair that it should have been done; because I know that one of my constituents manufactures this wire. He has an invention of his own for it, which is not patented, the machinery being known only to himself. I know also that in the town from which I come another machine has been patented for the manufacture of this wire. I hold that it was obviously unfair not to call for tenders, and I mention it seeing that this description of wire could be manufactured in the colony.

#### SHEEP INSPECTORS' REPORTS.

Mr. DODSON asked the Colonial Secretary, If he will, during the recess, cause a *précis* to be made and laid before the House early next session of such portions of the Sheep Inspectors' reports (ordered by the House on the 26th July, 1886) as may relate to the number of hands employed and sleeping accommodation for the same on stations having four thousand sheep and upwards?

Major ATKINSON replied that this should be done.

#### PUBLIC BODIES' FINANCE AND POWERS BILL.

Mr. HISLOP, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said that the object of the Bill was to give to local authorities greater powers to deal with the lands which were vested in them. A Bill of a similar nature was passed in 1886. He would shortly explain the provisions of the Bill. The interpretation clause showed that the Bill enabled the various local bodies having possession of land for public purposes to dispose of that land by lease or otherwise, and also provided that a "special resolution" should be passed in regard to them. The 4th clause provided that the Governor in Council might, from time to time, declare that any leasing authority should be subject to the provisions of the Act, or any part of it, so that the local authority need not adopt the whole of the provisions; and the provisions it adopted were, by virtue of another section, to rule as against any provisions which might have been passed in any Act previously passed with regard to dealing with such property. It was not necessary to go through the whole of the provisions, inasmuch as most of them were re-enactments in a different form of the provisions of the Act of 1886. It was provided that these acts should be done by "special resolution," which meant that a reso-

lution should be passed at one meeting of the body, and that then, after at least ten days had elapsed, it should be confirmed by another meeting. Full power was given to accept surrenders and to relet the land to the same tenants at a reduced rent, or to let it to new tenants. In the case of pastoral lands held by these bodies under authority of the Act, or reserved for primary or secondary education, nothing could be done without the consent of the Governor in Council. There were certain provisions with regard to Harbour Boards which were simply re-enactments of the provisions of the Public Bodies' Leaseholds Act of 1886. The last clause gave power to the local authority to make allowance to any person who had purchased land, and to reduce the amount which had been agreed to be paid in the event of its being found that the sum paid was greater than the value of the land; and the authorities could secure the amount by mortgage over the land. The Bill had been brought in at the instance of a great number of persons who had come to the conclusion, after careful inquiry, that some such provisions were absolutely necessary at the present time. A large number of leases were held of the local authorities where the tenants were unable to pay the rents, and the consequence was that unsatisfactory relations existed between them and the local authorities. There had been an almost unanimous assent on the part of honourable members to the provisions here enacted, and therefore he need not detain the House further.

Mr. SAMUEL said that, owing to the Bill having only recently been circulated, he had not been able to examine it as carefully as he could have wished; but there were one or two slight matters which he would like to call attention to. Section 5 provided,—

"A leasing authority may let any lands vested in it, or any part thereof, and which it is empowered to let on lease, for any term not exceeding twenty-one years, to take effect in possession or within six months from the making of the lease without any fine, premium, or foregift, and may in such lease covenant to grant renewals from time to time for a period not exceeding twenty-one years, but at a rent to be fixed by the leasing authority by a special resolution, or by valuation, or by arbitration."

He thought it ought to be made clear for how long a period this covenant to grant renewals should extend. Whether power would extend to grant renewals from time to time, or whether it should be one renewal only that should be granted, should be made clear. There appeared to be an error in section 7, which said, "Any land which has been offered at auction or public tender may be sold," &c. It seemed to him that that ought to read "Any lease," instead of "land," for the fee-simple should not pass. There were, no doubt, other amendments which would require to be made in Committee, but he thought the principle of the Bill was a sound one, and one that should be sanctioned by the Legislature.

Mr. W. D. STEWART was sorry the House

had not a better opportunity of discussing this very important measure. He noticed that section 2 repealed the Public Bodies' Leaseholds Act of last year, and he did not know exactly why that was done. The measure was of a very technical and important character, and he presumed it would not be taken into Committee at once, so that he would have further opportunity of considering it.

Bill read a second time.

#### AUCKLAND GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL BILL.

On the motion for the third reading,

Colonel FRASER said he hoped that the Government would not go any further with this Bill. It was quite clear, from the evidence which had been given, that the reserve which it was proposed to deal with had been set aside for primary education, and not for a girls' high school. This, therefore, was merely robbing primary education for the benefit of a high school, and he did not think the House would sanction that.

Mr. TURNBULL said it was his intention to oppose the third reading of the Bill. There were some very extraordinary circumstances connected with this reserve. It was one which was first gazetted as a temporary reserve for primary education. It consisted of 4,898 acres, and was set apart for that purpose in June, 1886. "The Land Act, 1885," gave permission for reserves to be made temporarily, and the papers connected with such reservation were to be laid on the table at the next meeting of Parliament, and then, if no objection were raised, the reserves were to come under the definition of permanent reserves. He had to remark, with regard to this laying of papers on the table, that not only the *Gazette* notice but also maps and plans connected with the reserves should be produced, and the fullest information should be given. In this case there had been a departure from that rule, for only the *Gazette* notice was laid on the table. That was laid on the table on the 24th June; and, the House raising no objection, the reserve was made permanent in September, 1886, but it was reserved for primary education. It was a reserve of very considerable value, and it had been shown by statements on the previous day that it contained 90,000,000ft. of the best kauri timber in the colony. Taking the royalty on that at the moderate figure of 1s. per 100ft., it would amount to £15,000. It was claimed that under the Act of 1878 the Auckland Girls' High School could take any reserves under the value of £5,000 for the purposes of that institution; but this had never been acted upon, and very important portions of the reserves had been taken for Gisborne and other places. Through the courtesy of the Minister of Education he had been able to see a memorandum by the late Premier and the Minister of Lands, stating it was their intention to reserve this land for the Auckland Girls' High School. But it did not matter what was in the minds of those honourable gentlemen. The question was, What had been determined on by Parliament? If what was in the mind of a Premier and a Minister of Lands was

Mr. W. D. Stewart

to supersede a Proclamation by the Governor and Acts of Parliament legislation would come to an extraordinary pass. He had no doubt that the Minister of Education would urge that it was in the mind of Sir Robert Stout that this reserve should be given to the Girls' High School; but the fact that the papers laid on the table showed that it was a reserve for primary education would prevent honourable members thinking that it could be taken for such a purpose as was now proposed. The contention of the mover of the Bill, or of the parties interested in the Girls' High School, was that under the Girls' High School Act of 1878 they had power to take this reserve. Well, in the first place, he (Mr. Turnbull) contended that the Act of 1878 only contemplated the reserves that were in the possession of the Board at the time, but did not contemplate that they should wait for a time when a valuable reserve was given and then come down upon it. If this Bill were allowed to pass—and he hoped it would not be—even if they carried out the law of 1878 they were entitled to no larger a sum than £5,000; and it would be necessary that a clause should be inserted, either here or in another place, to the effect that any sum beyond £5,000 which this lease might fetch should be handed over to primary education. That was taking the most favourable view that could be taken of the matter. The conditions of the sale of this land should also be submitted to the Minister of Education before it was submitted for sale. Without attaching the slightest blame to the Auckland members, and especially exonerating the honourable member for Rodney—who, he was quite sure, would not allow himself to be a party to anything that was not straightforward and honourable—he was of opinion that the House had been misled; and it was not until the previous night that he found how the matter stood. He admitted that the Premier and the honourable member for Wanganui did say that this should be for a Girls' High School; but, whether wilfully or not, they misled the House by laying on the table a Proclamation which reserved this for primary education, and had it appeared for anything else there would have been a very great objection to the passing of it. Under these circumstances, as he did not consider it wise to trust to the chance of the other House perfecting the legislation of the House of Representatives, as they were very much in the habit of doing, he was sorry to have to move, That the Bill be read a third time that day three months. He did so on the grounds that the House was not aware of the intention to make this a Girls' High School reserve, and that the Bill itself was supported on false premises, and that, had not the House been—he would not say wilfully, but—extremely misled on this matter, it would never have passed the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR said that, in seconding the amendment of the honourable member for Timaru, he did so because he thought the House should have some further information: and, at any rate, there would be no harm in the Bill



standing over till next session. He found that this reserve was actually worth in cash something like £37,000 at the present time. He understood the Government purchased this reserve from the Natives a few years ago at a cost of £12,000. He should say, at any rate, it was now worth £36,000. He held it was too large a sum to grant for the purposes of this Act, when the funds of the common schools were about to be curtailed owing to the exigency of the times. Before they parted with a large estate like this in the interests of a section of the community who, in his opinion, ought to educate themselves, he trusted the Government would hold this matter over for further consideration. There was not the slightest indication in this Bill as to the value of the property they were dealing with, and the inquiries made by members only revealed the fact that this was an exceedingly valuable property. He trusted that the third reading would be delayed for three months.

Mr. PEACOCK hoped the House would not accede to the wishes of the honourable member for Timaru by postponing this Bill. The urgency of the matter had been already represented to the House, and he should say nothing further on the point. But he wished merely to remark that there was no doubt whatever, with regard to the intention of the Governor in setting aside this particular endowment, that it was for the Girls' High School, and not for primary education. He was quite aware, as had been stated by the honourable member for Timaru, that in giving effect to that intention the reserve was gazetted in the first instance as for primary education, and possibly it might have been done in that way because the Act of 1878 made it possible for the Governor to set aside out of the education reserves an endowment for the Girls' High School equivalent in value to the endowment now under consideration. He himself knew that the Government were requested to give an endowment to this school, and that all the arrangements embodied in the papers showed that, in withdrawing this block from the Crown lands, there was no intention other than that the endowment was to be for this school. He hoped the House, under the circumstances, especially as a certificate of title had been issued in favour of the Girls' High School, would not hesitate in this matter, but would give effect to the Bill, and enable a very useful institution to get a building erected which was absolutely required for the purpose.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Who issued the certificate?

Mr. PEACOCK said the certificate or grant was issued, he believed, for the Girls' High School by the Land Transfer Department in the usual manner. He presumed that the Governor was empowered to grant from the education reserves an endowment for a Girls' High School; and the mere fact of this particular reserve being dedicated to primary education as a matter of form, and the Governor exercising his power under the clause of the High School Act, made very little difference in the merits of the ques-

tion, which was whether the Board were to be enabled by this Bill to utilise the endowment to the best advantage.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said it was unfortunate, the Minister of Education did not take the House into his confidence in introducing this Bill and carrying it through Committee; because a new phase had been put on the matter, and honourable members were not sufficiently informed as to the precise rights which this Bill affected. He thought it would have been very much more satisfactory to the House if honourable members had been informed at the outset of what they were now partially informed: and he felt considerable difficulty in knowing what should be done. He did not wish to do any injustice to this high school. On the other hand, if this reserve had been set aside for primary-education purposes some definite decision should be come to by the House, and they might be doing as great an injustice by taking away the land from its present position as they might do by withholding it from the school. It was extremely difficult to say what the rights of parties were.

Mr. MOAT said, in order to show that it was never intended that this should be an endowment for primary education, he might just narrate to the House what occurred. The Auckland Board of Education had for many years been endeavouring to raise funds for the building of a Girls' High School. All the late Ministers of Education—Mr. Dick, Mr. Rolleston, and Sir Robert Stout—had said that the present building, for which a high rent was paid, was a disgrace to the department; so on one of Sir Robert Stout's visits to Auckland a deputation from the Board, of whom he (Mr. Moat) was one, waited upon him and requested that he would give the Board an endowment to build a new school. Sir Robert Stout expressed his willingness to do so, and asked the Board to consult the Surveyor-General as to a suitable block. That gentleman recommended the land referred to in the Bill, and the Board applied to have it set apart. An objection was at first made by the Crown Lands Department; but Mr. Ballance, shortly after, visited Auckland, and, having consulted the Assistant Surveyor-General and heard the matter explained, he agreed that the endowment should be granted. The House would therefore see that there never was the slightest intention of this land being made a reserve for primary education, and the fact of its being gazetted as such must have been simply a clerical error.

Mr. FISH said there appeared to be something extremely wrong in the matter, and he quite agreed with the honourable member for Dunedin West in expressing his regret that the Minister in charge of the Bill did not think it to be part of his duty to take the House thoroughly into his confidence. When members of the Government introduced a Bill of this kind, honourable members coming from parts of the colony not particularly interested were apt to take the fact of a Minister introducing a Bill as a guarantee that the rights of the people were not being infringed. It

would appear to be quite plain that in passing this Bill, as they were asked to do now, they were infringing the rights of the people, to whom this reserve had been given for a certain purpose, and were applying the reserve to another purpose, without the House really knowing what they were doing in the matter. It appeared that these remarks were entirely borne out by the Act of 1878, which created this high school, because clause 5 said,—

“Out of any reserves set apart for education in the Education District of Auckland the Governor may grant any land not exceeding in value five thousand pounds to the Board, free from all charges or incumbrances, as an endowment for the said school, such value to be ascertained by the Land Board of the Auckland Land District.”

Now, it appeared that the whole of this reserve was absorbed, or was sought to be absorbed, by this school; and the reserve itself was made for the purpose of primary education. It was never contemplated by the Act of 1878 that the whole of the reserves should be taken, but merely that the Governor might grant, out of such reserves, land not exceeding £5,000 in value. Under any circumstances, it appeared to him that precedent to going on with this Bill there should have been a valuation by the Waste Lands Board of Auckland. The Legislature might be actually granting land to the value of £20,000 or £30,000. He did not know that they were not.

Mr. PEACOCK.—It has already been granted, whatever it is worth.

Mr. FISH did not know that it had been granted. He had only the Act and the *Gazette* notice to go by, and in the *Gazette* notice the land was distinctly set apart and reserved for the purposes of primary education; and by this Bill they were deliberately taking a reserve from primary education and devoting it to secondary education. His views on secondary education were perfectly well known—that the system now was utterly rotten, and it should be either swept away altogether or made to fit in with the primary system; and, until one of these things was done, he would resolutely resist, as far as his vote went, any application of colonial funds to bolster up secondary education. These institutions, as at present conducted, were class institutions of the worst and most objectionable kind. They were not secondary schools in the proper sense of the word, because in them the children were, in some of the classes, given the same education as was given in the primary schools, at a cost of about four times as much as it cost in the primary schools. He thought the House was entirely wrong in upholding in any shape or form such a system as that. He spoke on the assumption that the state of affairs was the same in Auckland as in Otago, where, he knew, children were being educated in the high schools in elementary classes at a cost of £16 a year each; whereas in the primary schools the same education was given at a cost of £4 a head. For that reason, amongst others, he objected to this Bill; and, had he had the

slightest idea that the measure was one of the nature it had been shown to be, he should have opposed it at every stage, and now he should be compelled to vote for the amendment. He thought the House was indebted to the honourable member for Timaru for unearthing this scheme and exposing it; and he thought it extremely wrong for any Minister of the Crown, knowing that a reserve was being diverted from primary education, to bring in a Bill for the purpose, and not to tell the House what he was doing.

Mr. GOLDIE thought the honourable member for Dunedin South made a great mistake in imputing anything wrong to the present Minister of Education in connection with this matter. The provisions of this Bill were introduced last year by his predecessor in office in the Special Powers and Contracts Bill, and the clauses on this subject passed the House on that occasion, but they were rejected, with others, in another place. It would have been the duty of those who now objected to what was proposed to raise their voices then; but they had apparently not done so. Most certainly the present Minister of Education was in no respect blameworthy for what was being done. As to the statement of the honourable member for Timaru that this reserve was made for primary education, it was never reserved for primary education at all. It might be admitted that the *Gazette* notice showed that the land was at one time intended to be made a reserve for primary education; but it had been taken from being waste lands of the Crown especially to be a reserve for the Girls' High School, though, owing to some mistake, it was gazetted otherwise. That it was a mistake was shown by the fact that the Board of Education held a certificate of title under the Land Transfer Act, which specified its purpose. Here was a memorandum from the Under-Secretary for Crown Lands, which stated the fact:—

“I certify that a certificate of title has issued to the Board of the Education District of Auckland in terms of ‘The Auckland Girls' High School Act, 1878,’ for 4,770 acres of land in the Maungaru Survey District at Auckland. A copy of the certificate of title is filed in this office.—H. J. H. ELIOTT, Under-Secretary.”

He (Mr. Goldie) had also received this telegram from the Chairman of the Auckland Board of Education:—

“Girls' High School reserve is vested in Board, through certificate of title under Land Transfer Act, as an endowment for the Girls' High School, under the provisions of ‘The Auckland Girls' High School Act, 1878.’ Mistake in *Gazette* has probably arisen through school being under entire control of Board of Education, there being no separate Board of Governors.—S. LUKE, Chairman.”

Therefore the Board had been in the actual possession of the land for over twelve months, and, whatever the House might do, it could not take from the Board its right to the land for the purpose of the Girls' High School. All the Board now asked was to be allowed to so use the

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land as to get funds to erect a building for the school; and the absolute need of that was shown in the fact that they were now paying £300 a year rent for a most unsuitable building, on which they had spent a large sum in additions and repairs, and the lease of which expired in just a year from now. The Board were therefore most anxious to have power to use the land as proposed, so that the proceeds might be devoted to the erection of a school-building.

Mr. MONK supported this Bill, because he believed the assertion that it diverted a reserve for primary education to be an error due to misstatement, or a clerical error in one of the public documents. As to the value of the property, he thought there was a misapprehension. Experts estimated that there was 10,000,000ft. of timber on it, which, at 6d. per 100ft., would represent £2,500. An honourable gentleman had said that if the timber was worth 1s. per 100ft. the value of the whole, supposing it to be 8,000,000ft., would be £4,000. But he could assure the House that it was not worth 1s., and he believed that at the present time there would be great difficulty in getting even 6d. per 100ft. for it. He questioned very much whether the Board itself was not under some misapprehension as to the amount it would be able to obtain for this particular block. He did not think the Board would be able to make anything out of it by leasing it in small areas. Its situation was so peculiar that it could not be profitably cut up and worked in small areas, because, to get the timber out, a great expense would have to be gone to in making tramways for it to be got out, and this could not be done profitably unless the land were held in one block. He therefore believed the land would have to be sold as a whole, to make anything of it. After the timber was taken off the land would be of little or no value. It was a complete misapprehension to think the property was worth £10,000 to £30,000. He could assure the House it was not worth anything like that amount; and he questioned very much if so much could be got for it as was wanted for the purpose of this Bill.

Mr. TANNER thought a great injustice was proposed to be done by the Bill, if it was correct that the reserve had been made for primary education. It was a curious explanation that there must have been a clerical error in the *Gazette*; and, if there had been one, surely the matter might be cleared up and the actual facts be made known. The remarks of the honourable member for Rodney rather led him to think there had been no mistake at all, because that honourable gentleman said that when application was first made for the reserve they were told by the authorities that it could not be given, but that when the late Minister of Lands came to Auckland they interviewed him and he put the thing right. The honourable member knew that the late Minister of Lands had a way of putting things right when application was made to him, and he thought the least the House should have was that honourable gentleman's explanation of the matter. He thought, at all events, the House should

defer deciding on this matter until they had heard what was the information and knowledge of the honourable member for Wanganui on the subject. They were asked to hand over a valuable reserve for secondary education at a time when the Government were reducing the grants for primary education—when the Government declared it was necessary, in the interest of retrenchment, to reduce the vote for primary education. Surely this was a wrong time for the House to be giving away valuable reserves for secondary education—for the education of those who could well afford to pay for the education of their own children. Surely, when primary education was languishing for want of sufficient means to provide the necessary accommodation for the children, it was time that the House should put its foot down and prevent such a wrong from being done as was proposed by this Bill. He should be very glad to hear an explanation from the Minister of Education on the subject. No doubt what had been done had been done before that honourable gentleman took office, and he was not in any way responsible for what was proposed now. But they should hesitate before passing this Bill, in the circumstances which had been stated; and, unless a far more satisfactory statement was forthcoming than had yet been afforded, he should vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Timaru.

Mr. FISHER would be extremely sorry that any honourable member should think he would be guilty, while holding the high and important office of Minister of Education, of withholding or concealing from the House any information which ought to be placed before it. He had never attempted that line of tactics in the whole course of his life, and he was confident that he would not begin now to adopt that course of conduct. His own ideas were in entire accord with those of the honourable member for Timaru as to the necessity of preserving any reserves which were, or had originally been, set aside for the purpose of supporting the primary-education system; but he was confident that the honourable gentleman would see, if he would examine the whole of the correspondence and documents in this case, that there had been a mistake in regard to the purpose for which the endowment was set apart. He had examined the whole of the papers very closely, and, as the result, he was convinced that the intention was, from the beginning, that this reserve should be set apart for the Auckland Girls' High School. There never had been a doubt on that point from the beginning of the question to the present moment. To show what the intention had been with regard to this particular reserve, he would read the following memorandum from the Education Department:—

"The Chairman, Board of Education, Auckland.

"I am directed to inform you that the Government have decided to set apart the land known as 'surplus in Walton's land-claim,' contain-

ing 4,898 acres, as an endowment for the Auckland Girls' High School, and that the requisite formalities are now in progress.

"W. J. HABENS.

"17th May, 1886."

This was following on a lot of correspondence prior to that date—correspondence which was very voluminous. There was this antecedent communication from the Under-Secretary of Crown Lands:—

"The Commissioner, Crown Lands, Auckland.

"Will you please send a description of the 4,898 acres, 'surplus land in Walton's land-claim,' which is to be set apart as an endowment for the Auckland Girls' High School, which will be reserved as an endowment for education, and then granted in terms of section 5 of 'The Auckland Girls' High School Act, 1878.'"

"H. J. H. ELIOTT.

"14th May, 1886."

It must be evident from that, to the mind of any impartial person, that the intention was, from the beginning, to set aside the reserve for the Auckland Girls' High School. Then, when the description of the land was forwarded from Auckland, the officer in the Auckland department addressed the Under-Secretary for Crown Lands in Wellington, as follows:—

"Crown Lands Office,

"Auckland, 21st May, 1886.

"Accompanying this I beg to hand you description of 4,898 acres, Walton's land claim (surplus land), for reservation as an endowment for the Auckland Girls' High School.

"S. ETHERIDGE,

"For Commissioner, Crown Lands.

"The Under-Secretary, Crown Lands."

The next step in the matter was the publication of the description. The description was written in ink, but by some accident—for he could not help thinking that it was done by accident—there appeared at the bottom of the description, written in pencil, "For primary education." He thought it must be clear to any person looking at the matter in an impartial way that there had been a mistake in the addition of those few words.

Mr. TURNBULL.—No mistake at all.

Mr. FISHER quite conceded that, looking at the Proclamation which had been put before the House, the honourable member for Timaru had a perfect right to move in the direction in which he had done; but he thought there was no justification for a suggestion of the honourable member for Dunedin West—a suggestion which had been intensified by the honourable member for Dunedin South—that there was an intention on his (Mr. Fisher's) part to withhold or conceal some of the facts of the case. It must be quite evident from the papers he had read what were the intentions of the department of the Government of the day, and he thought it was altogether a wrong thing to say that any attempt had been made to divert a primary-education reserve to the purposes of secondary education; and he must

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say, in conclusion, that it was a most unworthy suggestion for the honourable member for Dunedin South to throw out, that he, as Minister of Education, had attempted in any way to withhold or conceal from the House certain information in regard to this matter that ought to have been placed before it. In reality, that suggestion amounted to this: that he had attempted to pass the Bill through the House by means of a false pretence. There was no warrant for such a statement.

Mr. TURNBULL said he had made no such charge.

Mr. FISHER was quite sure that the honourable member for Timaru would not entertain an idea of the kind; but the suggestion was made in the most definite form by the honourable member for Dunedin South, and he wished the House and that honourable member especially to understand that, while he held the position of Minister of Education, he should always be careful not to withhold any information that ought to be before the House.

Mr. W. D. STEWART, as a matter of personal explanation, wished to say that he had no intention of indicating that, in his opinion, the Minister of Education had designedly withheld information. But he thought that the honourable gentleman would get up and say that he was not aware, when he introduced the Bill, of the precise difficulty that had now presented itself to the House. He understood, from something that the honourable gentleman had said yesterday, that he had not realised the difficulty which the honourable member for Timaru had raised. He should be the last to suggest that the honourable gentleman had intentionally withheld information. What he felt was that the honourable gentleman should have been informed before he introduced the Bill—by some one, at any rate, he did not say by whom—what were the precise facts, and that he should have stated them to the House.

Mr. FISHER was bound to say that he was not aware of the difficulty until it was brought under the notice of the House by the honourable member for Timaru.

Sir G. GREY wished to say, in the first place, that he had for a long period of time observed the course of action always pursued by the Minister of Education; and that the honourable gentleman would attempt to withhold information, or to perform any such wrong act, seemed to him a most improbable thing; and he should bear testimony to that in all places and at all times. Then, he had to say that he had every sympathy in favour of securing this great advantage of a Girls' High School for Auckland; but he was compelled to state that, upon an examination of the documents, he thought, upon the whole, that the right to the land rested with the primary-education authorities. He had arrived at that view under these circumstances: He attached great weight to the correspondence which had been read out as showing a certain intention, but there were other facts which it was impossible to get over. Subsequently to that correspondence

the Governor, on the 7th September, issued a Proclamation, which Proclamation was headed, "Land reserved for Primary Education," and at the bottom of the Proclamation it was stated that these lands were given "for primary education." Thus there were repeated at the conclusion of the Proclamation the very words that were used at the beginning of the Proclamation, and therefore he had come to the conclusion that, whatever might have been the original intention with reference to these reserves, the title was made good in a certain direction by the words of the Proclamation setting apart the land for a particular purpose. The date of that Proclamation was the 7th September, 1886, and the grant giving the endowment as an endowment for the Girls' High School was dated the 10th November, 1886—more than two months after the date of the Proclamation. Though it might be argued, he thought, that a certificate of title was really a title, he still was under the impression that a Proclamation, which was equivalent to an Act of Parliament and which therefore had the force of an Act of Parliament, ought to decide the question; and, as there was no special repeal of the original Act, he believed that the fair and just title to the land really rested in the authorities having charge of primary education. It was with great sorrow and disappointment that he came to this conclusion, because the matter had taken him quite by surprise; but he held that he was taking a proper line of action.

Major ATKINSON said it seemed to him that it would be a great pity if the House refused to pass this Bill. There was no doubt that it was a measure of considerable importance to the city and neighbourhood of Auckland. He had looked into the question carefully, and it was perfectly evident to his mind that the land referred to in the Bill was never in any sense a primary-education reserve. He was informed by the Secretary of Lands that in no case was land in the first instance set apart for secondary education in the North Island. It was always declared a primary reserve. In this case the land was selected by the department for this purpose while it was waste lands of the Crown, not to be made a primary-education reserve, and went through the required treatment that all these reserves for secondary education went through. It was proclaimed as land set apart for education in the Province of Auckland, and was then to be taken for the Girls' High School. It could not have been taken directly from the Crown. It was necessary to proclaim it primary-education land in the first instance. It could not be given to the Girls' High School unless it had been, in the first place, declared a primary-education reserve. The officers of the department stated distinctly that it was selected for this purpose, and went through this form in order to comply with the general custom in such matters. He might say that the governors had proceeded under the Land Transfer Act, and that great confusion would arise unless the Bill were passed. He felt strongly,

quite as strongly as any honourable gentleman, that the House should not take any education reserve and divert it from the purpose for which it was set aside to another purpose; but it was not so in this case. It was selected by the late Government for this purpose, and merely passed through a certain form because the law, so far, required it to do so. He would suggest that, if there was a strong feeling on the subject—though he could not see how there could be—the Bill might be referred to the Waste Lands Committee for inquiry; but he was anxious not to see the Bill lost. It would be a great pity, now that they had taken so much time over it, and the facts appeared so clear, to put the Bill on one side; but, if it was necessary, he should be willing to refer it to a Select Committee.

Mr. GUINNESS said there was one point that he did not think the Premier had looked into, and that was the interpretation of the 5th clause of "The Auckland Girls' High School Act, 1878." The correspondence read by the Minister of Education clearly disclosed that the reserve was made with the intention of vesting it in the High School Board of Governors under section 5 of the Act of 1878. He ventured to submit that the correct interpretation of that Act was simply this: that it applied to reserves made before the passing of the Act, but did not apply to reserves made after it became law. That was the position that he took up. Section 5 read as follows—and the Act was passed on the 1st November, 1878:—

"Out of any reserves set apart for education in the Education District of Auckland the Governor may grant any land not exceeding in value five thousand pounds to the Board, free from all charges or incumbrances, as an endowment for the said school, such value to be ascertained by the Land Board of the Auckland Land District."

He maintained that that meant that, out of the reserves which had been set apart in the Auckland Provincial District prior to the date of the passing of that Act, it should be lawful for the Governor to grant to the governors of that high school land to the value of £5,000; and the power given under that Act could not be made applicable to reserves made after that. This was the irregularity. The reserve was clearly made, as mentioned by the honourable member for Auckland Central, in the *Gazette* of September, 1886, as a reserve for primary education; but the question was, whether even making the reserve for primary education came within the meaning of the words "reserves set apart in the district for education generally." The next question was, whether the grant by the Governor of this reserve, which had been set aside in September, 1886, was a valid grant, and whether these School Commissioners had any title to it. The Bill, he ventured to submit, ought to have been a Bill to validate this; but it did nothing of the sort, but simply gave power to deal with it. He should certainly support the honourable member for Timaru in preventing any of our funds, whether by way of money grants or grants in land, from being

given for the purposes of secondary education. He had always opposed that, and should continue to do so, more especially now that they were strengthened in their arguments in that direction by the proposal of the Government to reduce the expenditure on primary education.

Mr. PEACOCK wished to explain that, personally, he would be quite willing—and he believed many others would be—if honourable members thought that the value of this endowment was more than £5,000, that a clause should be inserted in the Bill, in the other House, giving the balance over £5,000 to primary education. He believed the intention was that this reserve should be purely for the Girls' High School; but he would agree to that being done.

Sir G. GREY would like to make a suggestion that he believed would perhaps settle the difficulty. There seemed to be two decided opinions—one that the land was not intended for primary education, and the other that it was. If there were distinct words put in the preamble to the Bill, stating that, whereas it was thought that the reserve had originally been granted for primary-education purposes, notwithstanding these doubts it should be lawful to take it for the purposes of secondary education, then he could vote for it; but he must confess he could not support the Bill in its present form.

The House divided on the question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

#### AYES, 30.

Allen	Kelly	Russell
Buchanan	Lawry	Seymour
Cowan	Marchant	Taiwhanga
Dodson	McGregor	Thompson, R.
Fisher	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, T.
Fulton	Mitchelson	Valentine
Goldie	Moat	Withy.
Hamlin	Moss	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	O'Connor	Monk
Hobbs	Ormond	Peacock.
Jackson		

#### NOES, 32.

Anderson	Hodgkinson	Reeves, R. H. J.
Beetham	Hutchison	Richardson, E.
Blake	Joyce	Ross
Duncan	Kerr	Smith
Feldwick	Lance	Steward, W. J.
Fish	Larnach	Stewart, W. D.
Fraser	Levestam	Vogel
Graham	Loughrey	Walker.
Grey	O'Callaghan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Parata	Taylor
Guinness	Perceval	Turnbull.

#### PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Atkinson	Tanner
Newman	Samuel
Richardson, G. F.	Ward.

Majority against, 2.

Word struck out.

The House divided on the question, "That the words 'this day three months' be added."

Mr. Guinness

#### AYES, 29.

Anderson	Guinness	Perceval
Blake	Hutchison	Reeves, R. H. J.
Buxton	Joyce	Richardson, E.
Cadman	Kerr	Smith
Duncan	Lance	Steward, W. J.
Feldwick	Larnach	Vogel
Fish	Levestam	Walker.
Fraser	Loughrey	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grey	O'Callaghan	Taylor
Grimmond	Parata	Turnbull.

#### NOES, 36.

Allen	Lawry	Ross
Buchanan	Marchant	Russell
Cowan	McGregor	Seymour
Dodson	McKenzie, J.	Taiwhanga
Fisher	Mitchelson	Thompson, R.
Fulton	Moat	Thompson, T.
Goldie	Moss	Valentine
Graham	O'Connor	Whyte
Hislop	Ormond	Withy.
Hobbs	Pearson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hodgkinson	Pyke	Monk
Jackson	Richardson, G. Peacock.	
Kelly		

#### PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Atkinson	Tanner
Newman.	Samuel.

Majority against, 7.

Motion negatived.

#### GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

Mr. MITCHELSON moved, That this Bill be read a third time.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—I beg to move the recommitment of this Bill, for the purpose of considering the advisability of adding the new clause on Supplementary Order Paper No. 7, as follows:—

"Notwithstanding anything contained in section thirty-six of this Act, the Commissioners shall cause tables of rates and charges for the carriage of passengers and goods upon railways to be prepared as soon as practicable upon the system or plan known as 'Samuel Vaile's system of railway fares,' and shall bring the tables of rates and charges so prepared into operation at the commencement of the quarterly financial period next after the preparation thereof, and shall keep the same in operation, for a period of not less than twelve months from the coming into operation thereof, on the line of railway running from Auckland to Te Awamutu, including the branches therefrom to Onehunga, to Cambridge, to Te Aroha, and such other branches therefrom as there may be in the Waikato, and including the Kaipara line from Auckland to Helensville, to the termini thereof respectively.

"The said Commissioners shall make a report of the result of the working of the said railway upon the charges and rates as aforesaid to the Governor, who shall submit the same to both Houses of the General Assembly at the next session thereof.

"The Commissioners, if they find the result satisfactory, may continue the said rates and

charges in operation on the aforesaid railway, and extend the operation thereof to other railways; otherwise they shall discontinue the operation of such rates and charges forthwith on the expiration of the aforesaid twelve months."

I may state that at an early hour this morning, when the Bill was in Committee, I moved this clause; but, seeing that there were very few honourable members present—on the last division there were only twenty-eight—and knowing that several honourable members feel, with me, that this clause is of very considerable importance, and thinking they might like to speak on the question, I took the vote on the voices, with the understanding that, upon the moving of the third reading, I would bring the matter forward and ask for the recommitment of the Bill. I may explain to honourable members that, although there are many members of this House who do not believe in Mr. Vaile's scheme, still there are many thousands of people in all parts of the colony who thoroughly believe in it; and, although the Railways Bill leaves it optional with the Commissioners to give this scheme a trial, I wish to make it compulsory, and therefore have given notice of this new clause. There are many honourable members who, I know, went before their constituents during the last election and pledged themselves in favour of giving this scheme a trial; and I am now moving the recommitment of the Bill with a desire to give those honourable gentlemen an opportunity of not only expressing their opinions upon the clause I have read, but also of voting on the question in accordance with the pledges they gave to their constituents. To my mind, it is deserving of very great consideration, and I hope the House will not hastily reject it, but will, at all events, give the scheme a trial. I understand that Mr. Vaile would be in a position, within six months from the time of this Act coming into force, to put this scheme into full working order, with regard to passengers, goods, and parcels traffic. Although several honourable gentlemen who may desire to speak on the question are not just now present, I intend to call for a division, so as to give them an opportunity of going into one or other of the lobbies in favour of the recommitment of the Bill or against it.

Mr. FISH.—I shall support the recommitment of this Bill for the purpose of assisting the honourable gentleman in carrying the amendment he desires to propose; but in doing so I do not wish to be understood as indorsing or favouring this scheme proposed by Mr. Vaile: at the same time, I think he has so intelligently put before the public a scheme, which must have given him a considerable amount of thought and care, that there should be an opportunity afforded him of putting that scheme into operation, if the Commissioners think fit.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The power is already given.

Mr. FISH.—I see no reason why the Bill should not be recommitted for that purpose;

and I trust that when it is recommitted advantage may be taken to make one or two other alterations in the Bill. I observe that last night the Committee fixed the salary of the Chief Commissioner at £1,500. Now, Sir, I think it is futile to expect we can get the man we want for £1,500 per annum. If the scheme is to be a success it is a most miserable cheese-paring policy on the part of the Government to make the salary of the Chief Commissioner so small as £1,500 per annum. I have no doubt that the salaries provided for the two Under-Commissioners may be found to be sufficient, but I am strongly of opinion that the salary of the Chief Commissioner should be higher than is fixed in the Bill. The Government say that if they find they cannot obtain a good man at the price they will still engage him, and come down to the House next year and ask the House to increase the amount. That is a way of getting out of the difficulty, and no doubt the House would indorse the action of the Minister; but I think the effect of the amount being placed in the Bill at £1,500 will be to prevent the Ministry getting offers from the men we want. There is another thing, I take leave to say, I think should be in this Bill, and which I am sorry the Government have not thought it desirable to import into it. There should be some power of veto on the part of the Government with regard to the tariff the Commissioners may frame. I am given to understand the Victorian Bill contains a proviso of that kind, and I think this House or the Government should retain in its power the right to veto the tariff which the Commissioners may impose and which may mar commerce and settlement. I take this opportunity of again expressing my extreme regret that the Government should have pushed this measure to a conclusion this session. It appears to me that the one or two objects the Government have in view in introducing this Bill are, in the first place, to increase the rates; and, secondly, to reduce the wages of the men. I believe if the Government were to speak their real mind on the subject they would say these are the two great objects they had in view—namely, to increase the rates to the public generally, and to decrease the wages of the working-men; and, by placing ourselves in the hands of a Board, to take away from ourselves the power of having anything to say when an injustice is perpetrated; and my prediction is that, in a very short time indeed, one of the results of this Board will be universal dissatisfaction from one end of the country to the other. I say that, although the question may have been discussed during the last Parliament, it was never brought before the public in the same concrete form as now; and we should have an opportunity of placing the matter before our constituents in order to see how far public opinion is really in touch with this great change which the Government are making. We have no great reason to be dissatisfied, on the whole, with the management of our railways, except with incompetence, possibly, or unsuitability, I should say, on the part of the General Manager. The railways in

New Zealand have been managed extremely creditably, and there can be no imputation of any corrupt influence having been brought to bear on the Minister from time to time, such as I believe was the case in Victoria. I take leave to say that neither the Government nor any of their supporters have given any solid reason for the introduction of this Bill. The only reason they have attempted to give is that the scheme in Victoria has been a success, and ergo it must be a success in this colony. I deny that wholly. I deny, first of all, that the causes which led to the introduction of the scheme into Victoria exist here, and I deny that the advantages predicted as certain to flow from it will flow. We shall, by passing this Bill, give up the control of sixteen millions' worth of property for at least five years to irresponsible men. I think in making an experiment of this kind the House should have insisted on limiting the time to as short a period as possible—not more than three years. It will be said that all these are Committee objections, and that members of the House ought to have remained here to discuss these questions during the last sitting. I may explain now why I thought it to be my duty to leave the House about half-past two this morning. It was because the Government had determined to make this measure in every sense a Government measure, and, knowing they had a majority at their back, it was perfectly useless for independent members to remain here with a view of making any amendments in the Bill. Therefore I declined to injure my health and constitution by sitting here till five or six o'clock. And, Sir, I take this opportunity of again saying that I hold it to be most improper, on the part of any Government, to introduce a measure of this magnitude in the short space of time we have, when such a measure can only be passed by taxing the vital energies of honourable members by making them sit up till six o'clock in the morning. That is not the way to pass important legislation. Honourable members, after being at work so long, cannot possibly bring to bear on important measures that brightness of mind and clearness of intellect which they ought to bring, and which they would retain if they were not exhausted by sitting in the House for these long periods. It is sometimes wondered why at the conclusion of a sitting at five or six o'clock in the morning there are only some twenty-six honourable members present; but it is almost physically impossible for honourable gentlemen to remain in the fetid atmosphere of this House for ten hours at a stretch. I protest in the strongest manner possible against any Government compelling honourable members, in order to pass Bills within a certain time so as to close the session, to sit for such a long time. There was no excuse for it in this case, because, as I have said, and as many honourable members must admit, this Bill might just as well be passed next session as now, and to have delayed it would have given us an opportunity to go before the public and explain the measure. By delaying it the Government could

*Mr. Fish*

have taken all necessary preliminary steps for procuring a Chief Commissioner during the interval before next session, and then they would have been prepared, if the House passed the Bill, to make the appointment at once and let the Commission begin its duties. I felt it to be my duty to make this protest at this time, and to express a strong hope that at any rate next session the Government will bring down their Bills sufficiently early not to necessitate the extreme tension on the physical powers of honourable members at the end of the session which there is now.

*Mr. TANNER.*—The honourable member for Dunedin South has said the Government can force this measure through because they have a strong majority; but I should like to remind him that this large majority is composed of members on both sides of the House. It has not been treated as a party question at all, and there are many members on the opposite side of the House supporting the Bill quite as strongly as members on this side. In reference to other remarks by the honourable member for Dunedin South, I think we should be careful about going into Committee again and reopening the whole question on this Bill. There may be no objection to recommit it to consider one particular clause, but it would not be well to recommit it in order to go over the whole ground again.

*Mr. FISH.*—I have no intention of moving any amendment myself if the Bill is recommended.

*Mr. E. RICHARDSON.*—I remained in the House till about four o'clock this morning, and then left, being unable to sit any longer. I had several amendments which, as I had previously suggested, I intended to propose, which I think would have considerably improved the Bill; but, as I could not stay, I could not move them; and I will indicate now where I think some of them are needed. I think in clause 36 there are several omissions as to what should be the powers of the Commissioners; and notably one power is omitted which is given in both the Victorian and New South Wales Acts, by which the Commissioners are able to make special rates for quantities. As far as I am able to ascertain, this Bill does not give such a power. I am aware that "The Public Works Act, 1882," has to be read with this measure, and a thorough study of both this Bill and that Act together is necessary to enable us to see what powers the Commissioners will have; but, as far as I have been able to find, the power I refer to is not given. Then, I think there is an omission in the Commissioners not being declared to be common carriers. I think very great trouble will ensue if that is not done; and it could be done by a short clause, which might perhaps be introduced in another place. But the amendment I first suggested probably could not be made in another place, it being on a subject relating to the imposition of rates. I think the Government should carefully consider both those points before the Bill is finally passed. Then, the Acts in both Vic-



toria and New South Wales prohibit the Commissioners from removing or closing railway-workshops; and I think there should be a similar provision in this Bill. There should also be some provision as to the granting of free passes. I am aware that by subsection (n) of clause 86 the Commissioners may make by-laws "for the issue, and prevention of the abuse, of free passes on the railways or any of them;" but I think that—seeing that these are Government railways, and that certain concessions have been and are being made to members of Parliament and others—it would be well to follow the example of the other two colonies and put in a clause saying what Parliament thinks should be done in that direction. Then, I think there should be some specific provision in relation to running Sunday trains. There has been a great deal of feeling, at one time and another, in most parts of the colony on that subject. As the Bill now stands, I do not think the Commissioners have sufficient power to deal with that matter, and in the other colonies it has been considered wise to specify what should be done in that direction. I think there are several omissions in clause 86, but those I have mentioned are the most important. I think the points I have mentioned want carefully looking into, to insure the proper carrying-out of the Bill; and I hope the Government will instruct the officers of the department, before the Bill is finally passed, to carefully consider if the Bill gives all the necessary power to insure its successful operation and the efficient discharge of their duties by the Commissioners. I throw out these suggestions, and I hope the Minister for Public Works will think them worth looking into. I am not, myself, going to move the recommitment of the Bill for the purpose of reconsidering any clauses that might endanger the passing of the measure; but I trust that the Government will consider the points I have mentioned, with a view to amendments being made, if they should be deemed to be necessary, either here or in another place.

Mr. WARD.—I wish to give notice that, if the Bill is recommitted, I shall move a new clause limiting the amount of damages payable in case of accidents. I understand that in Victoria a proviso of this character is in force, and I think there should be a similar one in this Bill; and I hope the Minister in charge of the Bill will move in that direction. I should further like to say, as one who was in the House all night yesterday and listened attentively to the clauses of this measure being read, that I do not consider sufficient time was given to members of the House to consider the details of the Bill. The Bill is of a very important character, and I do not think it has had that full consideration which it should have had. I should have preferred its being left over till next session. There are clauses in it that I do not agree with, and I shall vote against the third reading of the measure, as I consider it is of too important a character to be hurried through in this manner.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I support the recom-

mittal of the Bill, and I give notice that I shall move certain amendments. I may say, at the outset, that I cannot support the proposal of the honourable member for Auckland North, and it is not for that purpose I shall support the recommitment of the Bill. I want to move that clauses 84 and 86 be reconsidered. In clause 86 an amendment was introduced, on the motion of the honourable member for the Bay of Islands, to the effect that the Commissioners may, with the consent of the Licensing Committee of any district, issue licenses for the sale of spirits at any railway-stations in any such district. I think, if we can trust the Commissioners with such great powers as we have given to them in this Bill, we might very well leave them to deal with a matter of this sort according to their own discretion. I fully agree that it may be quite right that the people in localities should pass resolutions and come to an agreement about the licenses to be issued within the limits of their own particular district, so long as those licenses relate to houses for the convenience of the people in that district; but I do not see that they should apply to such a case as that of railway-stations. The people of the localities in which those railway-stations are situated are not the only people to be consulted in a matter of this kind; people coming from all the localities in the colony are interested in this matter. The railway-stations do not belong to any particular district, but to the colony as a whole. When clause 86 was in Committee I moved to strike out subsection (c); but, as I was unable to get a teller with me, I could not go to a division, and there was no record of my having moved that motion. Subsection (c) provided that the Commissioners might regulate the granting of licenses for vehicles of every sort plying for hire at a railway, and the plying for hire at a railway of any vehicle not so licensed. In my opinion it is not necessary to provide for that in this Act. It simply means that an additional fee is to be put on these people, for already they are licensed by the various local bodies. If this clause were carried it would impose great hardship on many hackney-carriage and express drivers. I was told last night that such a power already exists in the Minister for Public Works; but I say it does not. What exists is this: Where stands have been established in railway-station yards, express and hackney-carriage drivers have to pay a license if they wish to use those stands. But under this subsection no hackney-carriage or express driver may take a passenger from a railway-station unless he has paid a license-fee to the Commissioners. I think that subsection should be taken out. Then, I wish to move a new clause providing that the wages of working-men shall not be reduced by the Commissioners, unless the consent of this House be first obtained. The opinion has been expressed by a great many members of this House, and with great justice, I think, that one of the first acts of the Commissioners will be to reduce the wages of the working-men; and that is a power which, I think, should not

be placed in their hands, because if they do that they will reduce the wages throughout the whole colony, and so a great hardship will be done. I think that is one of the powers that should be retained by this House. As to the amendment of the honourable member for Auckland North, to give Vaile's scheme a trial, I cannot agree with that. Perhaps it would be better if the honourable gentleman were to amend his motion so as to make it provide that Mr. Vaile should be the first Chief Commissioner. One of the arguments made use of by the honourable member for Auckland North was that many petitions had been sent asking for a trial of the scheme. But I think that such petitions are not worth much, especially when they come to us from Auckland, where people get up petitions for all sorts of objects. Why, I remember that they got up a petition to secure the reprieve from the gallows of murderers who were almost taken red-handed. Therefore I do not think these petitions should have any weight. Then, all those who have read the evidence brought forward by Mr. Vaile himself must admit that he has no argument on his side at all. The arguments of Mr. Vaile simply amounted to this: that he believes so-and-so, and, because he believes it, it must be right. We know that a Committee which sat last session, consisting mainly of Auckland members, who wished to give him every chance, had to come to the conclusion that they could not recommend giving the scheme a trial, unless the district in which it was tried would become responsible for any deficiency that might arise. While I do not support the amendment of which the honourable member for Auckland North has given notice, I wish to see the Bill recommitted for the purpose I have mentioned.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Before the Bill goes into Committee, I wish to say that, while we are making provision for the Commissioners constructing railways, I do not see that there is any power under which the plans of the railways, *et cetera*, would become the property of the Commissioners. The Public Works Department and the Commissioners would be two distinct bodies, and it would be necessary to hand over the plans to the Commissioners. I do not know whether it is necessary to provide for that.

Major ATKINSON.—It is not intended to give the Board power to make railways unless the work is specially handed over to them by Order in Council, and then the plans would have to be handed over.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I do not know whether the Government will accept the recommitment of the Bill for the purpose of adding a clause of the character indicated by the honourable member for Nelson—that is, to make some provision for the protection of men working on the railways. I am very much afraid that they will be the first sufferers under this Board, and for this reason: We are told that settlement is to be one main feature of the management of the Railway Commissioners, and commercial principles another. What will they do so far as the

settlement part of the business is concerned? They will revise the tariff; and, as for the other, they will take 6d. or 1s. per diem off the working-men. I do trust that the Government will make some provision of the character indicated, so that these men shall not be reduced; because it does seem to me a serious thing that, in a young colony like this, men should only get just sufficient to keep them alive, and not be able to get sufficient to provide for themselves in their old age. I know that these sentiments are not very popular in this House with some honourable members; but I cannot help, and will not help, expressing my opinions whenever I have an opportunity on behalf of those who are not here to defend their interests. This morning there was no opportunity of getting inserted a clause of this character; but I trust that the Premier, in the interests of the masses, will see that such a clause is inserted; and I hope that he will accept the amendment of the honourable member for Nelson.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I hope that the Premier will not overlook the matter I mentioned in clause 36, because I believe that that clause cannot be touched in another Chamber.

Major ATKINSON.—No. I have taken a note of the honourable gentleman's point, and thank him for the suggestion. But I propose that, if necessary, any amendments of that character shall be sent down by Governor's message. I might tell the honourable gentleman that this clause has been gone through very carefully by the officers of the department.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—May I ask whether the honourable gentleman will bring down by Governor's message a clause like the one indicated—that the Commissioners shall have no power to reduce the rate of wages except with the consent of Parliament?

Major ATKINSON.—I do not see my way to bring down any such clause as that at all.

Mr. WARD.—I may say that I mentioned to the Minister for Public Works this evening that I intended to move, if the Bill again went into Committee, in the direction I mentioned a short time ago. I should like to know if he will introduce a clause limiting the amount of compensation payable in cases of accident.

Major ATKINSON.—I will look into it, but I am doubtful of the propriety of saving any amount in compensation.

Mr. FISH.—I should like to ask the Premier whether he has considered the question I raised this afternoon and last evening—that is, with regard to the Government having the power of veto as to any tariff the Commissioners may frame. It is so, I am informed, in the Victorian Act. The Government there have power to veto a tariff if they do not think it in the interest of the country.

Major ATKINSON.—I will look into the matter and see.

Mr. MONK.—I must make some explanation to the House for the vote I feel myself compelled to give. I have paid some attention to railway grievances in the part of the

Mr. Levestam

country to which I belong. Though I think it is necessary that great reductions should be made in the rates now charged on the lines in the North, I have always felt that the plan as laid down by Mr. Vaile would not be practicable. In the first place, I do not think the population is sufficient to make it payable; and, then, I think that no allowance has been made for the wear-and-tear that would take place under Mr. Vaile's system. I should like a greater reduction in railway freights than I believe will be secured under a Board such as is contemplated; but if the Board is to be charged with the control of the railways by this House, and with the approval of the country, then I think we cannot tie up the hands of the Commissioners by supporting a motion which would virtually take from them the power which it is contemplated by this measure to give them. And I feel certain that, if Mr. Vaile's scheme were adopted on the Waikato and Kaipara lines, in twelve months' time such a loss would be revealed to the country as would startle us, and such as the country cannot afford. On the other hand, there are some features about the Railway Bill that I feel very anxious about. I do not like the idea of handing over the railways to an absolute power for such a long time as is contemplated by the Bill. Supposing we place our railways in the power of an autocrat, no matter how clever that gentleman may be, it is quite possible that his experience may be such as to lead him to attempt a policy which will not be applicable to our lines, where, no matter how strong our desire to make the railways a financial success, such considerations must be controlled by the prices of produce and concessions that, in the interests of settlement, must be made. I feel certain that any Railway Board that may attempt to manage our lines will have to contend with difficulties that do not exist on lines in any other part of the world. They have to contend with low water-freights, and, as time goes on, this difficulty, instead of disappearing, will rather intensify and become more difficult to cope with as sea-services increase. If this House expects that any Railway Board that can be devised can make our lines profitable, I feel certain in my own mind that it will be absolutely mistaken, and that the advantage of the Board will simply be this: that it will be withdrawn from political control. That will be some advantage, and for that reason I feel compelled to support the Bill. But I am certain that, if there is any expectation that our railways will be made to pay full interest upon the cost of construction, that expectation will not be realised; but, on the contrary, that the skill of any Commissioner will be shown not so much in the introduction of some system of which he may be the reputed master as in the facility with which he will adapt himself to grapple with difficulties that for a long time to come he will find besetting the management of our lines.

The House divided on the question, "That the words, 'the Bill be now read the third time,' stand part of the question."

## AYES, 52.

Allen	Kerr	Reeves, W. P.
Atkinson	Lance	Rhodes
Bruce	Larnach	Richardson, E.
Buchanan	Macarthur	Richardson, G.
Cowan	Mackenzie, M.	Ross
Dodson	Mackenzie, T.	Seymour
Fergus	McKenzie, J.	Stewart, W. D.
Fisher	Mills	S.-Menteath
Fitchett	Mitchelson	Taipua
Fitzherbert	Monk	Taiwhanga
Fulton	Newman	Tanner
Grimmond	O'Callaghan	Thompson, R.
Hamlin	O'Conor	Valentine
Hislop	Ormond	Walker.
Hobbs	Parata	
Hutchison	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Izard	Pearson	Barron
Kelly	Pyke	Beetham.

## NOES, 24.

Anderson	Hodgkinson	Steward, W. J.
Blake	Jackson	Taylor
Buxton	Jones	Turnbull
Cadman	Joyce	Ward
Feldwick	Lawry	Withy.
Fish	Moat	<i>Tellers.</i>
Goldie	Moss	Levestam
Grey	Perceval	Thompson, T.
Guinness		

## PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Samuel	Duncan
Wilson.	Seddon.

Majority for, 28.

Amendment negatived.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be now read a third time."

## AYES, 56.

Allen	Izard	Pyke
Atkinson	Kelly	Reeves, W. P.
Beetham	Kerr	Rhodes
Bruce	Lance	Richardson, E.
Buchanan	Larnach	Richardson, G.
Buxton	Lawry	Ross
Cadman	Levestam	Seymour
Cowan	Macarthur	Steward, W. J.
Dodson	Mackenzie, T.	Stewart, W. D.
Fergus	Mills	S.-Menteath
Fisher	Mitchelson	Taipua
Fitchett	Moat	Thompson, R.
Fitzherbert	Monk	Valentine
Fulton	Newman	Walker
Hamlin	O'Callaghan	Whyte
Hislop	O'Conor	Withy.
Hobbs	Ormond	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hodgkinson	Parata	Russell
Hutchison	Peacock	Tanner.

## NOES, 18.

Feldwick	Joyce	Turnbull
Goldie	McKenzie, J.	Vogel
Grey	Moss	Ward.
Grimmond	Perceval	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Seddon	Barron
Jackson	Thompson, T.	Fish.
Jones		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Pearson	Ballance
Samuel.	Duncan.

Majority for, 38.

Bill read a third time.

On the motion, That the Bill do pass,

Mr. SEDDON said,—Sir, I desire to lodge a last protest against the passing of this measure, because, notwithstanding that there is a very large majority in favour of it, I still hold to the opinion that the consideration which so important a measure ought to have at the hands of members of this House has not been given to it. I desire also to put on record the manner in which this measure was put through, and I think it will not place either the Government or this House in a very favourable light before the people of Great Britain and New Zealand. Here was a measure dealing with fifteen million pounds' worth of public property—for that is what our railways cost—forced through Committee at a quarter past five this morning, when there were only some twenty-seven members present. I was one who remained until about half-past three. I then lodged a protest against the Bill proceeding further under the circumstances, and left the responsibility with the Government, and they thought fit to see the measure through Committee. They did what I consider is against the Standing Orders, and is somewhat unconstitutional, inasmuch as they appropriated in payment of the salaries of these Commissioners £3,500 per annum for five years, making a total of nearly £20,000. I do not know that there is any parallel to the present course in regard to such a Bill as this—the action of the Government last night, after passing the Bill through Committee, in then putting the appropriation clauses through a Committee of the Whole, giving the assent of the Crown to them, and then recommitting the Bill and passing it through. By that proceeding we have bound the colony to pay this money for the next five years for a pure experiment. I am afraid the passing of this Bill means the reduction of the wages of the employés on our railways. I have heard it mooted, in the lobbies and outside, that a reduction can be made to the extent of some £30,000—an honourable gentleman near me says £50,000—and that means this: that the spending-power of those employés will be curtailed. I do not lay much stress upon that, but I am afraid it means a detrimental effect on the wages generally throughout New Zealand. If we place the control of our railways in the hands of an irresponsible body, and if that body, without having their power in this respect distinctly defined by the measure, are to cut down wages to such a point that it will interfere with the wages of the rest of the wage-earning classes of New Zealand, it will be a sorry day for this colony that so pernicious a Bill was ever passed. It also means raising the tariff on the producers, the farmers of the colony. We know full well that the amount they now receive for their produce is not sufficient to compensate them for pro-

ducing, and they have to produce at a loss. I see nothing in this measure, and have heard nothing from the Government, in regard to what has been very much complained of, and that is, as to who is to be the Chief Commissioner; and it is very likely we shall have the late General Manager of Railways, Mr. Maxwell, in that position. There is nothing whatever in this Bill, as far as I can see, which compels the Government to seek elsewhere for the Chief Commissioner; and, whether rightly or wrongly, something strikes me that Mr. Maxwell will be one of the Commissioners, if not the Chief Commissioner. There has been a general complaint against his management, even when under the control of Parliament; and, if there was then any well-founded ground for complaint, how much more intensified will the evil be when he is placed as Chief Commissioner, free from parliamentary control! As I said last night, I say it here again, the management of our New Zealand railways has been commendable, taking all the circumstances into consideration. At all events I do not believe it has been so glaringly bad that we should hand over to an irresponsible body this large and valuable public property, when, I believe, a number of our railways may be closed altogether, when it is quite possible the railways may be worked upon purely commercial principles to the detriment of the work of colonisation, for which this large sum of money was raised. This Bill is, to my mind, a serious blow, so far as the progress of the colony is concerned, in that direction. I am afraid the public will suffer by the change; but the majority has decided, and we must for a time submit to be guided by the majority. The only thing I would say is this: that there is in the colony, at the present moment, a feeling in existence that delay should take place before this measure is given full effect to. I hold in my hand a resolution which has been forwarded to me from Auckland.

An Hon. MEMBER.—From whom?

Mr. SEDDON.—It is from the New Zealand Reform League.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who are they?

Mr. SEDDON.—Some Auckland members are laughing derisively at the announcement that I have made—that it is from the Reform League of Auckland; but it appears to me that a very considerable change has come over those honourable gentlemen since the elections. There is one honourable gentleman, at all events, I have found in the lobby—Mr. Goldie—who did not hesitate to keep to his pledges and be guided in his actions by the wishes of those who were instrumental in securing his return to this House. The honourable member for Parnell was also quite consistent in not wishing to take from Parliament and the control of the House the management of our railways. This is what the League says—and I desire to put it on record, because there is a good deal in it:—

An Hon. MEMBER.—It is not worth the paper it is written on.

Mr. SEDDON.—This is not the only thing

that is not worth the paper it is written on. I leave it to the honourable member for Franklin South,—perhaps he understands it. Seeing he is an authority on paper-writing, he should be the last to interrupt. This memorandum is as follows:—

“New Zealand Radical Reform League,

“Auckland, 7th December, 1887.

“SIR,—I beg to forward you, on behalf of the above League, the following resolution passed at its last meeting, held on the 5th instant:—

“That this League learns with regret that it is the intention of the Government to form a Railway Board, and import a railway expert to place at its head; and would direct attention to the fact that a Parliamentary Committee, in 1886, reported among other findings that, although the system now in force in New Zealand is similar to that in the United Kingdom and its dependencies, and is well administered, it is nevertheless not satisfactory as a system. This association, therefore, in the strongest manner, condemns the appointment of a Board to still further develop this system, and believes the result can only be to perpetuate a vicious railway policy and entail loss on the country generally.”—I have, &c.,

“JAMES BATTY, Secretary.”

Sir, from information I have received from Victoria about the working of that system, I find that the further it goes on the less satisfactory it is; and that information comes from one who is, I may say, connected with the working of that system. In writing to me, he says that New Zealand is going a little too far ahead—that it would be better to be cautious and see how the thing developed further in Victoria. I believe it would be better to wait a little longer before we commit the colony to what is intended by this Bill. I do no more than say this: that the responsibility rests with those who have supported this measure. Considering its magnitude and importance it has not had that consideration it was entitled to; and I do not think that in doing what we have done we are acting fairly to the public creditors of the colony. Hence I protest against it.

Mr. KERR.—I was one of those who supported this Bill, and I believe it is a really good Bill. At all events, I feel satisfied our railroads will run better than they have done in the past. But surely the honourable member for Kumara and other honourable gentlemen are talking to their constituents. They are continually yelping about the poor man's wages being lowered. The working-men of this country can take care of themselves, and they will have good wages. Railway-men cannot expect much more than farmers get now. Labour always protects itself, and always will do so. I am always glad to see men get good wages, as well as anybody else; but I am not going to see farm-labourers receive 2s. and 3s. a day less than railway-labourers. I wonder why railway-labourers should receive more wages than farm-labourers do.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—How do they?

Mr. KERR.—They do at the present time.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—Where?

Mr. KERR.—In Waimea and all over New Zealand there are men now going about, as good men as platelayers, and they would be very glad to get work at less money than is now paid to platelayers. That is my answer to the honourable gentleman? If times are bad for other people, the men on the railways must bear a share of the pressure. I do not want to see the wages lowered, but if the wages of other people are lowered the wages of railway-men must be lowered also. I feel satisfied the thing will come right of itself. There are plenty of men walking about the country in search of employment, and they would be glad to take less than the railway-men get.

Mr. MOSS.—It is a bad sign.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—A sign of bad government.

Mr. KERR.—When I left twenty men a week were passing my place. I was feeding them, and they would have been glad to get employment. They went down the Coast looking for work, but could not get it. That is going on through the whole colony, I am sorry to say, to-day. I do not see why the present employes should monopolize the whole work of the railways. If they are not satisfied, let them go elsewhere and do better, like other people. The honourable gentlemen that are continually crying about the poor man are not the poor man's friends. Do they employ the poor men, or give them a meal when they are hungry? Not they. They are only throwing dust at the working-man, to help themselves for election purposes. Who ever heard of the honourable gentlemen—the honourable member for Auckland Central or the honourable member for Parnell—doing anything practical for the working-man's benefit?—only talking in this House! It is really sickening to hear them. They have done this for years; but I can tell the honourable gentlemen that the working-men can see things for themselves; and this game they have played so long is worked out, and the working-man will not be blinded by the honourable gentlemen's oratory any longer.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I wish to say, very briefly, that I consider the whole responsibility for this measure rests with the Government. I sincerely hope it will prove a success. I think it was a great mistake to hurry a measure of this kind through the House, and more especially a mistake not to take up the amendments which were proposed by several honourable members with a view to improving the measure. There has been, in my mind, a breach of faith in the matter, though I will not say a wilful one. I understand that last night all amendments were refused. Honourable members were told that it was of no use moving amendments. I confess that I cannot work in the middle of the night, and, if Bills of this character are forced on at such late hours, I and others have a difficulty in following them. When this Bill was read a second time there

was an assurance given from the Government bench that all amendments would be respectfully considered, and that it was not to be looked upon as a party measure. It seems to me that the refusal last night even to entertain amendments, and the statement of the Government that the Bill should pass as it was, was a distinct breach of faith. I appeal to all honourable members who made suggestions at the second reading if it was not understood that all amendments were to be respectfully considered; and the honourable member in charge of the measure has since signified the same. The Government chose to reject the counsel of those who, in a friendly manner, wished to offer suggestions. The Bill, as now passed, instead of being a measure to obtain the assistance of some very highly-skilled person from England, is a measure to enable a higher salary to be given to a gentleman already in the public service, and to remove from Parliament the control of the railways. For my part, I am afraid the Bill offers very little promise of success; but it is still my most anxious wish that it should prove successful.

Mr. MOSS.—I wish, Sir, to place on record my protest against this Bill. I voted against it at the second reading. And, Sir, last night, when it was put into Committee after midnight, I stayed till daylight, and must say that I never saw a Bill of this great importance hurried through—forced through—in the way that this Bill was. To call ourselves a deliberative body, and at the same time to treat a great measure in the way this has been treated, certainly is not and cannot be right; and I, for one, enter my protest against such a course. It is a great measure—one of the greatest we could have passed. These Railway Commissioners will largely control the labour-market. The great mass of the people ought to be our first consideration. If they are not prosperous any other prosperity is fictitious and of no value. We are now here fresh from the elections, and surely one would suppose that those who, a short time ago, professed so much interest in the welfare of the great struggling people have not so soon forgotten their professions! The honourable member for Waimea has told us of the very great distress that prevails—that there are hundreds of people out of employment and seeking it in vain; and yet a measure which would have been of infinitely more importance than this—a measure which would have certainly given new hope, imparted new confidence, and started enterprise in all directions—tariff revision—is put off because there is no time to deal with it. And yet we can deal with a question like this, which could have been well left till next session. I have noticed that the majority in favour of this Bill has increased in the House during its passage. I am quite sure that the majority outside will increase against it when the full scope of the Bill is understood. We have fallen in love before this with non-political Boards. I remember one which was established by act of this House. The Government Insurance Department was placed under the

control of that non-political Board. How long did that Board last? And I add that large majorities are no sign that a measure is right. There were as large majorities for the Insurance Board; and one of the greatest swindles ever perpetrated—the South Sea Bubble—was carried in the Imperial Parliament by 172 to 55; yet it proved a disastrous failure. I may say that in connection with that measure there was one man whose opposition was so continuous that he was called the “Cassandra” of the Imperial Parliament—I refer to Sir Robert Walpole. I have heard the same name applied to a member of this House for his opposition to measures of this kind; and that honourable gentleman might very well be proud of the term. I should hope that, if this measure is passed—as it will now be passed—it will be followed by taking off one Minister from the Treasury benches. We are now taking away from the Government a large amount of work that used to fall upon one Minister's shoulders, and I should hope their zeal for retrenchment will induce them at once to dispense with the services of one Minister. That seems to be the natural corollary to the passing of this Bill, if they are to respond to the cry for retrenchment that has been raised. I have referred to the demand that prevails throughout the colony for the introduction of a great measure this session; and I venture to say once more that this Parliament will not be doing its duty—I am entitled to hold that opinion as a member—if we prorogue without some certainty that that measure will be brought down at the earliest date. The session has not lasted ten weeks yet, and the first four were taken for the formation of a new Government and to allow that Government time to prepare a policy. Six weeks is all the time we have devoted to work, and in those six weeks we have passed Bills far-reaching in their character, and more important than we have ever passed before—measures which, I firmly believe, will work for ill. We have dealt with those important Bills with a haste and in a manner that have never been witnessed in this House before. In six weeks we have disposed of measures which should have taken three or four months to be properly dealt with. I would like to repeat to the Premier that it is not even yet too late to deal with the tariff this session.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The question of the tariff is outside the passing of this Bill relating to the railways, and it is my duty to confine the debate to the measure under consideration.

Mr. MOSS.—Sir, there are certain measures for the relief of the people which I consider should be passed this session. It would be very easy for us to adjourn this meeting of Parliament till April next, instead of beginning a new session then. At our meeting in April we could at once take up work left undone now at the stage at which we leave it. By that course we should have no Financial Statement, no Address in Reply—we could go straight to work, and take up different items of business exactly where we left them.

*Sir J Vogel*

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the hono-  
rarium?

Mr. MOSS.—That would not be affected in the slightest degree one way or the other. The April session would be only a continuation of the present session. The Appropriation Act need not be passed till then: we could meantime pass an Imprest Supply Bill to carry on with till then. We could also then take into reconsideration this Railway Bill. It would not in that case be put into operation until the people of the country have expressed their matured opinions on it, until honourable members have had also an opportunity of again discussing the subject with their constituents, about whose opinions many of them are now talking so freely. When the adjourned session ended the House could be prorogued for a couple of days and begin the new session of 1888-89 without delay or difficulty. I think those honourable members would come back from the fresh breeze of public opinion with new ideas, and, probably, with a greater respect for the opinions of those outside than they are apt to be actuated by after too long a residence in Wellington. I entertain a very strong objection to the Bill, and a still stronger objection to the way in which it has been passed. I have voted against it at every stage, and I shall vote against it now.

Mr. FERGUS.—We have just had one of the usual diatribes from the honourable member for Parnell, delivered in the same old doleful strain—the same strain in which he has delivered every speech he has made this session. The first and the only article in his creed of the politics of the country seems to be that of Protection *versus* Free-trade, as to which the House has decisively settled that it shall be left over till another session to be dealt with.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member must not refer to the tariff as it may be affected by the system of Protection or of Freetrade, in speaking on the Railways Bill.

Mr. FERGUS.—I will not, Sir, if not in order. Then, the honourable gentleman says this proposed Board will be an irresponsible Board. It is as much a responsible Board as the members of this House are responsible to their constituents. Supposing this Board does not manage the railways satisfactorily, it is open to Parliament to at once resume control, and have them again managed as they are now. Notwithstanding all that has fallen from the honourable member for Kumara as to the working of the non-political Board in Victoria, it must be admitted that there has not been the slightest attempt there to again put the railways under political control. This House has affirmed that there shall be non-political control of our railways by a majority of 56 to 18—a most substantial, absolute, and overwhelming majority. Not one single argument has been adduced by honourable gentlemen opposed to the Bill as to why it should not be given effect to. The question has been before the constituents for several years, it has been a burning question in many of the constituencies, and we find honourable gentlemen on both sides of the House get-

ting up and saying they are pledged to have an alteration in this direction in the management of our railways. Even the late Minister for Public Works told us that he absolutely drafted a measure which, he said, was nearly on the same lines as this, and that it was only because of differences in the Cabinet of which he was a member that it was not brought forward. We know very well that, just after that honourable gentleman assumed office in 1884, he expressed in his Public Works Statement very grave dissatisfaction with the manner in which the railways had been for some years managed, and he said that some such change as that now proposed was absolutely needed in order to bring them into satisfactory working again. He recognised that the evils we were then suffering from were growing ones, and that they would increase to such an extent as would make it absolutely imperative to remove our railways from political control altogether. The honourable member for Kumara has told us that he has received from some person in Victoria communications which say the Board there is going down in favour. Will the honourable gentleman kindly give us the name of the party he got that information from—some data to go on? The last report of the Board seems to show that it is going on from triumph to triumph.

Mr. SEDDON.—The late Minister for Public Works said last night that the Board there was going back.

Mr. FERGUS.—I should be very glad if the honourable gentleman would do so now. I will wait for him to do so.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—The honourable member had better make his own speech. I can speak for myself another time.

Mr. FERGUS.—I was giving the honourable gentleman an opportunity of corroborating the remark of the honourable member for Kumara.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I stated last night, when the honourable member spoke on this subject, that it was exceedingly unfair to deal with comparisons of this sort in an offhand, slipshod way, as he was doing himself; and that, if he wanted to compare the results of the working of the Victorian railways with our own, it must be in a different way from that in which he was doing it. He was again misquoting figures, as he did last night, from a return which he held in his hand, which he did not understand, and which he had asked me to explain.

Mr. FERGUS.—The honourable gentleman is inaccurate again. The figures I quoted are correct, and from the Victorian report. Why does the honourable gentleman insist on misrepresentation? He has not dealt with the point at all. The honourable member for Kumara said that the honourable member for Kaiapoi had stated the Victorian system was going back. It is either true or not that it is going back. Is the honourable gentleman prepared to say that the Victorian system is falling off in public favour or not?

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—Yes; in public favour.

Mr. FERGUS.—No; it is not so. The train-mileage has fallen from 2s. 9d. to 2s. 6d. But that is accounted for, as the last report says, because the rates have been reduced to an amount of a quarter of a million, and 130 miles of political lines have been made. In 1884 it was 2s. 9d.; in 1885, 2s. 7d.; and last year, 2s. 6d. But the net returns of the railways give 3·60 per cent. on their cost. These are absolute facts, and I utterly deny that any public man in Victoria who knows anything about the management of the railways has said that the present system of management is going back in public favour or in success in any shape or form. The very contrary is the case; and the last report on the Victorian railways, which has been referred to several times in discussing this Bill, proves that conclusively. The honourable member for Christchurch North said the Government had last night intimated their intention of accepting no amendments. Why, Sir, the Government were quite prepared to accept any reasonable amendments that might be proposed. The honourable member for Christchurch North and the honourable member for Kaiapoi knew quite well that the House was in favour of the Bill being passed; and they knew quite well that some hours had been wasted on the Land Bill before this Bill was got to. The honourable member for Christchurch North was not here when the clause providing for the appointment of Commissioners, the crucial point in the Bill, was passed; and, as soon as that clause was passed, the honourable member for Kaiapoi and other leading members of the Opposition left the House—they left the Government to carry through the rest of the Bill, the purely administrative clauses of the measure.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—That is a direct misstatement.

Mr. FERGUS.—The honourable gentleman will have an opportunity of showing that by-and-by. The only members of the recognised Opposition who remained were the honourable member for Sydenham and the honourable member for Nelson, and these two honourable gentlemen proposed, and, I think, successfully, certain amendments, but merely in the administrative clauses. It appears to me that if the honourable member for Christchurch North and the honourable member for Kaiapoi were opposed to the measure they should have opposed it on its second reading, and that they should not at this its last stage bring up a useless division on the question, especially when we have another question waiting to come on for consideration, involving the whole subject of the public works of the colony. It seems to me rather late for the honourable member for Kumara to evolve from his inner consciousness supposed facts to damn the measure. Is he not yet convinced that the House is in favour of the measure? Has not the last division shown him that there is an overwhelming three-to-one majority of the House determined that the measure shall pass? The Government are quite prepared to stand by the measure as it is, and to see that the new system shall have a

fair and reasonable trial; and, if it should be found to be unable to meet the wants of the colony, then it will be within the power of the House to sweep away the Board entirely. I hope that there will not be much more discussion on this measure, seeing that it has now reached a stage when further opposition cannot be of any avail.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—I desire to protest in the most earnest manner against the organized obstruction that is coming from the Government benches. Sir, we have to-night a repetition of the old story. Whenever the Opposition come down here prepared to expedite business—determined to devote themselves to expressing, in the mildest and shortest of terms, their objections to a measure passing—we find Ministers getting up and making these irrelevant, interminable, and senseless speeches. Here, to-night, we find the members of the Opposition making a few brief businesslike protests against the passing of the third reading of the Bill, and the Minister of Defence and Justice scattering all hopes of getting business put through by making a speech calculated to raise all sorts of opposition. The Opposition can put up with a good deal, but if things go on in this way we shall have to make a stand, and insist on the business of the country being attended to.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—I desire to say a few more words upon this Bill, not with any desire to obstruct business or to delay the passage of the Bill, but because I feel a sense of disappointment at the fate of the amendment I moved a short time ago; the more so as I moved that amendment, amongst other reasons, to give certain honourable gentlemen who I knew were in favour of giving Vaile's system a trial a chance of giving effect to their views by their votes. But I have been disappointed with them. It is true that some of them went into the lobby with me; but others did not, and my amendment nearly lapsed for want of a seconder, and would have lapsed had it not been for the honourable member for Nelson. I find I am wrong: the honourable member for Waipa, I understand, seconded the amendment. Several of those honourable members to whom I refer expressed themselves as desirous of giving Mr. Vaile's scheme a trial, and I shall now proceed to read to the House reports of what they said during their election campaigns. I must begin with the Minister for Public Works, whom I was sorry to see going into the opposite lobby. He said at his meeting at Mount Eden, on the 25th July, "I am not absolutely in favour of Mr. Vaile's system, but would agree in giving it a trial, but not throughout the colony." Having in view that statement, I did expect assistance from the honourable gentleman.

Mr. KERR.—I rise to a point of order. The honourable gentleman is referring to a previous debate.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I understand that the honourable gentleman is referring to something that was said on the hustings before the meeting of Parliament, which, of course, is alto-



gether outside the rule that prohibits reference to previous debates in the House this session.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—That is so, Sir. I am quoting from election speeches of the honourable gentlemen to whom I am referring. Then, this is what the honourable member for Waikato said at a meeting at Hamilton on the 26th July:—

“As regards the management of our railways, he should say he had done good service to Mr. Vaile's system; that he had not only not actively opposed it, but had got all that was asked—namely, a Committee of inquiry; and, as a member of that Committee, he had in 1886 voted in favour of the scheme on every occasion.”

And further, in reply to a question, he said,—

“If it is proposed to risk a large sum in trying Vaile's scheme, I would not vote at all. I would not do so against the wish of so large a section of my supporters.”

Therefore I expected the honourable gentleman to get up and advocate the scheme. The honourable member for Waipa said at his meeting at Hamilton on the 24th August, “that he had already pledged himself to advocate and support Vaile's scheme.” Now, Sir, did he do so? He did not; he simply voted in favour of the amendment. The honourable member for Auckland Central was also a supporter of the scheme then. He said at the theatre, Auckland, on the 8th July,—

“What he had to say about Mr. Vaile's scheme was this: Mr. Vaile was a gentleman who had filled him with admiration for the determination and resolution with which he had followed out his plan. He had displayed great courage in making the proposals he had made in his scheme; and he felt that he could not think too highly of Mr. Vaile, who, in the face of insult, prejudice, and opposition, had followed on in the track of duty; and for his (Sir G. Grey's) own part he would stand by him (Mr. Vaile) as long as he followed it.”

Now, Sir, there are other honourable gentlemen to whom I could allude who also expressed themselves in favour of giving this system a trial; but I will not trespass longer on the time of the House. I have pointed out what those honourable gentlemen had to say at that time, and I certainly do, contrasting their action to-night with what they then said, feel somewhat disappointed at not receiving more active assistance from them. I feel it so keenly that I have voted against the third reading, and deem it my duty to oppose the Bill passing.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—The Minister of Justice is very fond of getting up and talking loudly, and scattering charges in all directions. I am not in the habit of noticing anything of that sort, unless references are made that directly apply to myself; and, in this case, he commenced his oration by charging my honourable friend the member for Christchurch North and myself with getting up and leaving the House when this Bill was on. He had the decency to withdraw, if not to apologize for, the remarks so far as they applied to the honourable

member for Christchurch North, but he did not withdraw them as regarded myself, and he refused to give way to allow me to explain. As a matter of fact it was exactly twenty minutes past four o'clock in the morning when I left this House, and I explained to the Minister in charge of the Bill that I should have been glad to stop to the end, only that I was so unwell. I think the remarks of the Minister of Justice were not particularly generous; and that, at any rate, he might have given way for a moment to enable me to explain. The only other thing that I wish to say is that he was mistaken in regard to the Victorian railways. I told him last night that he had misquoted the Victorian report, and he came over to me, and I showed him where he was wrong. He has misquoted it again this evening; and now I will read a paragraph for the information of the House. This is the last paragraph in the main report of the Commissioners before they go into details:—

“The earnings per train-mile amounted to 6s. 1½d. and the expenditure to 3s. 7d., or net 2s. 6½d.; as against earnings last year of 6s. 5d., and expenditure 3s. 7½d., net 2s. 9½d.”

Which gives a difference of 3½d. per train-mile—exactly the reverse of what the honourable gentleman said.

Mr. FERGUS.—No; exactly what I stated.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—No; the honourable member said they were still improving, whereas they were actually going to the bad to the extent of 3½d. per train-mile; and, seeing that the train-mileage amounts to some millions of miles, it comes to a large amount. I may as well read the rest of the paragraph:—

“The additional mileage run, and the reduction made in rates and fares, fully account for the difference in the net result.”

Mr. FERGUS.—Hear, hear.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—The honourable gentleman says “Hear, hear,” after committing a very gross blunder.

Mr. FERGUS.—I said distinctly—and the House will bear me out in this, and I have the Blue Books here too—in March, 1884, the return per train-mile was 2s. 5d.; in 1885, 2s. 7d.; in 1886, 2s. 9d.; and last year, 2s. 6d. I distinctly said that the reason why the train-mileage return showed a less amount was that there were 130 more miles of political railways open this year than there were before, and that the rates had been reduced to the tune of a quarter of a million sterling.

Mr. SEDDON.—As a matter of personal explanation, I should like to say that I made the statement that last year the railways went back; the Minister of Justice said I was wrong, that they were never better than they were last year, while the contrary is proved in that statement.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I have only a few words to say before the Bill is finally passed. I did not vote in the last division, because I had paired with an honourable gentleman who is away; but I am against the Bill, and I wish to say this: The comparison made between the railway systems of Victoria and New South

Wales and those of New Zealand are totally misleading, as both these countries have a common centre and one principal town that they converge to, while New Zealand has four principal towns and four centres equally important. The railways in New Zealand are quite different; and the Board that is to be appointed, if matters go so far as that, will find that it will have a great difficulty to contend with which they have not in Victoria. In Victoria they have one centre for the railways, all the lines converging in one direction. Here we have four centres—more than that, five or six—with each line carrying a different class of goods, and having altogether a different class of traffic. Now, much of the complaint that has been raised against the Government for not being able to make the railways pay has been owing to the Government not having a free hand, or the station-managers not having a free hand, to make arrangements for large quantities of haulage. Now, this Board will be in a position to go into these arrangements, so that they can agree to carry large quantities at low rates; and, as they will be expected to make the lines pay, they will, to get traffic, carry large quantities at low rates. Who will then suffer? It will be the people who have small quantities, who want their goods carried short distances, who will have to pay heavily to make up the difference required, owing to the large quantities being carried at lower rates. That, I believe, will be the working of the thing, and I have no doubt that there will be a greater howl from one end of the colony to the other than we have heard hitherto. If revenue has to be increased, there is no way in which it can be done except by taking advantage of those persons who have small lots to send, and I believe that in twelve months' time there will be more annoyance, and more cause for just complaint, than there has been previously, because when the Boards go into this matter they will do what I have said. There is no other way that they can do it but by putting on these extra charges for small quantities, and reducing the charges for large quantities. I certainly have been opposed to this Bill from the very first, because I am quite sure that any ordinary Minister for Public Works could manage these railways as well as any Board, and a good deal better, for he has the assistance of this House. And I would go further, and say that the recommendations from this House to the Minister of Railways have always been in the direction of improvement, and not in the direction of making them any worse. Well, the Board, of course, are not to be expected to have that advice, for it will not be competent for any member of the House to interfere with the Board for the term of their engagement. To my mind, we are simply making roads for people to get into employment at large salaries to carry on the work for a short time, and we shall be disgusted with it in two years, and very glad to get out of it again, and, perhaps, shall have to pay large sums as compensation at the end of that time to get quit of these

*Mr. Duncan*

appointments. I will not say more at this stage, because anything one might say now would be merely a waste of time. I have only to protest against the Bill, from first to last, as uncalled-for, unnecessary, and one that is never likely to work satisfactorily.

Mr. MILLS.—The last speaker let drop something about making the railways pay by competing with the steamers. That has brought me to my feet. I have simply to say that I have voted every time in favour of the formation of these Railway Boards, because I think they cannot fail to effect very great and important results. I think that the railways under the management of a non-political Board will produce better results, without raising the rates improperly, and without any material reduction in the wages of the working-men, as feared by the honourable member for Kumara. I feel sure there are many other directions than these in which the railways could be made to pay, if they were removed from political control. Now, I can say that, as far as my judgment goes, I should have no hesitation in giving the colony 4 per cent. on the money invested in railways and taking the management of them, and that that would leave a very considerable profit to myself. I think there is very little doubt that the railways, in charge of a non-political Board, would yield that result, and that they would do it, as I say, without any such increase in the rates as is feared by honourable members. There is one other thing I should like to say, and that is that I very much regret to hear from so many parts of the House this wholesale condemnation of the present General Manager of Railways—Mr. Maxwell. I agree with what has fallen from the late Minister for Public Works and the present Minister for Public Works, that in Mr. Maxwell the colony has a first-class and very efficient officer. As an administrative officer I think Mr. Maxwell has very few equals; but there is no doubt his manner is very much against him, and has alienated public sympathy from him. I should regret if I thought there was reason to fear that the Government would place Mr. Maxwell in the position of Chief Commissioner; but I certainly hope that they will see their way to place him as one of the three.

Major JACKSON.—The honourable member for Auckland North was pleased to honour me with his attention when he addressed the House re "Vaile's scheme;" and I gathered from his remarks that he considered he had not received that support from myself and other members he had hoped would be accorded to him; and in reference to which I may say that, knowing the honourable gentleman had given notice he would move to have a clause inserted in the Railway Bill providing for Mr. Vaile's scheme being given a fair trial on the Auckland railway sections, I wired to Mr. Vaile as follows: "Railway Bill committed. We propose inserting clause insuring your scheme having fair trial. Write promptly, enabling me defend scheme in Committee regarding transit goods. Think understand regarding passengers." In view of acting in con-

cert with the honourable gentleman I showed him a copy of this telegram, with a result quite contrary to my anticipations: not only did he deprecate any assistance from me, but he bitterly complained of my telegraphing to Mr. Vaile at all, saying I had "jumped his claim," and come between him and his constituents for the purpose of putting myself right with the electors of Waipa at his expense. And I gathered from him that he would rather I did not support a trial of Vaile's scheme at all, and that his principal object was to curry favour with his constituents, who had unmistakably expressed themselves as being anxious that Mr. Vaile's scheme should be adopted. I saw several of the Auckland members, and, in order to heal the honourable member's wounded feelings, I sent a second telegram to Mr. Vaile, which was shown to that gentleman and approved of before being despatched, and was as follows: "*Re my last telegram, reply promptly. Required information to enable me support Thompson, who had given notice of proposed clause, and takes charge in Committee.*" In due course Mr. Vaile's answer to the telegram arrived, which I gave to the honourable member for Auckland North for his information, who subsequently returned the same to me: that is, he placed it in my pigeon-hole, where I found it according to arrangement. Bearing in mind the old adage, "Too many cooks spoil the broth," I determined to leave the matter in the honourable member's hands, supporting him with my vote, and canvassing honourable members in favour of the scheme—with, I must confess, very little success; and, whatever may be the opinion of the country generally, certainly a majority of the members of this House are not in favour of the scheme being tried. I do not know that it is necessary I should take action in this House with the sole object of strengthening my position in Waipa, and, should the honourable member for Auckland North consider it desirable from his point of view to do so, I am sorry if I have in any way interfered with his plans; but I will say, without fear of contradiction, that I am as anxious as the honourable gentleman himself that Mr. Vaile's scheme should have a fair trial under the supervision of those who will honestly endeavour to make it a success. This is not the first time I have said so in this House; and, so long as this eventuates, I do not care who gets the credit, merely contenting myself with giving what assistance I can towards that end. Now with regard to the Railway Board. One of the principal objections is that under its management wages may be reduced. I do not think there is any weight in that argument. One honourable gentleman who spoke recently, the honourable member for Port Chalmers, is, I believe, the manager of the Union Shipping Company. Has he been able to reduce seamen's wages below the average wage paid those employed outside that company; or do honourable members think that if the management were in the future under Government control it would give better results than at present, or that its shares would be more sought after? Certainly

not; and when the railways are worked under a Board the employes will most probably follow in the steps of the Seamen's Union, no doubt receiving wages equal to, if not in excess of, those received by others undertaking duties of a like arduous nature. The price of labour will be subject to the law of supply and demand: if the supply is greater than the demand, prices must fall; on the contrary, if the demand is in excess of the supply, prices will be raised; and nothing can permanently interfere with that law. I did not intend to speak on this matter, and should not have done so but for the remarks of the honourable member for Auckland North, and will now merely again say, in conclusion, that I have as honestly endeavoured as he has to have Mr. Vaile's scheme afforded a fair trial.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—I did not intend to say anything upon this subject, and should not do so had it not been for the remarks of the honourable member for Port Chalmers. That honourable gentleman told us that if he had charge of the railways he could make them pay 4 per cent. Now, I have always been of opinion that we should get rid of our railways—sell them. We shall never do anything with them unless we do get rid of them, and I should be only too glad to assist the honourable member for Port Chalmers by giving him every facility to get these railways. If he will only pay 3½ per cent. for them, he will find me voting to give him them, if he has a syndicate to take them over. There is no doubt the railways, at the present time, are mismanaged; and, if the honourable member for Port Chalmers only travelled as I do, and have done for the last ten years, every day on the railways, he would see how they are mismanaged. I am not going into a number of matters with regard to their mismanagement, but will just give one or two examples. First of all I will take the question of return-tickets for what are called excursion-fares. If honourable members have been to Masterton they will know that between here and there there is a station called the Upper Hutt. During the holidays you can take an excursion-ticket to Masterton; but, if a person at the Upper Hutt wishes to get an excursion-ticket, he has to come fourteen miles to Wellington, and by so doing he will save 9s. on the transaction. He has to travel fourteen miles to Wellington, and then back again past his own door—twenty-eight miles in all—and then he will pay 9s. less than if he had taken the ticket at the Upper Hutt. If that is not curious management, then I know nothing about the management of any affairs whatever. Then, there is another matter which struck me as a curious thing. I remember a lady one day coming from the Hutt to Pitone. She was taking children with her, and wished to take a perambulator. She paid 6d. for her own ticket, and the perambulator was sent as luggage in the van, and was charged 1s. for. The same charges were made returning, so that, whereas the return fare for herself was only 1s., she had to pay 2s. for taking the perambulator. Then, I remember a person getting a ticket at the Hutt Station, wishing to

go to a concert at Kaiwara, which, as we all know, lies some distance nearer the Hutt than does the Wellington Station. What was the result? He could not get a return-ticket to Kaiwara, but had to take a return-ticket to Wellington, and, by doing that, he made the journey 1s. cheaper than he would have done by taking the ordinary fare to Kaiwara and back. That is another instance of the curious management on these railways. Then, we will go into a bigger matter than these. There was a woollen factory started at Pitone. It was required that the machinery should be taken from Wellington to that factory, and it was found that the drays could take the machinery more cheaply from Wellington than the railway could. The railway authorities, Mr. Maxwell being the gentleman in authority at that time, were asked what they would take it for, and the owners of the drays were also asked; and it was found that the machinery could be taken more quickly and cheaply by drays than by the railway, although the line of road runs alongside the railway from here to Pitone. I may point out another matter. A railway was wanted to the Hutt Race-course. A number of gentlemen belonging to the Wellington Racing Club wished the line to be constructed, but they were unable to have it constructed according to their own plans during several Administrations, and when they asked what the price for it would be they were told £6,500. That was what Mr. Maxwell said would be its cost. When the honourable member for Kaiapoi came into office we interviewed him, and he allowed us to construct the railway in our own way. Sir, in three days our engineers had taken all the levels and arranged everything for starting the line; and in six weeks that line was completed, and was passed by the Government engineers as being equal to any of their own lines; and the line only cost us £3,100, or equal to £9 the half-chain, and I say the half-chain because I wish to point out what the Government did. The Government allowed us to construct the whole line, except the connecting half-chain, and they insisted upon doing that half-chain themselves. They had to put in points, which cost £14, so I will not take them into the calculation, but we supplied the rails; they had merely the half-chain of formation to make. Mr. Maxwell was at the head of affairs, and it took three engineers six weeks to peg out that half-chain. They had pegs in all directions, so that I do not believe any one of them knew which were his own pegs. Then they took six weeks to construct that half-chain—that is to say, it took them as long to construct the half-chain as it took us to construct the whole. And, when the bill came in, would you believe it—I am speaking facts, and the records can be produced to verify them—would you believe it, that half-chain cost £130! The honourable member for Port Chalmers, probably, rarely travels in a train, and, possibly, has hardly ever seen Mr. Maxwell; but, after these facts, will he tell us that that gentleman is a good manager of railways? I say it is absolutely absurd to say that anything could be more

*Mr. Fitzherbert*

mismanaged than the railway-system of this colony. I could give a thousand such instances as I have given here—some of a trifling character and some of more grave importance—but I do not wish to weary the House. I merely rose to say that we shall be very glad if the honourable member for Port Chalmers will get a syndicate to take over the railways and give us twenty millions for them; and, whether the syndicate employs Mr. Maxwell or not, we shall be very glad to see him out of the public service.

Mr. MONK. — There is one more incident which I should like to add to the long list given by the honourable member for the Hutt. I had a letter from a gentleman the other day complaining of the railway management; and, as an illustration of the causes of dissatisfaction, he said that he could send two tons of bonedust from Auckland to Oxford for 11d. less than the freight charged upon one ton.

Mr. LEVESTAM. — I do not think the honourable member for the Hutt showed, by any incident he quoted, that the management of Mr. Maxwell had been bad. One instance he gave was that the Government had taken as long to lay down half a chain of line as the Hutt Park Company had taken to lay down miles; but the honourable gentleman did not say how many men were employed. However, what I wish to say is this: that on the second reading of the Bill I said I would not oppose it, as there was so large a majority in favour of it, but that when it went into Committee I would propose certain amendments. I remained here the whole of last night till past five o'clock this morning, and I did propose some amendments, but I could not get even a seconder for them. One amendment I wished to propose was that the power of lowering the wages of men employed on the railways should not rest with the Commissioners; but I could not get a seconder for that amendment. Therefore I moved for the recommitment of the Bill just now. The honourable member for Auckland North said that I seconded his motion for recommitment; but there he is entirely mistaken, for I certainly would not be a party to compelling the Commissioners to make a trial of Vaile's system in any way. That is all I wish to say. I tried to amend the Bill, and have offered no opposition to it, because I believe a majority of the people of the country, as well as of this House, wish the experiment to be tried, although I said to my constituents that I was not in favour of it.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES. — I wish to enter my protest against this Bill passing. Although a majority of the House appears to be in favour of it, I do not agree with the honourable member for Nelson that a majority of the people want it. It is simply a "fad" on the part of some honourable members that the management of the railways should be taken from the Government and given to a Board. That Board is spoken of as being a non-political Board; but it will be nothing of the sort; and, notwithstanding what the Minister of Justice has said about the Board in Victoria being non-political, I beg to say that a great

deal of pressure is brought to bear on the Commissioners there, and the honourable gentleman knows it. He has quoted that Board as being a great success. It is a fact that for the first year or so, on the principle of the old adage that "new brooms sweep clean," they did their work well; but we have it on record that more frequent and worse accidents have happened on the Victorian lines since they have been under the management of a Board than ever occurred before. That simply arises from the fact that the Commissioners were put on their mettle to work the railways on the lowest possible scale, and so they put inexperienced men and boys into positions which ought only to have been occupied by good men. We see the result in the frightful accident at Windsor not long ago, which cost that colony £100,000, besides many valuable lives. I contend that the management of the railways should be under one head, and that head a Minister; but he should attend to that work alone, and not have a variety of portfolios, as is the case here. Our Minister for Public Works is also Native Minister, and I do not know what else besides, and it is impossible for him to attend to all the work. I contend also that outside officers of the department are bound down by too much "red-tape," so that they cannot move hand or foot. If the Minister for Public Works had been more liberal, and had given the Stationmasters and other officers in outlying places discretionary powers, our railways would have paid far better. The Stationmaster at Nelson, or Picton, or elsewhere cannot move hand or foot without consulting the head office; and then, probably, Mr. Maxwell is away in Auckland, or Dunedin, or somewhere else, and a delay of a week or a fortnight takes place before a reply can be got; and that is the cause of a great deal of the dissatisfaction with our railways. I believe it would be by far the best thing for the colony if our railways were sold. We could then reduce a portion of our national debt, and devote a fourth of the money to opening up the country with good roads. That would be the best thing to do; but, failing that, it would be well to lease the railways, or let people farm them; and then I venture to say that, instead of paying something under 2 per cent., they would pay 3 or 3½ per cent. The honourable member for Port Chalmers says that if we have a Railway Board it will make the railways pay better. I am not surprised at the argument of the honourable gentleman, for we all know that self-preservation is the first law of nature, and the honourable gentleman knows that these Commissioners will be in such a position that they will have to increase the rates from one place to another, and that will have the effect of increasing the traffic by the local steamers. I have very little more to say, except that there is such a difference between the circumstances of Victoria and of this colony that it is not right to draw a comparison between them. Here we have two islands altogether differently situated in regard to the management of their railways, and the result

of this Bill will only be to increase centralism. The Chief Commissioner will have to be at Wellington, and the others will be flying all over the country, and will have to come here to consult their chief, so that the whole thing will really be managed from Wellington. If there is to be a Board at all there should be one for each Island. I venture to say that before this measure has been in operation twelve months the voice of the country will be altogether against it, and there will be appeals to do away with the Commissioners, and they will have to get some thousands for loss of office. I protest against this Bill, and will give it my strongest opposition.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I certainly think it is time this discursive discussing was dropped. I cannot agree with the last speaker, and am astonished at his arguing that the railways should be sold. What are the people in England endeavouring to do now? They are striving to induce the Government to buy the railways there, and there is legislation being brought forward in the House of Commons to regulate the tariff on the private railways. But I would ask honourable members to come to a vote on the question—if not for their own sakes, then for the sake of the little cherubs who are sitting up aloft, and who do not want to stay here till two, three, four, or five o'clock in the morning listening to discussions from which nothing practical can result. If we do not go to the vote at once, some of the most important Bills which the Government have brought forward this session will have to be carried with only some twenty honourable gentlemen in the House; and those who are now taking up the time in talking will not be here, but will have gone home to their beds.

Mr. ROSS.—I think the thanks of this House and of the country are due to the Government for making what promises to be a successful attempt to settle this difficult question. For the last three years the subject has been before the House and the country. In the Speech from the Throne in 1884 the House was strongly advised to make an alteration in the management of the railways. The same thing occurred in 1885, and frequently, in different ways, the question has been pressed on the notice of the country. I have no fear, such as has been expressed by some honourable members, that the constitution of this Board will have the effect of reducing the wages of working-men on the railways below the current rates. I think the working-men will reap a great advantage from the constitution of this Board. At the present time men working on the railways are liable to be moved about from place to place through political pressure being brought to bear. That will be removed, and the men will be placed in a better position. We are told that some of the best men have been taken away from the Hillside workshops and sent to other workshops in the colony frequently, without considering the circumstances in which those men are placed; and without considering in any way how they would be

affected by the removal. They have, I have been informed, in some instances, been ordered to be removed to the Addington workshops, and, on their refusal to go, have been dismissed, in order to make room for persons from other parts of the colony. Employees who have been in the service for years, and against whom no charge of misconduct has ever been preferred, when vacancies have occurred which they were competent to fill, and to which they ought in fairness to have been promoted, have had to endure the mortification of seeing strangers appointed to those positions, their own claims being overlooked or ignored. I think that is a grievance which will be removed by the constitution of this Board. It is a tentative measure; and if it does not succeed, and if it is found necessary to recede from the position we have taken up, it will be easy to do so. I think we have arrived at a condition of affairs when the experiment should be made.

Bill passed.

#### PROPERTY-TAX BILL.

On the question, That the House do presently consider a resolution of the Committee of Ways and Means, recommending that leave be given to introduce the Property-tax Bill,

Mr. TURNBULL said,—I should like to ask the Premier if he intends to take the second reading of this Bill to-night. It is a very important question, and I think the House should know his intention in reference to it. A great many honourable members think that the property-tax should be of a progressive nature; and it would be rather unfair to them that a Bill like this should be brought down without notice, and proceed to its second reading without their having an opportunity of discussing it. I therefore beg most respectfully to ask the Premier to let the second reading of the Bill be postponed until to-morrow. It involves a very serious question, and one that will, or, at any rate, ought to, occupy the time and attention of this House for a considerable period, because the time has come now when we cannot help noticing the inequalities which exist between the property-tax paid by different classes. We cannot avoid noticing the fact that a small number of men hold a large amount of property, and that they do not pay adequately towards the expenses of the country at the present rate of taxation. I am sorry that our taxation should not at once take the shape of a land-tax instead of a property-tax; but, if we are to have a property-tax, we can regulate the exemptions to such an extent as to make it really a land-tax. I should be very sorry to see a tax imposed on machinery or anything used for creating wealth; but there is a large amount of land and property held by a few persons who do not bear their fair share of the burdens which are put on the people. I venture to say that if we gave proper attention to Bills of this kind there would be no necessity for a Legislative Council. We passed a Bill last night dealing with a most important matter. That Bill was forced through the House as others have been, and the consequence is that we hear

people say, "Look at the Legislative Council. What should we do without it?" If we gave proper time to consider our legislation in this House we could do away with the Legislative Council altogether. I ask that proper consideration may be given to this question: it is a most important matter; it is a matter in which a great many members are deeply interested; it is a question with which the welfare of the country and the progress of the country are inseparably bound up, because if we had a progressive property-tax I am sure that would conduce very largely to the prosperity of the country. A Bill of this nature is of so much importance that I would respectfully ask the Premier not to insist on its being read a second time until to-morrow.

Major ATKINSON.—The honourable gentleman is mistaken as to the nature of the Bill. It is not a Bill in connection with which we can consider the question of the incidence of taxation, nor is it possible, at this stage of the session, to open up a question of that character. It is quite certain that the House has determined that no alteration in the incidence of taxation shall take place this session; and, if it were not so decided, it is not upon such a Bill as this that the question could be discussed. It is a Bill merely to levy a tax upon the basis of the present Assessment Act. The honourable gentleman's remarks refer entirely to the Assessment Act, which is not before the House now. There is hardly a member of the House not prepared to grant to the Crown 1d. in the pound property-tax; and that is the only question raised by this Bill. I hope the honourable gentleman will see fit to withdraw his objections to the Bill proceeding.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Am I to understand that if one chooses to raise the question of whether there should be a difference in the mode of taxing—that is to say, that incomes of such-and-such an amount should be taxed, and so much above that amount so much—this is not the proper Bill to consider it upon?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; it is the Assessment Bill which provides for that.

Sir J. VOGEL.—This Bill provides for the amount which is to be raised, and, if it were desired to make a change, this would be the Bill by which to effect it.

Major ATKINSON.—No; that ought to be done in the Assessment Bill.

Sir J. VOGEL.—All I say is this: that this is a question to which I have given a great amount of consideration; and when we talk of absentees we must remember that there are two different classes of absentees. There are persons who have made fortunes in the colony and who are residing out of the colony, and some gentlemen who have made fortunes elsewhere and have invested their money in this colony. I do not think the honourable member for Timaru has considered the question as between those two classes. It must be remembered that ever since we commenced colonising the country we have, like other colonies, asked people in England not only to supply us with

Mr. Ross

population, but also with capital. Now, it is incidental to the supply of capital by way of mortgage that property mortgaged should come into the hands of persons who lend money. No person who sent out money to be lent in the colony on mortgage would be unaware of the fact that there is a possibility of his having to purchase the property or become the owner of it; and therefore, if you put taxation on absentees generally, you put taxation on the introduction of capital by persons who would have no other idea than to send out capital simply to be advanced on mortgage, and who have no intention of coming to reside here; and these persons are doing good work by supplying capital, so far as the colony is concerned. Any one who knows anything of the history of the colony knows that we have always had held up before us the inexpediency of discouraging the introduction of capital; and if the Government can discover any means of distinguishing between the two classes I have referred to—of putting taxation upon those persons who have made their money in the colony and are spending it at Home, and not taxing those persons who have become owners of property in the colony not by their own will, but by force of circumstances, arising out of their having invested money in the colony—they will have solved a very difficult problem. I do not say that it is undesirable that we should tax those persons who, having made their money in the colony, are living out of the colony; but I think we should not be unmindful of the obligations which are owing to that different class of investors to whom I have referred.

Mr. MOSS.—I suppose that we shall have to swallow this Bill without due consideration; but I will take the opportunity of saying that this property-tax, which was brought to us as an old American system, is now entirely obsolete in America. It was never more than a local tax there, it was never used by the Federal Government as a system of taxation, and now it has been abandoned in every State except three or four. If this Bill had been brought down at a time when we could have fairly considered it we might have shown very good reasons for pursuing the same course here—of abandoning a tax calculated to divide classes, which is very oppressive upon the people, and is a very serious impediment to the progress of the country. We have not that opportunity, but I do not wish it to go forth that the House at all unanimously acquiesces in the levying of this tax as a matter of course.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—With regard to the question of the property-tax, I might point out that this system of raising and lowering the tax year by year is a very disturbing element in connection with the investment of capital in this colony. It is not like the income-tax at Home, which we know varies frequently, because the incidence is different. I know, as a matter of fact, that there is nothing which deters more the introduction of capital into this colony than the uncertainty which prevails in reference to the amount of the yearly tax. It is quite clear

that no one can know, from time to time, what the taxation is going to be, and therefore borrowers and lenders cannot make their arrangements as they would like to make them; and I feel convinced that if we levied a property-tax at a certain rate, and fixed it for three or five years, great good would be done. I rise to direct attention to that subject, because I know that the present system has operated injuriously to the colony, and I venture to say that it will continue to do so.

Motion agreed to.

Bill introduced, and read a first time.

#### LOAN BILL.

This Bill was introduced and read a first time.

Major ATKINSON, in moving the second reading, said,—I am sorry there is not a larger House, especially on the Opposition side, since members of the Opposition have expressed themselves as exceedingly anxious to know the views of the Government on this subject; but there is no doubt that the Loan Bill, speaking broadly, meets with the entire approval of the Opposition, or they would be here to learn the reasons which I shall give, and give very shortly, for introducing this measure. I may say that the Bill has been introduced by the Government with very great regret. I am not letting the House unduly into secrets when I say that when I took office I was thoroughly determined, in my own mind, that, if possible, no loan should be proposed at all; but, after I had mastered the position, it seemed to me that a loan was absolutely necessary in the interests of the country. I myself was first convinced, and it took some time to convince the Government of the fact; and, apparently, the House is not yet convinced. I am not at all sorry to see this, because, in my opinion, it is a most excellent sign that the House will not consent to further borrowing without being thoroughly convinced of the necessity for it. I wish the House to understand that that was the attitude, first, of myself as Treasurer, and, secondly, of the Government, when they came to consider the question. We had to look at the responsibilities and liabilities absolutely incurred by the late Government; and, even putting them at a very moderate rate, before we finally came to a conclusion as to what public works should be carried on, we unanimously arrived at the conclusion that there was no possibility of avoiding the loan which we now propose. Now, Sir, I want the House to consider this question, if possible, from the point of view of the country, and not from the point of view of party. I want honourable members to look at it from the broad point of view of the interests of the country. The Government have very carefully considered the proposals which they have submitted to the House; and, as far as they can see, not only will very considerable inconvenience occur if any of the proposals which they have submitted are not carried out, but something more than inconvenience will be the consequence—there will be considerable loss to the

country. The position of the country, in the opinion of the Government, is such as to require very careful consideration on the part of every man in this House, as to how far we can properly go in reducing expenditure under loan. The Government are therefore very anxious that the House should approach this subject, as I have said, not in a spirit of party but in a spirit of doing the best for the country, irrespective of party altogether. Therefore the position which the Government will take up, if the House approaches the subject in the spirit I have named—and I have no doubt it will—is this: They have carefully considered all the proposals they have submitted. It is possible that they may have submitted some proposals which the House in its wisdom may consider unnecessary—the House may say, looking at the position of everything, that it is better to stop and not go on with further borrowing in respect to them. When the House goes into Committee on the public-works estimates the Government is going to ask it to consider every item carefully, and to say whether, in the interest of the country, it will be right to stop this or that particular work and refuse further expenditure on it; and if, after fair discussion in Committee, without party spirit, the House determines that such and such works are not necessary, then the Government will accept the verdict of the Committee, and will be prepared to reduce the Loan Bill according to the amount that may be struck off in Committee. Now, Sir, that may be said to be a weakness on the part of the Government; but I think, after the large majority the Government have had on all their important measures, they are strong enough to come to this House and ask it to consider every one of these items irrespective of party, and only look at them from the point of view of the necessity of the position. We shall advance reasons why we have placed these particular items on the estimates, and shall then ask the Committee to consider dispassionately whether they are necessary or not; and, when the Committee has completed its labours, if any substantial reduction is made we shall be prepared to reduce the Loan Bill accordingly. I do not know whether I need say more on this subject. I had thought of whether it would be right to go into the whole question of how we borrow from one fund for the benefit of another; but, on further consideration, I do not think, at this stage, it is desirable to do so. It might open questions that would be irritating to honourable members. I may say that I myself am very much displeased with the power we have of borrowing from one fund and giving to another; but, after looking at the position of the various loans and the position of the General Account, it does not seem to me possible this session to make such an alteration as I should like to see. The engagements are so large, and the responsibilities so great, that I do not see how I could propose, as I should like to do, an immediate stop of this plan of using one loan for another, nominally under the power we possess of investing the surplus funds of a particular loan.

*Major Atkinson*

But, Sir, the responsibilities of the Government are very great. We have now enormous sums of money to provide against particular dates. I may say that in the month of April next we have to provide £1,800,000 on the London market. Now, when honourable gentlemen recognise that that has to be provided at the beginning of the year, when we have got no revenue in at all, honourable gentlemen will see the great difficulty of the position; but, after careful consideration, I do not see that we could gain much by opening up this question during the present session. But, in my opinion, this system of borrowing from one account in aid of another should be put a stop to at the earliest possible date. I am quite certain it is a vicious system, and the chief part of the Treasurer's time is taken up with contriving how to get hold of sufficient money to meet his engagements. That should be put a stop to. I find our liabilities are so great that it is absolutely impossible to deal with it this session, and therefore I do not propose to go further into the question at this time. But I must tell the House this: that it is absolutely necessary, as far as I can see, not to suddenly stop our public-works expenditure. I want to impress upon the House that the Government feel as strongly as it is possible for any member of the House to feel a repugnance to further borrowing. It is only from the necessity of the position to wind up the system we have got into at the earliest possible date that we propose this loan. I hope no panic will seize us, and that no heroic measure will be resorted to. It is proposed by some honourable members that we should immediately stop borrowing. That is what I call an heroic measure. If honourable members will look at the estimates they will see that, although there is considerable expenditure next year, it will consist almost entirely of liabilities.

Mr. SEDDON.—There is £43,000 for Canterbury and Otago over liabilities.

Major ATKINSON.—There is a very large amount for the West Coast which might be cut off if it were not for "engagements;" therefore we are obliged to make this provision. I do not want to raise a question of this sort, and if the honourable member for Kumara can show that there is £43,000 for any part of the colony, I do not care where, that we can reasonably cut off, I hope he will make the proposal in Committee, and he will receive the assistance of the Government in the matter. But, Sir, speaking with regard to this heroic policy, there are some members who say, "Put your foot down and take the consequences." We must look at it as business-men charged with the government of the country, and we consider that we are not justified in making a sudden stoppage of this very large expenditure which has been running on for many years; but we are now bound immediately to put our foot down and say we will bring it to a conclusion at the earliest possible date; and I think, if honourable gentlemen will carefully study the estimates, they will see that the Government proposals are such as to bring that system to a



conclusion at the earliest possible date without creating something like a panic in the country. That the retrenchments proposed are very serious and effective nobody who studies our estimates can doubt. I do not doubt that the Government will receive the assistance of the Committee; and, if the Committee see their way to strike off any large works, and say they are not to proceed, but are to come to an end, the Government will willingly and carefully consider the matter; and if, after careful consideration, the Government think it right to do so, they will be prepared to reduce the loan to that amount: not in the way the honourable gentleman opposite appeared to twit us—namely, that we should allow the Committee to deal with us as it liked. We give a million as what we think a reasonable amount to carry on the service of the country; but, if the House determines to say that particular works shall be cut off, looking at the position of the country, we are not prepared to say that the Government, as a Government, will not undertake the responsibility of continuing administration when these sums are cut off. I hope the Committee will give the proposals of the Government fair and reasonable consideration; and if they are accepted, either in the whole or in a modified form, if they will effect that which we desire, we shall act in accordance with the wishes of the Committee, and so bring to an end this miserable system of applying loan-money to all sorts of works. We have got to put a stop to it. I hope the Committee will so vote that our proposals will have the effect of bringing to an end, and at the earliest possible date, this wretched system into which we have fallen.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Before moving the adjournment of the debate, it would be right to ask the honourable gentleman two questions, if he will allow me to do so. First, the honourable gentleman has to find £1,300,000 in April. I think he is making a mistake. That is the whole year's interest. Perhaps the honourable gentleman will tell me if he was referring to something more than the interest.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; to the £600,000 we have to repay the Bank of New Zealand—what I have got to find in cash.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The next point I should like to ask about is this: The Public Works Statement contains proposals for expenditure extending over three years and a half. The honourable gentleman said we should have an opportunity in Committee of considering each item. That will not test the honourable gentleman's proposals over three years and a half; or does he mean that it should test the proposals for this year only?

Major ATKINSON.—I think it will test it for the whole period, because, if the Committee determines that a work is not to go on, that work is struck out, and we have not to provide for it out of the loan. Supposing the Otago Central Railway is not to go on, they strike out the vote for this year, and we should not have to make provision for it in the loan. When the Loan Bill came down that would be struck out.

Debate adjourned.

#### PROPERTY-TAX BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—I move the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. SMITH.—I beg to move, as an amendment, That in the opinion of this House, in lieu of the proposed property-tax, there should be levied a land-tax, exempting all improvements, and an income-tax with a fair exemption. I would just like to say that I have no intention of taking the House by surprise; but until the half-hour adjournment I was quite unaware that this Bill was coming on to-night. It was not on the Order Paper, and I was not in the House at the time the Premier gave notice of it. During the last election this question of a land- and income-tax was brought up, and no end of candidates—both returned and defeated—pledged themselves to support a land- and income-tax. Two Ministers of the Crown—I read from their speeches—said they would support a land- and income-tax as against a property-tax, and I have now moved this resolution to give members an opportunity to vote on this question. Now, it may be said that this is a wrong time to bring this on—that it is too late in the session; but until the Property-tax Bill was proposed there was no opportunity of moving this resolution. I intended, in moving it, that it should take the place of the property-tax. It will be said, no doubt, that this question should stand over until next session; but, if it does, so far as this Parliament is concerned there will be no further opportunity of bringing this amendment forward, for this reason: We shall now, by passing the Property-tax Bill, affirm the decision of the new Parliament in favour of the property-tax, and, of course, that would remain and be passed from year to year until the end of the present Parliament; and again we shall have the same thing take place—that members pledge themselves to a land- and income-tax, but still vote for the property-tax, simply because they have no opportunity of voting in the direction they wish. Now, the question which this Parliament has to consider is, Which is the best, a property-tax or a land- and income-tax? Of course there are various reasons for and against each. The reason I object to the property-tax is that it is a tax that touches the improvements. Every person who has, by his labour, or by spending money on his land or property, improved that property, has to pay extra taxation. It is a tax on industry. If there is any tax that has driven people out of the colony it is the property-tax; for this reason: that it taxes a thing people pay money for—improvements; and the consequence, quite naturally, is that it drives money out of the country; whereas if there were a land-tax, exempting all improvements, people could borrow money for improvements, and improvements would not be taxed at all. This is one great reason in favour of a land- and income-tax as against a property-tax. Another reason is this: that an absentee landlord, who has perhaps a large landed estate, under the property-tax does not pay the amount of taxation he would pay

if there were a land-tax—in this way: that the real absentee landlord improves his property to but a small extent. He very naturally wishes to take all he can out of the property, and therefore does not pay the amount he should, for by making very little improvements he escapes taxation. Not living in the colony, he escapes Customs duties, and if he does make improvements he escapes the property-tax very lightly; whereas if there were a land-tax he would pay equally, whether he improved or not. The improving and unimproving settler would pay alike; whereas they do not pay alike now, because the improving settler pays most and the non-improving settler pays very little indeed. I think for that reason every honourable member must feel that a land-tax, exempting improvements, is far preferable to the property-tax, which really taxes improvements, drives money out of the colony, and allows people who do not improve their estates to escape a great deal of the taxation of the colony which they should pay. That is the reason why I am in favour of a land-tax as against a property-tax. Then it may be said that a land-tax allows to escape a large number of persons who derive large yearly incomes from professions and otherwise. Well, that is the reason why I propose that they should be reached by an income-tax, and the revenue derived from that class will be then much larger than is got from them now by the property-tax. It is supposed generally that the great bulk of the property-tax is paid upon land; but it is not so. The great bulk comes from the tax on buildings, which are perishable things, and improvements, and more especially on goods imported into the colony, and therefore the great bulk of the people have to pay the greatest part of the property-tax. It may be said that the £500 exemption allows a large number of people to escape the tax. That is right as far as property they absolutely own is concerned; but they have to pay property-tax on nearly everything they buy. Sir, this is a very important question, and, without going further into it now, I hope the Premier will allow it to be debated, and enable honourable members to do so by letting the debate be adjourned till to-morrow.

Major ATKINSON.—I hope the honourable gentleman will see his way to withdraw his amendment. It would be utterly impossible to bring a land- and income-tax into operation in less than five or six months: that is to say, we should lose the £300,000 to be levied as property-tax this year. Now, we are all agreed that the property-owners are not to escape this year, and we are also agreed that we must get money to meet our engagements. It is my business to tell the House that if we go in for this change in the incidence of taxation we shall be in great monetary difficulties; and it is my duty to tell the House that at this stage of the session we cannot go into the question of the incidence of taxation. I ask the honourable gentleman, therefore, as a practical man, to withdraw his proposal, and let us deal with it next session. I am prepared to deal with it, and I venture to think there are arguments to

*Mr. Smith*

be adduced on the other side which will not leave the honourable gentleman a leg to stand on. The matter has been argued out before, and no doubt it will be again; but I would point out that, in the face of the experience that we have had of the fall in the value of land all over the world, the honourable gentleman is proposing to put a special tax on land in this colony, while we have to compete with every other country in the world in which there is no special tax on land. A number of the honourable gentleman's theoretical arguments are quite beside the mark, when we remember that the proposal is that we should put our land, with a special tax on it, into competition with land all over the rest of the world that has no such tax on it. It is quite impossible that we can deal with the question at this stage of the session, or even pretend to approach it; and I therefore ask the House not to attempt to go into it. I think every one must admit that we must obtain revenue, and it is my duty to tell the House that we shall be in most serious difficulties if we cannot collect the property-tax within a short time. It is absolutely impossible to bring down a Bill enacting that there shall be a land- and income-tax and to provide the necessary machinery for the collection of it this session, and I therefore again ask the honourable gentleman not to argue this question this session when we have more important questions to argue. If the honourable gentleman goes on to press the question our only choice will be to either sit very late in the morning to get the Government Bills through or we must remain here till after Christmas. I venture to think that the common-sense of the House will say it is absolutely impossible at this stage of the session, and in the present financial condition of the country, to pretend to change the incidence of taxation now. I do not object to vote on the honourable gentleman's amendment if he likes to press it, but it will be putting a number of members in an unfair position, as many members who would prefer that there should be a land- and income-tax will be obliged to vote against the amendment, knowing it is utterly impracticable.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I am afraid the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government has pointed out a practical difficulty in the way of taking a division on the amendment. I think I am correct in saying that a land-tax could not be levied without another valuation being made—the existing valuation was not made in such a manner that a land-tax with improvement exemptions could be levied on it. Now, the valuation of the colony is not a trifling matter, as the last cost some £15,000. I was rather surprised to see by a statement in the newspapers that the honourable member at the head of the Government has given a sort of half-promise that another valuation should be made next year.

Major ATKINSON.—It has got to be made under the Property Assessment Act.

Sir J. VOGEL.—In my opinion it is a very costly business. I think the honourable member for Woodville might be satisfied with an

assurance, if the Premier would give it, that, before a new valuation is made, the House shall have an opportunity of discussing this question; because, if an alteration should be decided upon, it would be very desirable to make it before the new valuation is commenced. If the Premier would give an assurance of that kind I think it would be well not to press the present amendment. Any honourable member moving such an amendment as this must look to the possibility of its being carried, and the carrying of this would simply prevent the property-tax from being levied this year at all, and it would be impossible to levy a land-tax in the present year. I therefore think the question is one that relates rather to the future. Sir, there is a great deal to be said as regards the amount required to be levied. Now, we are coming to a property-tax of a penny in the pound; and the only difference between the proposal of the present Government and the proposal of the late Government is this: that, whereas the present Government propose that the increased revenue to be derived from the property-tax shall come from the whole body of the property-tax-payers, we proposed that only some six thousand of them should pay the increase, the other twenty-one thousand escaping. We proposed that the people who own property of not more than £2,500 should continue to pay thirteen-sixteenths of a penny, and should have the benefit of the £500 exemption; but we proposed that the exemption should be abolished as regards the six thousand taxpayers whose property is over £2,500 in value. As compared with the proposals of the late Government, therefore, the present Government are largely favouring six thousand of the richest persons in the colony, and the burden which the late Ministry proposed to put on them the present Ministry propose to make twenty-one thousand of the poorer taxpayers bear. I can see no reason for this at all. There is no reason why people who pay the tax on large properties should have this £500 exemption; and it is nothing but the power which the class who would have to pay this can exercise which has enabled them to upset the proposals of the late Government and to substitute for them those of the present Government. There is not a shadow of doubt in my mind that it was that, and that alone, which upset the last Government. We were told over and over again that it was not the tariff or anything else which the Government proposed that was really objectionable, but that if we gave way on our property-tax proposals all the rest could be carried. But we would not do so, and the result was seen in the late elections, and is seen in the legislation during the present session, for no honourable gentleman on either side of the House can examine the policy which we are commencing this session without seeing very clearly that it is the aim of the Government to take away power from the people generally and place it in the hands of what are known as the privileged classes. Whether we look at their policy as regards elections, the attempt they are making

to upset the liberal electoral laws now in force, their land policy, their Native-land policy—whether you look at it in almost any of the Bills brought down, it is evident that they are prepared to undo the work of many years past in favour of a small and privileged class. And this is an example of it to-night on this question of the property-tax, which we find is so settled as to realise the hopes of those who said to the last Government that if they gave way on that subject all their other proposals could be carried. This Government gives way on that question, and the twenty-one thousand are the sufferers by that yielding, and the six thousand richer ones are the gainers. I now come to another point. It is a question, to my mind, whether it would not be desirable to fix the amount of the tax definitely for a number of years rather than make a change each year, or at least let it be liable to change each year. There is always an uncertainty hanging over people, whether they are amenable to the tax or not, as to what its amount will be when next levied, and that uncertainty has an especially important effect with regard to the taxation upon mortgages. It is notorious that mortgagees, in order to protect themselves from the tax and against a possible increase of it, add  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. to the rate of interest charged, and that  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. represents 1½d. in the pound without the £500 exemption. This has gone on during the last few years, and it will continue to go on, and the unfortunate persons borrowing money have to pay a sort of insurance fund of 1½d., without any allowance for exemption, in order to protect the mortgagees from payment and possible increases of the tax. I could never understand—although I suppose there must be some reason for it—why there is a prohibition in the Act against mortgagees and mortgagers contracting between themselves as to who should pay the tax. In my opinion, as far as the property-tax relates to money lent on mortgage at all events, it would be well to fix the amount of the tax definitely for a period of years, or fix it at a rate which should not be altered except on from three to five years' notice of the proposed alteration. By this means the mortgagers would be protected from the excessive payments they have to make now. The question of an income-tax to supplement a property-tax is one which is well worthy of consideration. There is a class of persons who do escape taxation under the present system—persons who have large salaries which they do not invest in property, and who merely pay taxation through the Customs. That is a question which, in my opinion, is well worthy of consideration. I am bound to say, however, that I see there would be great difficulty in levying a general income-tax in substitution for the present tax upon personality, because it is difficult to know what should be considered income and what money that ought to be placed to the credit of capital. There are a number of important points on which I should have liked to touch, but it is too late in the session now to do so; but I think it

would be well to simply ask the attention of the Government to the whole subject. There is no doubt that the property-tax affects not only the operations of landowners, but operations of all kinds; and I must point out, what I have mentioned earlier in the session, that we are now taking a higher rate of property-tax without increasing at the same time the tariff; yet the question will arise next session, when proposals are made to fortify the tariff, Should there not be simultaneously made an increase in the amount of the property-tax? In fact, I doubt if the Government will be bold enough to propose an increase in the Customs tariff without at the same time increasing the direct taxation. I think it would have been much fairer if the two increases had been made simultaneously, and that the large increase now being made in the property-tax—an increase of nearly 25 per cent.—should not have been made without an increase in the indirect taxation, which has fallen so much on account of causes which should lead to an increase, causes which are patent to honourable members, such as the improved habits of the people, and the fall in the price of goods amenable to *ad valorem* duties. That, I think, is the cardinal mistake the Government is making in not having increased the Customs duties simultaneously with the increase in the direct taxation; for if they touch the tariff next year, and, in consequence, increase the Customs duties, they will certainly be asked to make a further increase in the property-tax. The two systems of taxation go side by side; and if it be the case, as we have to consider is the case on account of the action adopted by the Government, that the direct taxation is insufficient as compared with the indirect taxation, it follows as a logical sequence that next year, if there is an increase in the indirect taxation, there must be further increase in the direct taxation. I am of opinion that a penny property-tax represents a very large tax upon income, even if we suppose that the whole of the property exposed to taxation was of a nature to return income. If you capitalise at 6 per cent., say, £100, to put the thing in its simplest form, that represents £6 per annum income, and 1d. in the pound represents 8s. 4d. Therefore, in order to get, on a 6-per-cent. basis, an equivalent in income-tax you would have to make the tax something between 1s. 4d. and 1s. 5d. in the pound on income; and that presupposes that the whole of the capital is employed and yielding taxable revenue; but, as a matter of fact, everything is taken, a man's furniture, pictures, books, piano, almost his clothes, so that it cannot be supposed that the whole of the property yields income or revenue. I think it will be seen from these figures that the direct taxation, as now proposed, is larger in proportion to the indirect taxation than it ought to be.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I hold strong views on the matter brought forward by the honourable member for Woodville. But I must certainly say, before I proceed any further, that I cannot understand the logic of the last speaker, the

honourable member for Christchurch North. It seems to me that his argument only goes in this direction: that we are overtaxing those who can afford to pay taxes, and that the Customs tariff ought to be raised to equalise the property-tax. Well, Sir, while I admit that the tariff should be adjusted, I want to see it adjusted in the direction of giving work to the people. That is my view. Besides, independently of that, I think that wealthy people should pay more, or should pay equivalent to those who have less wealth. I think that is a fair way to put it. I mean to say this: I believe in graduated taxation, whether it is a land-tax or a property-tax. So far as a land-tax is concerned, the question was put to me at last election, and I said, as honourable members must know, that a land-tax at the present time is an impracticable thing to get as this Parliament is constituted at present.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why?

Mr. TAYLOR.—When it comes to voting directly, you will see why. My contention is this: that we should take the best next thing to a land-tax—get a graduated tax, so as to make those gentlemen who own two hundred thousand or three hundred thousand pounds' worth of property pay in proportion to their means. I do not see why a man of wealth, such as those persons I refer to, should only have to pay 3d. or 1d. in the pound, the same as a man who toils all his days to keep himself out of the workhouse.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No workhouses here.

Mr. TAYLOR.—If you have not got them now, you soon will have them. There are some in some parts of the colony. I trust that honourable members who bring forward measures of this kind will deal with that question from a practical point of view. I admit that the honourable member for Woodville is perfectly right in his views on this matter; but, looking at the constitution of the last Parliament and of this Parliament, he must know that this question is just now entirely outside the practical business of this Parliament, and that we have no opportunity of dealing with this question at the present time. So far as a land-tax is concerned, unless it is graduated, what does it mean? Why, if the property were valued fairly now, if the land were fairly valued, there is a land-tax at present derived from the land. But if you graduated the tax you would get a larger amount of income from those who can afford to pay it. I am not going to be a party in this House to advocate a scheme for what I might call the purpose of gaining popularity. If I thought I could get a land-tax I should be in favour of it, but I know that is impossible just now, and what I want is that the direct taxation, whether it be in the shape of a land-tax or a property-tax, should be graduated.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What is that?

Mr. TAYLOR.—There is a dictionary in the library. It shows very little for the intelligence of those who sit here that they should ask me the meaning of a word of that character. I never like to be rude,—that is well known; but

Sir J. Vogel

I must protest against ignorance of that character. I suppose we shall have the honourable member for Dunedin Central or the honourable member for Dunedin South getting up and objecting to either a land-tax, or a property-tax, or any other tax of a progressive character. I have heard the honourable gentleman say that we should pay £2,500 per annum to one man, when that sum would keep three hundred of his constituents if properly distributed. Fancy an honourable gentleman representing a democratic constituency holding these views and objecting to my views!

Mr. FISH.—Does the honourable gentleman refer to the honourable member for Dunedin South or to the honourable member for Dunedin Central?

Mr. TAYLOR.—The honourable member for Dunedin South. I have no doubt the honourable gentleman is fully primed to deal with this question. I simply say that I am in favour of a graduated tax, either in the shape of a property-tax or a land-tax, and I am in favour of taxing those who can afford to pay taxation. I am astonished at some honourable gentlemen. I must simply put it down to their want of, well—

An Hon. MEMBER.—Ignorance.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Just so. I only want to say this: that I trust the Government will carry their Bill without any further trouble. I say this is a waste of time to-night. You cannot deal with the land-tax. You know the difficulty, and if you like to take the penny at once we can settle it. You may preach and you may pray, and I do not object to that; but when you are before the people it is your duty to deal honestly with them. That is the way I do, and that is the reason I am here. I am not afraid of any views I express here. The people who sent me here did not send me to be mealy-mouthed. They did not send me here to advocate anything which I believed to be contrary to their interests; but I am sorry to say there are some honourable members here, returned upon that ticket, who do not exactly stick to their colours.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Name.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I am not going to be personal at all. I do hope that, instead of sitting here till four or five o'clock in the morning, we shall get on with the business, and not deal with matters entirely out of the range of practical politics.

Mr. BARRON.—I do not propose to go into this question of the incidence of taxation, but I simply desire to say that the honourable member for Woodville proposes to do a right thing at the wrong time. I hold the same opinions that the honourable member has embodied in this amendment which he now asks the House to consent to; but we cannot get quit of the knowledge of the fact that a large proportion of the year for which the Treasurer asks us to consent to this tax has gone by, and that the machinery which is necessary in order to give effect to the proposal of the honourable member for Woodville would have to be created, and cannot be created at once. If the honourable

member will take the assurance which I heard the Premier just now give him, that we should have an opportunity of considering this matter next session—that he will bring it forward early and take the opinion of the House upon it—I venture to say he will find the Premier not exactly right in what he says, that the balance of opinion is in favour of the property-tax and against the proposal of the honourable member for Woodville. I hope the honourable gentleman, in the meantime, will withdraw his amendment, for it simply comes to this: that he will not be able to carry into the lobby with him those who sympathize with the proposal on its merits, apart from the considerations which must now weigh with us. The honourable member for Christchurch North represents the question of the property-tax as being the one question which accounts for the defeat of the past Administration. Well, Sir, unfortunately the catalogue of the shortcomings of the previous Government is not of that simple, concise, and comprehensive kind which the honourable member would indicate; nor does it include that item. Sir, if I were to read out a little list of the things which formed the indictment against the past Administration, I am sure I should read a number of things which every member of this House would recognise as each of them serious in itself, besides forming a part of those accumulated shortcomings which caused the country to adopt the decision of the past House in connection with the late Administration. But let the past rest. I only got up to say that I hope the honourable member for Woodville will not place in a false position those who are entirely in accord with him, but that he will withdraw his amendment, and take an opportunity next session of allowing the subject to be discussed and voted upon on its merits.

Mr. FISH.—I think I may justly say that no member of this House is more sincerely in favour of a land- and income-tax than I am myself, and I can corroborate the opinions given utterance to by the honourable member for Woodville in almost every particular. I also strongly believe the statement of the honourable member for Christchurch North with regard to the legislation this session, and the indications of the policy of the Government next session, as being in the direction that the honourable member for Christchurch North has mentioned. I am extremely sorry to think that it is so, and that the Government have a majority, apparently, to give effect to that policy. But, with regard to the question which the honourable member for Woodville has raised on the present occasion, I agree with the last speaker that the time for bringing it forward is inopportune. The objections made by the Premier to having it considered at this particular time are so thoroughly unanswerable that I think the honourable member himself must see that it is in the interests of the cause he advocates—and advocates very ably—that he should not press the matter any further. I do not propose myself to debate the question now, because that is quite unnecessary, and would only

end in nothing. I trust the honourable gentleman, without giving up in any shape or form the principles he holds, will in the meantime withdraw his amendment, as the time taken up in its discussion now is entirely wasted.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—Sir, last election I made a point of ascertaining the views of the constituents on this subject—not only of those in my district, but of the constituents generally; and I found them unanimously desiring a repeal of the present property-tax and the substitution of a land- and income-tax. The property-tax is felt to be a very great hardship, especially to farmers and to persons who live in the country. There is no doubt that this property-tax is, as some honourable gentlemen said to-night, a tax upon industry; and I would just illustrate how that is so. I myself some years ago cut up some land into small farms, and have in my mind's eye now two men who took up land. One took up a particular section, and the other the adjoining section. There was no difference in the quality of these sections whatever. The one man paid his deposit and went away; I do not know that he has ever been near the land since. The other man paid his deposit, went on the land and improved it, cleared it, drained it, built a house upon it, and made it a valuable property—made it a property worth fully £500, so that he is now paying property-tax. On account of his labours on that land year after year he is now required to pay property-tax; whereas his neighbour, who has never touched his land at all, has had its value greatly increased through the perseverance and energy of his adjoining neighbour. That being so, I say that the property-tax is clearly a tax upon industry; and any tax upon industry is unfair, and should be avoided. We should give every inducement to people to settle on the land, and, instead of taxing them for the improvement of their land, we should try to encourage them to improve it. That is my view as to the property-tax. Then, what about the land-tax? I say a land-tax is a fair tax, and a tax we should, if possible, have. And I say, further, that if we have a land-tax the taxes that are derived from that land should be spent in the localities where it is raised, in making roads and bridges. I think if the land is to be taxed the revenue from it should certainly be spent in the immediate locality where it is derived. That is my view with regard to making use of the money derived from the land. Then we come to the income-tax, and I say that, at the present time, the persons who ought to bear taxation are not bearing it. There is no doubt that the proper form of taxation is that which bears equally upon all; and I say that it is most unfair to tax any particular class and to allow another to go free. It should fall on the shoulders of every man equally; and at the present time it is not doing so. If we had an income-tax, whom should we catch? Why, I do not care what town you go into in any part of the colony, there you will meet bank managers, managers of insurance companies, Judges, highly-paid officials, Ministers of the Crown—

Mr. Fish

these and other persons who have enormous incomes—

An Hon. MEMBER.—Solicitors.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—No; they have but very little; they are pretty well cut down by legislation: but you may have solicitors too. These men very often lease houses, and do not pay more through the Customs than an ordinary labourer who has a family to maintain—

Major ATKINSON.—What do they do with their money?

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—Some of them gamble it. But we need not go into particulars: there are other ways of spending it which are not beneficial to the colony. These men you meet every day: they are to be found in almost every half-dozen people that you meet; they have large incomes, and pay nothing to taxation; they have not a halfpenny-worth of property in the place—they lease a house, and that is all the property they have. I say that these persons should be taxed. Then, again, we have persons residing in foreign parts. I myself know of persons residing in London who are drawing immense incomes out of the colony; some are drawing as much as £8,000 a year; and are they paying taxation? Not a bit. There they are at Home enjoying themselves, and drawing the lifeblood out of this country. This kind of thing has gone on for ages past, and will go on for generations in the future unless we get a Government in power that will alter the incidence of taxation. I was in hope when I read the Financial Statement that I should see something about the repeal of the property-tax and the substitution of a land- and income-tax; but no, there was not a word of this kind, but only a proposal to put more on the present property-tax. If the amount of revenue is falling off, it is a very easy matter to raise it by doing something to the property-tax. Then, again, I say, if we do not do away with the property-tax, why have this distinction of the £500 exemption? Why not do away with it? I should have to pay the extra tax myself; but I should not mind that. I am sure that this £500 exemption is a most iniquitous thing, and if that were done away with we should raise another £40,000 a year: and in these times, when retrenchment is so necessary, and our income so small, I think we ought to look at these things, and, if we do not have a land- and income-tax, we should do away with the exemption under the property-tax. But there is not a word about that in the Financial Statement either. I feel, with the honourable gentleman who has moved the amendment, that we should be doing right to press it; and that it is a proper thing to have a land- and income-tax, and do away with the property-tax. The honourable member for Christchurch North stated that he saw some difficulty about fixing the income of individuals. I do not see any difficulty about this at all. Each individual has to make a declaration as to his income, and you will find that most persons put their incomes at a trifle more than they are, in-

stead of putting them at less; so that, if a few should happen to put their incomes at a little less than they are, this would be made up by the increase which others would place on their incomes. No man cares to have his income thought to be less than it really is; there are few men who like to make themselves appear to the world worse off than they really are. Therefore I do not think there would be any difficulty in arriving at a fair estimate of what the incomes of the taxpayers would be. Under the present property-tax I have known the most unfair things to be done. Many methods are taken of evading the payment of the tax. If a person finds he is taxed too heavily he puts debts against himself to the amount of £2,000 or £3,000, and then the amount upon which taxation is levied is reduced. I shall support the honourable member in this, and I hope he will call for a division, so that we may show through the pages of *Hansard* who those honourable members are who will support a land-tax and income-tax as against a property-tax. Beyond this I will not say more, because I believe the Premier is correct in what he stated. I believe that, if we were so disposed, it would be impossible to alter the incidence of taxation this session; but I hope we shall see our way to alter it during next session of Parliament.

Mr. TANNER.—I hope that this amendment will be withdrawn. I cannot agree with the last speaker that it would be at all a test of those in favour of a land- and income-tax. If this matter were to go to a division it would not indicate the views of honourable members on the subject. Every one agrees that the time is inopportune for going into this question; there is a great deal of Government business before us, and we must get on with it. I will not say a word about the subject itself. Although I hold strong opinions in favour of a land- and income-tax, I wish it clearly to be understood that if this goes to a vote I shall vote against the amendment. As I have said, I am strongly in favour of a land- and income-tax, and I ask the Premier, who has suggested that this important question should be left to stand over to next session, whether the Government will bring in a Bill to introduce a land- and income-tax in substitution for the property-tax, so as to bring the question before us, or whether the Government prefers that a private individual should do so. There is no doubt that a policy of such importance should be brought forward by the Government, and I ask the Premier whether he will bring it forward in such a shape that it can be discussed. This is a new House with a number of new members in it: let us, then, have the question brought before us again of a land- and income-tax as against a property-tax, and no doubt the question will be settled for years.

Major STEWARD.—As a member who has been working on the same side of the House with the honourable member for Woodville for years, I would ask him not to press this amendment. Although I entirely agree with him as to the advisability of a land- and income-tax as against a property-tax, for reasons which I

should be prepared to argue at length on the fitting occasion, I submit that it would place us in a false position to ask us to go into the lobby with him on his amendment. I tell him plainly that it is impossible, if we were to carry his resolution, that we should give effect to it this session; and if we carried it against the proposal for a property-tax this year we should place the colony in a very difficult position, which we have no right to do. I ask him to look at it from that point of view, and not to put us in the position of having to vote against him on a proposition with which, on its merits, we agree. I also agree with him that the progressive principle should be included in the proposition; but I submit that it has been shown conclusively that the present is an unfitting occasion on which to bring forward such a proposal. He will not succeed in ascertaining the relative strength of the two parties,—that in favour of a property-tax and that in favour of a land-tax and income-tax,—because many who support the latter will find themselves compelled to vote against it.

Captain RUSSELL.—I shall best be consulting the wishes of honourable members by not discussing the various points which have been raised, but by saying the few words I have to say on this property-tax. I would merely say, in regard to some of the arguments brought forward, that I believe those whom it is desired to touch under a land- and income-tax are the very persons who would escape taxation under the proposition of the honourable member for Woodville. I speak with bitter experience, from having had to pay both taxes, and I say that any improving settler is exempted under a land-tax, and has to pay pretty heavily under a property-tax. I would therefore recommend the House to leave the property-tax as it is. Now, there are various reasons which I think are specially worthy of attention in discussing this matter. The deserving man who goes up-country is not so exempt from taxation as the man who stays in the town and puts his money into bricks and mortar. But I will not go into that question. I feel very strongly that we are doing wrong in not reducing the exemption. I think the Government is wrong in that respect; but I do not suppose I shall carry the House with me. Unfortunately, Colonial Treasurers are anxious to extort every pound out of our pockets in the shape of taxation; and, so as not to make that taxation not so hateful as it would otherwise be, they resort to indirect means, and through the Customs they impose a taxation which would not be tolerated if it were imposed directly. An eminent financier says the best system of finance is to spend as little as possible, and that that form of taxation is best which is smallest in proportion. That is the true policy; but we shall never arrive at that until we impose more direct taxation than we do at present. My vote will always be given in the direction of reducing the Customs tariff and increasing direct taxation. I say that because I believe it would be in the interest of the country generally that taxa-

tion should be direct, and I say it as a taxpayer myself, because I believe by that means the taxation would be reduced. I am extremely anxious that the exemption should be reduced. Logically, it ought to be done away with altogether; but one cannot expect to get what is logical, and therefore I would reduce the exemption to £240, under which system, with 1d. property-tax, every man with that amount of property would have to pay his £1 yearly; and the result would be a great benefit to the country. I disagree with the honourable member for Christchurch North, who states that he considers the great advantage of the property-tax proposals of the late Government over those of the present Government was that the late Government proposed to reduce the number of people who paid the tax from twenty-one thousand to six thousand. That would be a great mistake. The wider you distribute the area of taxation the better for the country, and the more you approach the principle that the best system of finance is to spend as little as possible, and that the taxation should be small in proportion. Unless you go direct to a man's pocket and make him pay his tax in coin you will not get him to really understand that he is being taxed. Every one who is at all acquainted with local government knows that the man who has to pay his half-crown rate immediately makes a great outcry. If that man goes into a town he buys himself a new suit of clothes, and, possibly, a pound or two of tobacco; but he does not realise that he is paying ten times as much taxation as he does in having to pay his half-crown rate. He will go home well contented with his suit of colonial tweed or pound of tobacco, and will not believe that he has paid far more to the revenue than he paid in his rates. My object would be to make taxation as straightforward as possible. I believe it would even be a good thing to introduce into this Bill a clause prohibiting a man paying his taxes by cheque. We know that even the most prudent man will "stick up" an account at his tradesman's without thinking of what he is doing, but if you ask him to spend £1 he will at once button up his pocket and walk off. That is what we should endeavour to teach the people of the country in respect to taxation. I believe we should impose direct taxation, not simply for the purpose of reducing taxation, but for the purpose of bringing it home to the minds of the people that they are paying taxes. I have no doubt it will be said, "You are proposing this in the interest of the rich; you are punishing the poor, inasmuch as you want to abolish the exemption." No such thing. I am exceedingly desirous to relieve the poor, and I will show how that can be done under this very proposal which I am suggesting. It could be so arranged that the poorest would be exempted, while those who have realised property to a certain value would have to pay the tax. Men's labour should be exempt before you exempt any realised property; and when I speak of "labour" I do not care whether it is

the labour of a man's head or of his hands. It must also be borne in mind that the greater proportion of the property-tax that would be levied on the sum I propose should no longer be exempted would be paid by those who already pay property-tax; and for those who do not pay it but would have to do so I would remit Customs duties to an amount equivalent to the property-tax imposed. By that means you would reduce the taxation on the necessities of life to the very poorest classes, while those who ought to pay property-tax and who have hitherto been exempted would get an exemption to a greater extent than they do now, though in an indirect manner. As for the richer classes, they would not object to an increased property-tax, because they would know that the number of persons who paid the tax would be very much increased, and there would be a more careful watch kept over the Colonial Treasurer, so that the tax would not be imposed to so large an extent as it would be if you reduced the number of persons who had to pay it. Our object should be to make every taxpayer follow the actions of the Treasurer closely. Every one who holds a seat in this House knows that throughout the country there is a feeling that taxation should be increased. At every election you will see that the people are crying out for increased taxation; but the moment you make people realise the fact that they have to pay the tax, by having to put their hands in their pockets and pay up their pound, you will introduce a large number of people who will at once be deeply interested in a system of economy. However, there is no use in attempting to do anything this session, but next year I shall certainly endeavour to get the exemption reduced to £240.

Mr. GRIMMOND.—We could very well continue this discussion till five o'clock in the morning, advancing arguments on one side or the other. The honourable member for Woodville, I believe, has determined not to withdraw his amendment. Whatever may be said for or against it, I am not disposed to vote against it. We have wasted too much time already, and, as it is evident that a large majority will vote against the amendment, I hope we shall soon come to a decision on the question.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I should not rise at this hour of the morning were it not for the fact that I understand the honourable member for Woodville intends to take a vote on the question. This is a question in regard to which constituents expect their representatives to be consistent, and I wish to state my reason for the vote I shall give. My opinion is that, at this late stage of the session, it is an impossibility to accept the amendment of the honourable member for Woodville, even by those who are in favour of a land- and income-tax. The matter is so serious, as far as I know and can understand the subject, that I do not think it would be advisable for the country to do what the honourable member for Woodville wants; for this reason: that we have not for the last eight or nine months collected any property-tax, and the Treasurer looks to the property-

*Captain Russell*



tax to assist in making up the deficiency in the revenue. Now, to do what the honourable member for Woodville wants would require the whole machinery for the land-tax valuation, also the whole machinery for the assessment of incomes throughout the colony, and to get that machinery into motion and the assessments made eight or nine months would be required. So that we shall be here again in session before the Colonial Treasurer could get any revenue out of a land- and income-tax in any shape or form, and before we could get that machinery into motion. I am satisfied the Treasurer could not get any revenue from it. I think the proper course would be for those who are in favour of a land- and income-tax to move a resolution in the House in the early part of next session. I do not suppose any private member could introduce a Bill for this purpose without the consent of the Government, and I think the proper course would be to move a resolution, and then the question could be discussed in the House. If the Government were prepared to carry it out they could do so. I am in favour of a land- and income-tax, and when the proper time comes I shall be willing to support it. But it is not possible to do it at the present time. I have had some experience as a property-tax assessor and a land-tax valuer, and from that I know pretty well the circumstances of the people assessed, and I have no hesitation in saying that the property-tax is not as fair as a land-tax; but a land-tax without an income-tax would allow a large number of persons to escape. I say, from my experience, that they would not put down their incomes as low as they are. My experience in valuing was this: that some of those least able to bear taxation put the valuation of their property at a greater amount than it was really worth. I found that in some cases, where people wished to keep up their credit, they put down their property at a higher value than it was worth. I have known a man pay taxes on £2,000, and six months afterwards he was bankrupt; and I know of a man in the same town and street who was in a good position, and did not care to keep up his credit in that way, and, although his property was more valuable than the one referred to, he put it down at a lower amount. My experience was this: that those who were not so well able to afford it paid more taxes than those who were in a position to pay more. However, it is a subject on which a great deal could be said on both sides, as to whether an income-tax and land-tax or the property-tax is the best. My object in rising was to say that I intend to vote against the amendment, for the reason that I do not think it possible to have it carried before the next session of Parliament. If the honourable member for Woodville then moves a resolution in the House I shall be prepared to support it.

Mr. COWAN.—I wish to state that I also am in favour of a land- and income-tax; and I regret that the honourable member for Woodville is not willing to withdraw his amendment, and I regret this more particularly because, if he forces it to a division, I shall be compelled

to vote against it. I think the time inopportune, and the necessities of the country are such that such a resolution could not now be given effect to. The altering of the incidence of taxation would occupy a good many months, and it is impossible that effect could be given to this amendment. Although I am in favour of the principle embodied in the Bill, still I shall feel compelled to vote against it.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—I shall go into the lobby with the honourable member for Woodville. I consider the alteration of the incidence of taxation one of the most important subjects that this House could take in hand; and, although honourable members say it cannot be done, I maintain that we have done nothing whatever in the legislation of the present session. We have passed two or three Bills, but Bills which really do not benefit the country. I believe I am right in saying that the land-tax has been a source of great progress and wealth in Victoria. Sixteen or eighteen years ago the Berry Government brought in a Bill which the Melbourne *Argus* stated would retard the progress and settlement of the country; and yet Victoria is a most prosperous colony! We find there hundreds of thousands of acres occupied by a large and industrious population; and the same result would follow if we introduced a land-tax into this colony. I consider the property-tax a tax on industry and energy, and one calculated to keep down the people of the colony. I ask, how are those large and wealthy landholders in the colony who have benefited to a large extent by the prosecution of the policy of public works and immigration—how are they to be got at, in order that they may contribute their just proportion to the revenue of the country? I contend that these are the people who should contribute to the taxation of the country more largely than they do. I say, put the saddle on the right horse. If there were anything wanted to convince me of the justice of a land-tax, I should be convinced by a small extract from the *Evening News* of Hawke's Bay, which I will read:—

"The writer of those terse and ably-written 'Notes' in the *Freeman's Journal* has the following in the last issue of that well-conducted paper:—"I have read with much interest the following telegram about the sale of a small portion of Mr. Tanner's property at Riverslea, in Hawke's Bay: "Messrs. Hoadley and Co. to-day continued the sale of the Riverslea Estate, Hastings. Out of 1,000 acres 300 were sold, realising £45,000. Time did not permit any more to be offered, and the balance was reserved for private sale. The following is a summary of the sale yesterday: 278 small allotments realised £20,000; seven lots of five acres each, from £80 to £90 per acre. The total area sold was 199 acres, realising £23,144, or an average of £212 per acre." A very satisfactory sale indeed—for the owner. Then I turn up "Doomsday Book" and see what Mr. Tanner's property was valued at, and come upon this line: "Thomas Tanner, sheep-

farmer, Riverslea, Hawke's Bay, 5,776 acres, £105,110, Hastings." And then I marvel at the property-tax valuations; land assessed at £18 an acre fetching at auction £212, and understanding why some people love and many hate the property-tax. Twenty years ago all Heretaunga was let to Mr. Tanner for £600 a year. I had better, perhaps, not say what I was going to say, and let Judge Richmond state what followed. After Messrs. Ormond, Braithwaite, and Purvis Russell had joined Mr. Tanner, "the rent was raised to £700 a year, and finally, on an extension of the area included in the lease, to £900 a year. After the block had passed the Court a legal lease was granted, bearing date 24th April, 1867, for the term of twenty-one years, at the yearly rent of £1,250 for the first ten years and £1,750 for the remainder of the term." This lease, it will be observed, would not be yet up, and had not the shares been purchased Mr. Tanner's sale could not have taken place. He is a dull man who cannot draw his own conclusions. I would state them in precise and fitting terms were I master well graduated enough in the English language to do so—that is, provided our tongue gave scope enough for such a purpose. Our readers will at once see how the purchasers of this Riverslea property have hampered themselves. They will have to pay a property-tax now very much greater than that which the previous owner, Mr. Tanner, was subject to, and yet surely the mere cutting-up of the land cannot have enhanced its intrinsic value to so great an extent. This Riverslea Estate, too, is part of the celebrated Heretaunga Block, that block which has been the fruitful cause of so much litigation. Referring to this block, the *Press* says: 'Suffice it to say that it kept the best society of Hawke's Bay in a condition bordering on civil war for years, filled the pockets of a generation of lawyers, and afforded the materials for some of the most terrific declamation ever heard in the New Zealand Parliament or on the New Zealand stump. Is it not recorded in *Hansard*—which never lies—that, with reference to Heretaunga, a young and fervid politician, stung by an allusion to his poverty by one of the purchasers, solemnly declared that he "would rather own a small estate honestly acquired and securely vested than be the trembling lord of a principality the title-deeds of which were signed in blood and rum, and sealed with as many crimes as they had signatures"!' "

Now, Sir, that shows the absurdity of the property-tax as compared with the land-tax. Had a conscientious person been there to value the land he would have assessed it at £180 an acre. Here it brought an average of £212. That is one very strong argument that the land-tax is by far the fairest and most equitable tax we can have. Then we come to the income-tax. That tax is also a fair tax. It is well known that there are many professional men in the colony making large incomes and paying nothing. I quite agree with the honourable member for Hawke's Bay that the property-tax exemption should be reduced to £240, if that tax is continued. I shall vote with the

Mr. R. H. J. Reeves

honourable member for Woodville if he calls for a division.

Mr. KELLY.—During the late elections this was one of the great questions before my constituency, and I was pledged to support a land- and income-tax. But I think the present time is not the proper time to bring the question forward, and I therefore intend to vote against the amendment, if the honourable member for Woodville does not withdraw it. The argument adduced by my honourable friend on the right is in favour of an income-tax as against a land-tax, because the figures he quoted show that the land of the honourable member for Wai-pawa was valued at £18 an acre, and it brought £212 at auction.

Mr. TANNER.—There is not a word of truth in it.

Mr. KELLY.—I am sorry to hear it. I consider that if the Premier were to state that he was prepared to go on with the discussion of this question, and adjourn for a week and let honourable members come back, he would get many honourable members to support an adjournment. I do not think that these motions should come on at such a late period of the session, and I think those who are opposed to the Government should give what assistance they can to get the business through. Every one wants to get away before Christmas, if he possibly can. I do not think the honourable member for Inangahua would like to come back after Christmas. Although I am pledged to vote for a land- and income-tax, this is not the time to bring the question on, and I shall therefore vote against the amendment of the honourable member for Woodville.

Mr. GRIMMOND.—The Premier has frightened honourable members by saying that he wants a million and a half in April next; and a good many who are in favour of a land- and income-tax are afraid to vote for the amendment now because it would jeopardize the finances of the colony. Every time the House has met it has been urged that it is not convenient to have a land- and income-tax; but in the course of next year we shall have the valuation for the property-tax on. The House should say next year whether it is in favour of the property-tax or a land- and income-tax. I am in favour of the latter, and will do all I can to bring it in force in this colony; because the property-tax has clogged the wheels of industry and blocked enterprise. I am sure that the returns obtained by the honourable member for Timaru will show that the great bulk of the landed property is held by outsiders, and a land- and income-tax will reach those people. I intend to support the amendment of the honourable member for Woodville.

Mr. HOBBS.—As the honourable member for Woodville declines to withdraw this amendment, I want to say just one or two words upon it. I want to know where has been the sincerity of the honourable member for the Hutt during the last three years. Where is the sincerity of the late Colonial Treasurer, who got himself into office on the understanding that

he would bring in a land-tax and an income-tax? Certain honourable members voted to turn out the previous Government because they would not bring in a land-tax and an income-tax, and the late Colonial Treasurer and his colleagues were put in because they promised to do so. Then, after eighteen months, he told us that the people had got accustomed to a property-tax, that there was a great deal in being accustomed to a tax, and that therefore they would not disturb it. I can understand, and very clearly, what this little "move" is: it is only a diversion to take up the whole evening, as has been done before. I want to enter my protest against this proceeding. The honourable member knows very well that he will hardly get another member to go with him into the lobby; and he should not waste the time of the House in this way.

The House divided on the question, "That the words 'the Bill be now read a second time' stand part of the question."

#### AYES, 32.

Anderson	Jones	Ross
Atkinson	Kelly	Russell
Barron	Lance	Seymour
Blake	Lawry	S.-Menteath
Bruce	Macarthur	Tanner
Cowan	Mackenzie, T.	Valentine
Fergus	McGregor	Whyte
Fulton	McKenzie, J.	Wilson.
Hislop	Pearson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hodgkinson	Rhodes	Buxton
Jackson	Richardson, G.	Hobbs.

#### NOES, 14.

Feldwick	Joyce	Seddon
Fitzherbert	Levestam	Taylor.
Fraser	Moss	<i>Tellers.</i>
Goldie	O'Callaghan	Grimmond
Guinness	Reeves, R. H. J.	Smith.

#### PAIRS.

##### For.

Ballance  
Brown  
Duncan  
Fitchett  
Grey  
Kerr  
Loughrey  
Parata  
Perceval  
Reeves, W. P.  
Richardson, E.  
Steward, W. J.  
Thompson, T.  
Turnbull  
Ward.

##### Against.

Graham  
Withy  
Samuel  
Dodson  
O'Conor  
Izard  
Pyke  
Taipua  
Marchant  
Carroll  
Peacock  
Allen  
Hamlin  
Mitchelson  
Mills.

Majority for, 18.

Amendment negatived.

On the question, That the Bill be now read a second time,

Mr. TURNBULL said,—No one feels more the position of the Treasurer in this House than I do on the present occasion; I speak with all sincerity. I know the position the colony is in is most critical, and I know the

honourable gentleman would never have uttered the statement he did to-night in that respect unless he was well convinced of its truth; and I speak with very great regret on this occasion. My object in speaking is this: I have always held and declared strongly that taxation upon property should be of a progressive nature, and, although the Premier has told me that that question should not be raised on this Bill, but only on the Assessment Act, I should be sorry to see this Bill pass without giving expression to my views on that point. We are now going to inflict very great injustice on property-owners generally; because I hold that we should not have dealt with this question at all unless at the same time we deal with the Customs duties. By doing that we could have assisted property to a certain extent, because when dealing with the question of taxation it is right to treat all classes fairly, and not to unduly favour one class. In dealing thus with the property-tax a very great injustice is inflicted on a large portion of the community. I hold, as I say, that this taxation should be of a progressive nature. When we consider the large indebtedness of the colony, and the very large proportionate sums that have been expended in conferring great benefits upon property, I say it is only right that property should bear the heaviest portion of the burden of taxation in the colony. From official papers put before honourable members last session it appears that 1,800 people hold rather more than one-third of the taxable property in this colony. The proposal of the late Colonial Treasurer was that the increase in the property-tax should fall on 5,000 of the richest property-owners in the colony, persons owning £8,000 and upwards each. If the exemptions were increased the payers of the property-tax would be still fewer, and the property-tax would become virtually a land-tax on a few large holders. If we look at papers placed with one of the present Treasurer's Financial Statements we shall find this: that about 1,800 people hold property to the amount of £28,000,000, while the bulk of the taxation falls on 32,000 people who own an equal amount. I say that this taxation being laid on the smaller people is most unjust. It is not merely a question of the value of the property held by this small number of people, but the injury which these people are doing by holding the large amount of land which is not put to any satisfactory use. I pointed out the other night that there were ninety people who hold estates which aggregate 2,250,000 acres, and the consequence is that all the wealth which should come from that soil or property to enrich us is lost to the State, because the land is not only owned by a few, some of whom live out of the country, but it is also locked up against the population which might live on it. That land might carry a hundred thousand people. These are the things which we should consider in connection with the question of taxation and the large burdens that we are going to lay on the people. It should be one of the questions

that should be taken into consideration by this House. No doubt it may be said that the honourable member for Woodville would have an opportunity of bringing forward this question next session, when it might be fairly considered; but it is very difficult for any member of this House, however skilful he may be in the use of the rules of this House, to get a question of that sort before the House, so that it may be fairly considered. Even supposing that he gets it on the Order Paper, and it is called on, the question is probably talked out before a decision can be come to on it.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Do it in the early part of the session.

Mr. TURNBULL.—If you do it ever so early in the session you find your motion is talked out, and that there is no opportunity of getting any decision at all in the matter. At the present time there are 1,182 people who own from 1,000 to 5,000 acres of land; there are 171 people who hold from 5,000 to 10,000 acres each; there are 141 people who own from 10,000 to 20,000 acres each; there are 273 who own from 20,000 to 50,000 acres each; twenty who own from 50,000 to 100,000 acres each; and seven who own over 100,000 acres each. This land, proportionately, yields very little in the shape of taxation; and we might well consider on this occasion whether we are doing justly in bringing down a tax which, though it taxes each person equally so far as the rate of the tax is concerned, does not tax them equally so far as regards their ability to pay, and the benefit that they derive from the money expended in the colony. The late Premier stated in his place in this House, and the late Colonial Treasurer stated in his place here to-night, that what really caused the downfall of the late Ministry was simply this: that they proposed to make these people pay progressive taxation. And of that there cannot be the slightest doubt. The late Treasurer said just now—and he was not contradicted—that, if he would have given up his property-tax proposals, anything else the late Government might have proposed in the way of revising the taxation could have been carried—that everything else would have been carried if they only would have abandoned this particular proposal.

Mr. FISHER.—No.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Well, that was stated by the late Colonial Treasurer to-night; and if the honourable gentleman who says "No" had been in the House at the time he would have heard the statement, and then would have been his time to have said that it was not correct. I heard that statement, and I believe it was the fact. At any rate, we have no right to doubt any man's assertion made in this House and before the full House; and it would have been more courageous in the Minister of Education to have challenged the statement when it was made rather than to do it when the honourable gentleman making it was out of the House.

Mr. FISHER.—We challenged them in the country. That was the proper place.

Mr. Turnbull

Mr. TURNBULL.—"We challenged them in the country!" Why, the people in the country never heard it. This is the place to challenge them. Do you want to go behind the people's backs? Here is the place to have things of this sort brought out, and not in the country. If you wish to correct a statement it should be corrected at the time. There is not the slightest doubt about the enormous pressure brought to bear against the late Government by the great monetary and landed corporations and the large landed proprietors, and that that was the main reason for the change. The honourable member for Caversham says that he has a long list of what the late Government did. But what public man is there who has been before the public for years, like the late Colonial Treasurer, who has not committed blunders? We are none of us perfect; and to say that a man who has occupied important public positions for many years has made mistakes is only saying what might be expected of him. But I am afraid that, to use the language of Shakespeare, the honourable member for Caversham is a chronicler of small beer. Great actions he takes no notice of, but trifling errors he brings before the public in glaring colours. By the returns placed on the table it seems that there are 1,140 people—absentees—who own nine million pounds' worth of property; and, then, you have companies who hold another five million pounds' worth; so that these two bodies—the absentees and the companies—alone hold nearly fourteen million pounds' worth of property. And, considering the large advantages they obtain from the expenditure of public money, I should like to know why this House is not warranted in saying to these people, "You must pay a progressive property-tax." I cannot see any reason why a progressive property-tax should not be enforced. In the first place, these people have the largest properties in the colony; and the wealth which those properties give all goes out of the colony. Then, as regards the mortgages, they are drawing out of the colony all that is produced. Unfortunately, many of the mortgages were made when wheat was bringing 4s. 6d. a bushel. It was unfortunate not only for those who mortgaged the property but for those who advanced the money that such heavy advances were made at that time. The position now is that the persons who borrowed cannot pay, while those who advanced the money find the securities are not worth the money which they advanced. Still, the fact remains that all the money that is made in the colony goes to these mortgages; and I can see no reason why the colony should not obtain revenue from the persons who draw this wealth out of the colony. At the present time we are simply going to ruin. Let us look at the position of the colony as plainly as we can. We find that the private indebtedness of the colony is, in the first place, under the Land Transfer Act, something like £31,000,000. I am not going to anticipate a debate on the loan, but honourable members who talk about loans

must remember that, if we do not borrow as a colony, individuals must do so. The private indebtedness last year increased by two millions of money; so that it will be an actual necessity, whether the Loan Bill goes on or not, that one of two things will happen: Either the Government must borrow, or private individuals must borrow; and I say that private owners are in this position in this country: that they cannot borrow any more. Of course it may be said that this is simply a transfer of old mortgages to new; but I will ask any honourable gentleman who takes up this Land Transfer paper and looks over it whether the figures I have given do not represent the actual new indebtedness. There is £31,000,000 there; then we go to the banks, and find that they have advanced £15,000,000—£11,500,000 advanced on personal property, and upwards of £3,000,000 on bills discounted—that is, £45,000,000; then, it is well known that on the Stock Exchange debentures have been floated from private companies to the amount of another £10,000,000: in round numbers this accounts for not much short of £57,000,000. Then, we know that our private bodies have borrowed to the amount of another five millions; so that the interest which we have to pay out of the colony on our indebtedness amounts to about three millions a year. Taking it at a very low rate of interest, we have to pay no less than that sum annually for the indebtedness of the country. Of course there is this to be said: that we have borrowed fourteen millions from ourselves—that is admitted. But take this fourteen millions from the private indebtedness and you will find that it takes nearly three millions a year to cover the amount that we have to send Home to pay interest due by private borrowers. This is one of the great evils of the country. It is one which any statesman ought to take into consideration at once; because—it does not matter how wisely the affairs of the colony are conducted, what economy is shown—so long as individuals are allowed to incur such large indebtedness on the landed property of the colony nothing but ruin can ensue from it. Leaving out of the calculation the £1,700,000 of interest which we have to pay on our own debt, that is the amount that has to be paid on account of private indebtedness. The question now is, What have we to come in with which to pay that amount? All that we have is what we can produce; and, when we have paid the million and a half of public indebtedness, all that we have got is about seven millions of money to pay the yearly ten millions that we have to pay for interest and for what merchandise we require from the Home-country.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I should like to rise to a point of order. I do not know whether the honourable member for Timaru is in order in repeating a speech which we have already heard so many times during this session.

Mr. SPEAKER.—There is no point of order in that.

Mr. TURNBULL.—My object is to get this House to recognise the position that this country is in. I feel that there can be no salvation for this country, nothing to lift it out of its present difficulties, until the Government come down with a strong and merciless hand to tax this property—these large properties which are the cause of the misery that now exists in the country—until they are taxed to such an extent that the proprietors are compelled to break them up and throw them open for the use of the people. Let me ask, What does this 2,250,000 acres mean? Take two millions of acres, and what would it produce to the country, even at the low price of wheat now? What is the wealth shut out from the country now by this land being occupied by sheep, instead of producing grain? It is quite true that grain is at a low price, and it is natural that men should enter into that branch of industry that will pay best; but I say there are questions arising under this state of things which affect not merely the welfare of individuals, but the welfare of the State; and I am convinced that, unless steps are taken in time, there is no hope of our being lifted out of our present difficulties. We are now driven, as the Treasurer has told us, to every kind of shift to do what, in homely language, is expressed by the phrase “make both ends meet.” We are carrying out what we call a system of retrenchment; but what is that but taking money from ourselves? There is not a penny saved by this system of retrenchment but what we are taking from ourselves, and that is going to increase the miseries and misfortunes of the country. There may be £20,000 accumulated by the savings of individuals out of all the moneys paid away in salaries, and the remainder of the money will be taken out of circulation, increasing the miseries of the people. Why are the Customs duties falling off to such an extraordinary extent? Some of that decrease may be traced to the more economical habits of the people, but a great deal of it arises from the fact that the people simply have not the power to spend. With our Customs revenue falling off, what are we doing? We are retrenching—that is, taking money out of circulation. The imports were a million less last year, and we may reckon now that £500,000 a year more will be taken out of circulation; and there is no doubt that this will increase the falling-off in our imports. If any one will just look over the bank accounts he will find that within twelve months discounts have fallen off to the amount of one million. This seriously affects the whole community. In a small community like this you cannot take a million out of circulation without affecting the whole community very much. And now we are going to take another £500,000 out of circulation, and to reduce the public expenditure at the rate of £1,000 per day almost, that is to say, to the extent of £270,000 a year, and to make a reduction of £27,000 a month in the public-works expenditure. Sir, I maintain that some system of progressive taxation should be adopted. Of

course it may be pointed out that this is not the proper place or time to enforce this. But I do not think it is possible at any time for any individual private member to do anything in the way of increasing taxation; yet still I think this is one of those subjects to which attention should be called. An honourable gentleman asks what is the object of this. What was the object of the prophet, what was the mission that he was sent on? "Go, tell this people, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear." I reckon it is my duty, whether members stay in this House to hear it or not, it is still my duty, as a member of this House, as far as I possibly can to state the real position of the country. Now, it appears that 341 people in this colony hold property amounting to 16,871,666 acres. These are the people who, I say, ought to pay the progressive property-tax. We should get at these people. These should bear the burden of the country. Who have received the benefit of the large public expenditure, and who are locking up our railways from being used, our telegraphs from being used, and our Customs duties from being increased? These people hold human nature in abomination, for, if they advertise for a man to help them in occupying the large holdings, he must deaden himself to all feelings of humanity or he will be scouted. If he has, unfortunately, taken a wife and has a family he has no chance of getting a home. These people are shutting up the country against settlement. I pointed out the other night one estate of 40,000 acres that has only ten single men upon it; and it is some of the most fertile land in the colony! If that estate were properly occupied it would carry a population of some two thousand or three thousand people, and would add to the Customs revenue a sum of £6,000 a year. And what is it now contributing? It is contributing £60 a year through the Customs, and whatever the property-tax may be. If that property were cut up and settled, instead of being occupied by people paying £60 a year it would be occupied by people who would pay through the Customs at the very least £8,000. I say that no individuals have any right to hold property to the injury of the State to that extent. And no sophistry can ever prove that those men have a right to hold these lands. I would be one of the last to interfere with any one holding land to any extent if he chooses to pay the State the loss suffered through such holding; but, at the same time, the State must not be allowed to suffer because any one chooses to hold land and to lock it up against settlement. It is the object of this Government—and it is why they are placed on those benches, though they do not know it themselves—it is the object of those who pull the strings, the loan companies and banks, to keep them on those benches that they should unduly protect property and prevent it bearing a fair share of the public burdens. I will give a list of ninety estates in the South Island alone. There are in—

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		Estates.	Comprising— Acres.
Cheviot	..	3	170,000
Marlborough	..	11	309,000
Kaikoura	..	2	41,400
Amuri	..	8	248,000
Ashley	..	4	116,000
Selwyn	..	2	35,000
Ashburton	..	4	44,600
Geraldine	..	4	60,000
Waimate	..	11	282,000
Waitaki	..	8	153,000
Waikouaiti	..	2	39,000
Clutha	..	4	125,000
Tuapeka	..	4	115,000
Southland	..	16	431,000
Wallace	..	7	110,000
		90	2,279,000

Now, it is estimated that the whole population these ninety estates carry, at the present time, giving the most liberal estimate, is not more than 2,700 people—that is, so far as can be ascertained, the number of people living on that large amount of land. It is an average of thirty souls to each estate, and I think that exceeds the average. What would be the consequence if these estates were cut up into reasonable farms? They would give us 15,000 decent-sized farms, and those farms would carry 100,000 people. I appeal to the Colonial Treasurer to see to this. These owners are depriving so many of a living upon the lands; and, while the bulk of the population are bearing burdens heavy and grievous to be borne, no more is demanded from the owners of these large estates, who have a monopoly of wealth, than from a man who has got a small fifty-acre farm. I say that where the State gives to individuals a monopoly of wealth it is perfectly right that those people should contribute to the State according to the extent of that wealth.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to two o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 15th December, 1887.

First Reading—Second Readings—Third Readings—Library—Public Bodies' Leaseholds Act—Owhaoko Case—Wellington College and Girls' High School Bill—A. Owen—Native Land Administration Bill—Otago Central Railway Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### FIRST READING.

Government Railways Bill.

### SECOND READINGS.

Christchurch Hospital Bill, Christchurch Drainage Board Reserves Sale and Exchange Bill, Building Societies Bill.

## THIRD READINGS.

Native Land Court Bill, Maori Real Estate Management Bill, New Plymouth Borough and Harbour Board Street and Reserve Exchange Bill.

## LIBRARY.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON moved, *That, in order to provide for the management of the library during the recess, the resolutions in force during the past recess shall be in force during the coming recess, namely,—(1.) That the members of both Houses of Parliament residing in or within fifteen miles of Wellington be the Library Committee for the approaching recess; three to form a quorum. (2.) That the list of persons to be admitted to the full privileges of the General Assembly library during the recess be the same as that during the past recess. (3.) That visitors may, on application to the Chairman, be admitted to the library for the purpose of reference. (4.) That literary workers or students of a special subject may, at the discretion of the Chairman, be permitted to take out specified works on that subject.*

Motion agreed to; and it was ordered that a message be sent to the House of Representatives asking for their concurrence in the motion.

## PUBLIC BODIES' LEASEHOLDS ACT.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT, in moving the motion standing in his name, said that the printing of the report would not be an expensive matter; it was very short.

Motion made, and question proposed, "*That the report upon Petition No. 28, of twenty-two settlers of Wyndham, praying for amendment of 'The Public Bodies Leaseholds Act, 1886,' be referred to the Government for their consideration, and be printed.*"—(Hon. Colonel BRETT.)

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said there was no objection to the printing of the report, so far as the Government were concerned. He might, however, take the opportunity of saying that a Bill was now before Parliament, and he hoped it would reach the Council, which would, he thought, meet the case in question.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN pointed out that the motion was more than that the report be printed—it was also that it should be forwarded to the Government for consideration.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS thought there would be no use in printing it, as it contained nothing. He moved, *That the words "and be printed" be struck out.* It was quite sufficient that it should be referred to the Government.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL submitted that to print the report of the Committee without the petition would be like printing an answer to a conundrum without printing the question. He suggested the adjournment of the debate until the Council had had an opportunity of considering the Bill referred to by the Hon. Mr. Stevens.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN thought that the amendment of the Hon. Mr. Reynolds would meet the necessities of the case.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD was satisfied that the words "be printed" got into the report

by a clerical error, because the Committee never intended that the report should be printed, for, as the honourable gentleman had said, there was nothing in it at all.

Amendment carried.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

## OWHAOKO CASE.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL, in moving the motion standing in his name, said,—Sir, this is another question of printing, but it is one on which I think the labour will be of a little more use to the Council than in the other case. In the early part of the session a paper was, on the motion of the Hon. Mr. Shrimski, laid on the table relating to the Owhaoko lands, which purported to be the evidence in Court of the hearing of the Owhaoko-Kaimanawa lands. This paper was laid on the table and ordered to be printed. It is numbered Legislative Council No. 1, but is referred to in other papers as G.—4. It is an extract from the evidence, which the Council will perceive has nothing to do with the case which was before the Court. The evidence given in this paper simply relates to the mode in which the application for a rehearing was withdrawn. It was not, I submit, evidence such as should have been taken by the Court, and was, moreover, an injustice to absent persons; and it was not such as I think it is fair to leave alone amongst our records. Therefore it is that, with the permission of the Government, I have gone through the papers, and have moved that they be laid on the table. According to this evidence Dr. Buller is said to have supplied the Natives with drink, so as to get their signatures; and also to have substituted one paper for another, so that, when the Natives were really signing a paper withdrawing their application for a rehearing, they thought they were signing an application to have their names registered among the owners of the block. This evidence, if you come to look into it, is merely hearsay evidence; and the man has the audacity to utter what I believe to be lies in the presence of the Court, but he does not profess to speak from his own observation, but simply states it as something he has heard. And, of those who were stated to have been made drunk by Dr. Buller's rum, two were present in the Court and were not examined; and subsequently the Court would seem to have recognised the irrelevance of this so-called evidence sufficiently to think it not worth sifting. But, at the same time, I think it behoves us to put on record whatever we can which tends to show how it is that such prominence has been given to such a paper as this Legislative Council paper No. 1. Subsequently to this, the Attorney-General has read a letter from Mr. Warren, manager at Owhaoko, contradicting the reports contained in the evidence. The papers to be laid on the table are to meet the object I have in view; and if the Council pass the resolution I shall with pleasure submit to the examination of the Hon. the Attorney-General as to which of the papers shall be printed *in extenso*, and which shall simply be printed in a condensed form;

so that the paper as printed and laid on the table will be a recital of the circumstances connected with this case. The budget supplied by the Native Office is more bulky than I expected. I should, in justice to the officers of that department, state that the papers were made so bulky through everything relative to the case being placed with them, so that hereafter there might be no suspicion whatever that any papers relating to the matter had been suppressed. With this understanding, that the printing of these papers shall not necessarily involve the printing in *extenso* of the whole of these papers, many of which are unimportant, I move the resolution standing in my name.

Motion made, and question proposed, "*That the further papers on the Owhaoko case be printed.*"—(Hon. Mr. MANTELL.)

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I have no objection whatever to the motion; but it seems to me the Attorney-General might have saved a great deal of trouble and discussion in this matter. When I moved that these papers be printed the Attorney-General took objection to it, and stated that while he was in this Council he would endeavour to reduce the cost of printing. But he ultimately agreed to have a single paper printed. Even the judgment he refused to print; and now we are asked to have the whole of the documents which have been laid on the table printed. The Attorney-General refused to have them printed at my request, and I find now that he is perfectly willing to allow the papers to be printed at the request of another honourable gentleman. I think I have as much right to receive courtesy and attention from the Government as any other honourable member in this Council; and I say, by acting as he has done, he has shown party feeling, and has not treated me as he should have done. I am not making an apology: I merely want to show the Council the manner in which some honourable gentlemen are treated compared with others. If the cost of printing one paper at that time was too much, I do not see why the expense of printing the whole should be reasonable now. I fail to see why the Attorney-General allows this motion to be put without saying a word about the matter.

The Hon. McLEAN.—I am afraid the paper which has been printed necessitates the printing of further papers. I am sorry that the Government should have allowed a paper such as the one referred to to be printed and circulated. I know nothing of the circumstances of the case, but I say that the printing and circulating of such a paper as that is not fair to the persons concerned. One's nature rebels against such a thing; and, whatever the circumstances may be, every man is entitled to fair-play, and I certainly think that, by the printing of this document, the party concerned has not had fair-play. Whatever may be the cost of printing, it is only just that these further papers should be printed and placed alongside of the others. I believe the whole thing has been a mistake. I do not think the honourable gentleman who asked for

*Hon. Mr. Mantell*

these papers to be printed really realised what he was getting printed at the time. I am sure he did not realise it, or he would not have asked that the papers be printed. It is one of those cases in which people make a mistake, and it is too late to rectify it after the papers are in print.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I did not know the contents of the documents. I merely asked that the whole of the papers in connection with this case should be printed. The Attorney-General refused that request. I saw the letters of Judge Fenton and Sir Walter Buller, and they raised my curiosity, and therefore I wanted to know the rest of the case.

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—I would suggest to the Hon. Mr. Mantell that two other members of the Council should select the papers that should be printed, so that it might not be thought that the printed papers are simply an *ex parte* statement.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—In reference to the Hon. Captain Fraser's suggestion, I may say that I think it is an excellent one, and I shall be glad to consent to such an arrangement. My only object has been to endeavour to get further light thrown on the matter. I agree, however, with the Hon. Mr. McLean that it is a great pity these papers were ever printed at all. I do not think the Hon. Mr. Shrimski has any reason for complaint in the matter. I fancy that the papers for which he moved were prepared for laying on the table before the session began, and that the present Attorney-General had no time to look into the question. I am happy to say that I believe the Government will consent to the judgments being printed; and it is very important that they should be printed, because the first judgment—that delivered by Judge Mair, a brother-in-law, I believe, of the gentleman maligned in this paper—was entirely upset by the second judgment—that of Judge Wilson. Among other discrepancies, I see that in the first judgment Renata Kawepo was awarded eighty or ninety thousand acres. It appears that on the second judgment it was held that Renata Kawepo was not entitled to anything. These judgments will probably not occupy more space than four sides of an Order Paper, and I think everybody would admit that they should be placed on record, so that those who wish to estimate the value of a Native Land Court judgment may have, at any rate, two specimens alongside of each other for comparison. It may guide us hereafter.

Motion agreed to.

#### WELLINGTON COLLEGE AND GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL BILL.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said he wished, before the Council proceeded to the orders of the day, to call attention to a mistake which occurred last evening in the division-list on the Wellington College and Girls' High School Bill. He was always ready to fight a Bill when he was opposed to it, but he did not like to take advantage of any mistake which might be made in the taking of a division on the Bill.



Therefore he would ask the Hon. the Speaker to request the Hon. Major Wahawaha to say how he voted on that occasion. The Interpreter informed him (Mr. McLean) that the honourable gentleman voted for the Bill. If that was so, it made this difference: that the Bill was carried by one vote instead of being defeated by one vote. Standing Orders 79 and 80 referred to a case such as this. These Standing Orders were as follow:—

"79. In case of confusion or error concerning the numbers reported, unless the same can be otherwise corrected the Council will proceed to a second division.

"80. If the numbers have been inaccurately reported, the Council, on being afterwards informed thereof, will order the Journals to be corrected."

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said if there had been any error he was sorry for its occurrence. At the same time, he might say he took down the names as the votes were being taken, and he arrived at precisely the same conclusion as the Clerk did. He had heard since, however, that some members understood that the Hon. Major Wahawaha had voted in a different manner from that in which he (Mr. Waterhouse) understood the honourable gentleman to vote. If any exception was taken to the vote it should have been taken at the time. It was too late to take exception afterwards. In this case, he did not think any exception could be taken now, because, after the motion for the second reading was negatived, the words were then added, "this day six months." That was agreed to by the Council without any division at all. If there was any reason to suspect an error, that was the time to have called attention to it. If honourable members had called for a division upon the second question being put, that would at once have removed the difficulty. The second question was undoubtedly carried without any objection being urged by any member of the Council.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said that what the honourable gentleman stated was quite correct. He would ask how it would be possible for any member to challenge on such an occasion when he was not in possession of the division-list. It seemed to him to be obviously impracticable. The motion for the second reading having been declared negatived, it appeared to him that it would have been a waste of time to take a division on the subsequent question. If the honourable gentleman voted with the "Ayes," the Bill was practically carried; and, therefore, if that was correct, owing to an unfortunate mistake the decision upon the question had absolutely been carried in a different way from that which was declared.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR said that in taking down the numbers on the division referred to he made the result exactly the same as the Clerk had done; but he could not hear distinctly which way the Hon. Major Wahawaha had voted, and he put him down with the "Noes," on which side the Hon. Mr. Taiaroa had voted. The Hon. Major Wahawaha had

given his vote very indistinctly, and that accounted for the difficulty.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON said that he had counted the voices as they were given. He counted the Hon. Major Wahawaha's vote as "Aye," and it was only after the meeting of Council that he saw that the honourable gentleman had voted with the "Noes." Of course it was impossible for him to know that until he saw the list.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER said he made a remark at the time that the Hon. Major Wahawaha had voted with the "Ayes."

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES said the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse took down the numbers, and he (Mr. Holmes) asked the honourable gentleman what the result was, and he replied that the Bill had been lost by one vote—that was to say, there were 14 "Ayes" and 15 "Noes"; and this was before the Hon. the Speaker had announced the numbers.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER said he took down the numbers carefully. He made 15 "Ayes" and 14 "Noes." He himself voted with the "Noes." His counting of the members was different from that announced by the Speaker.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL supposed that there could be no practical outcome of this difficulty beyond some honourable gentleman moving that the resolution be rescinded.

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON said the Hon. Major Wahawaha was present in the chamber. There were a number of honourable members who had given evidence as to how the honourable gentleman had voted. Why not ask the honourable gentleman himself? He (Mr. Swanson) did not like the present method of voting adopted in the Council. If the Hon. the Speaker said, "'Ayes' to the right of the chair, and 'Noes' to the left," and then honourable members went to different sides of the chamber, an error such as had happened could not occur. He often fancied that he saw some honourable gentlemen on the other side of the chamber who took notice as to how the vote was going on his side, and voted accordingly.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said he was sitting close to the Hon. Major Wahawaha, and he knew that the honourable gentleman voted with the "Ayes." He (Mr. Shrimski) took down the numbers as—Ayes, 15; Noes, 14. He agreed with the Hon. Mr. Swanson that the method of voting carried on in the Council was anything but right. Honourable members on the other side of the chamber were always watching the way in which gentlemen on his side of the chamber were voting, and they sometimes regulated their votes accordingly. It was not a fair system of voting at all.

The Hon. Captain BAILLIE thought that the best remedy would be this: that the Standing Orders Committee should consider the method of voting adopted in the Council. There was always some doubt about the way in which the voices were given, and if, as the Hon. Mr. Swanson suggested, members went to the right or the left of the Speaker, there would

not be any question as to how the honourable gentlemen voted. He might remind the Council that some years ago this matter was brought forward, and it was decided then that the present method should be adhered to. He would give notice of motion with reference to the matter.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND said he took the numbers, but his tally did not appear to agree with that of any other honourable member. He made the numbers 16 "Noes" and 14 "Ayes," so that the Bill was lost by two votes. He remembered a previous discussion having taken place in reference to the method of voting. On that occasion he suggested that honourable members, when they were voting, should advance to the table and make a mark against their names on the division-list. In that way he did not see how a mistake could occur, at any rate so far as the Clerk was concerned in the matter. If a member made a mark in the wrong place, that would be his own fault.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN would like to explain that in bringing this matter before the House he attributed no blame to the Clerk, because certainly it was most difficult for him to hear some of the voices at times. He really wondered that officer was so correct as he was. He did not intend to take any further action in the matter, but he simply wished to see fair-play.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I would call on the Hon. Major Wahawaha to say in which way he voted on the occasion referred to.

The Hon. Major WAHAWAHA said that on the last division before the adjournment on the previous evening he had voted with the "Ayes," but perhaps his voice was not heard.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said he had the division-list before him, and there was no doubt that, according to the statement of the honourable gentleman, the division-list as announced by the Speaker did not accord with the voices now alleged to have been given on that occasion. The Hon. Major Wahawaha was recorded as having voted with the "Noes." The honourable gentleman now informed the Council that he had voted with the "Ayes." The voices of honourable members were frequently given so inaudibly and indistinctly that it would require greater precision than almost anybody possessed to be sure that a mistake was not made. There could not be any blame attached to the Clerk: at the same time a mistake had been made. The mistake on this occasion had altered a vote of one particular member, and the result which was declared was therefore entirely different from that which the Council intended. It was very much to be deplored. He felt in very great difficulty on this question as to the remedy. It was of essence that notice should be taken of a mistake at the time. At the same time, that rule had been made, he had no doubt, under the influence of a different mode of voting from that which prevailed in the Council—that was to say, a mode by which members went into a lobby, by which means were afforded

of detecting a mistake. He was left with this difficulty, which he frankly asked the Council to consider: Standing Order No. 80 said, "If the numbers have been inaccurately reported, the Council, on being afterwards informed thereof, will order the Journals to be corrected." That, if interpreted accurately, would go against the principle that there and then notice must be taken of any inaccuracy. Therefore he felt very great difficulty in this question, how the suggestion which had been thrown out by the Hon. Mr. Mantell, that the resolution should be rescinded, could be adopted. He should like to take time to consider how far that could be done. He had frankly stated how his mind was affected by the circumstance; and he would like very much, if the Council would allow him, to take time to consider the point.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said, perhaps it would come within the scope of the Hon. the Speaker's consideration to consider also whether, in the peculiar circumstances of the Bill having been ordered to be read a second time that day six months, that motion could also be rescinded.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said that was the very point about which there was a difficulty.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said that was the point he was going to draw the attention of the Hon. the Speaker to in considering this subject. Although the Bill had been lost, they would assume, by a mistake, a subsequent motion was made that the Bill be ordered to be read the second time that day six months. This motion was carried, and the motion appeared on the Journals of the House. He was glad to hear that no blame could be attached to the Clerk of the Council. He believed this was the first time that such a thing had ever happened.

Debate adjourned.

A. OWEN.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR said that before the orders of the day were called upon he would desire to ask the leave of the Council to withdraw a petition which he presented yesterday. At the time that he presented the petition he saw that it complied with the provisions of Standing Order No. 17, which stated, "Every member presenting a petition shall acquaint himself with the contents thereof, to ascertain that it does not contain language disrespectful to the Council, and that it be in a convenient form." He was not aware, until the matter came up for discussion, of the provisions of Standing Order No. 23. That Standing Order provided that "No petition containing serious charges affecting the integrity of individuals shall be ordered to lie upon the table unless the member presenting the same shall intimate that he will propose to the Council a resolution in support of the charges." He desired now to withdraw the petition, as it contained charges which he was not prepared to follow up with a resolution without further inquiry into the charges it made.

Leave granted to withdraw the petition.

*Hon. Captain Baillie*

## NATIVE LAND ADMINISTRATION BILL.

## ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—When I moved the adjournment of this debate yesterday, it was for the purpose of giving honourable members an opportunity of considering the importance of this measure. I must confess that, notwithstanding the fact of my honourable friend the Attorney-General arguing that delay was dangerous to a measure of this kind, I am not at all sure that the best thing to do even now would not be not to pass this Bill, for various reasons which I will endeavour to explain. My honourable friend pointed out that to cause any delay in the passage of any measure of this kind, at this time of the session, would be dangerous to the Bill. I agree with him; but he has had twelve or thirteen weeks, in which time he might have produced this Bill and brought it under our consideration. But no; it was allowed to remain until the very last days of the session, and then we are asked to assent to the passing of this Bill without giving it that consideration which its importance deserves. This Bill, to my mind, is a reversal of the whole of the policy of the last Ministry with regard to Native-land administration; and the honourable gentleman has given us no reason for the reversal of that policy. I understand it is argued that no reason has been given on the other side why this policy should not be reversed. That is a very poor argument indeed; and I say that, in connection with such a measure as this, we should have had some explanation. I am convinced, however, that my honourable friend's heart is not in this Bill, because, in moving the second reading, he did not show that usual vigour which characterizes him when he takes up anything he has at heart. The Bill is intended to enable certain transactions to be completed. Under the existing Act they are prevented from being completed; but by this Bill it is intended to allow certain purchases of Native lands to be completed. The Council have not before them the evidence—which, I regret, was not taken in shorthand—of the Chief Judge, who was examined before the Committee, when it was clearly shown to us that several persons made application for the completing of their titles, and they were absolutely refused by the Judge; and by the passage of this Bill this decision will be interfered with. It is intended by the present Bill to extend the time in which the purchase may be completed till July next, and that in the meantime the Bill shall only continue in force up to the end of the next session of Parliament. There is one objection which I have to this Bill of a very serious character, and that is that it interferes with the decision of the Supreme Court. That decision may be right or it may be wrong; but there is a place where that could be tested, and I submit that this is not the place to do so. I would also point out that the Act which this Bill is intended to repeal is called "the said Act;" and, notwithstanding the repeal, section 4 of the Bill refers to the said Act, and keeps it in operation. I have endeavoured to

understand it, but have failed to do so. It is an open secret that the object of this Bill is to enable certain persons to complete transactions in regard to Native purchases; and the lists which are on the table of this House, if honourable gentlemen will go through them, will show exactly the position. They are instructive as showing how far honourable gentlemen may probably desire to get something done for themselves. These papers, in fact, speak for themselves. I will not refer to them further. I think the honourable gentleman will be best consulting the interests of the country by not going on with this Bill. A serious objection was taken yesterday to the Native Land Administration Act of last session—that the Bill placed the Natives in a very unfair position in regard to their lands; but I think that this Bill would place the Natives in a far worse position, because very few transactions have taken place in the colony in regard to Native lands, and that is the only reason that the honourable gentleman gave to the Council in moving the second reading of the Bill. I would suggest to him again, if he would accept my advice, which I do not suppose he will, the advisableness of allowing this matter to remain where it is.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—Before you put the motion, Sir, I would like to say that it seems to me that, after the trouble we have gone to in obtaining this information for the Council, no one seems to take any interest in it. As far as I am concerned, I have only done my duty, and if honourable gentlemen do not desire to take any interest in the matter I am quite satisfied.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I must say that I am not altogether satisfied with the position of this matter at present. [Several sentences inaudible in the gallery.] Although, no doubt, I am in most perfect ignorance in regard to all matters connected with the chicanery, and deceit, and rascality of which we have had occasional signs, and of which we hear a great deal as of frequent occurrence in association with dealings in Native lands by private parties, yet in a case of this kind, where we have an Act on the Statute Book which embodies the distinct principle authorising the Government to act as the trustees in dealing with Native lands, I think I may be allowed to be able to form an opinion quite as worthy of attention as that of any honourable gentleman who may have had more special experience in this matter. I have experienced on former occasions that the Act which we deliberately placed on the Statute Book in 1886 was one which embodied a right principle, and I say that to depart from that principle by any alterations now, more especially in the proposal under consideration to repeal that Act, would be to inflict injury on the Maori inhabitants of the colony. Holding these opinions very strongly, and not at all seeing sufficient reason why the proposals of this Bill should go further than suspending the operation of the existing Act, I can see that the result will be the ultimate extinction of the

Act, although the Bill proposes to terminate at the end of the next session. I say we should make a very great mistake in acceding to such proposals. [Speaker inaudible.] If the Bill were one proposing to confer power on uneducated men of our own race to deal with lands which they occupied in a similar manner, I am quite certain some time would elapse before their education would be sufficiently advanced to enable many of them to take advantage of it. I doubt very much whether, in the present state of the colony, they would have found a valuable market for any lands they had to sell. It seems to me, for these reasons, it would be undesirable to make any alteration in the law. It is in order to admit of transactions which were stopped by the passing of the last Act—to admit of such transactions being revived again—that the proposal now before us is made. I am quite certain of this: that no possible harm can arise from a delay in this matter. It is all but certain that another session of the Assembly will be held in the course of a few months, and I hope that by that time the Attorney-General, who is thoroughly familiar with all questions of this kind, will have had time to consider in what way the present Act should be amended, and that he will prepare such a measure as will be more acceptable to the Natives, and work more smoothly than the present law. In order to give my honourable friend time to prepare a well-digested measure on this subject, I move, *That this Bill be committed this day six months.*

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND.—I desire to express my full appreciation of the sympathy which the honourable gentleman who has just addressed the Council has always shown in matters concerning the interests of the Native race. If I did not think that these interests were really best consulted by repealing the Act of 1886, I should not support this Bill. Thirty years ago, if the Government of the day had been able to treat with the Maori population, the establishment of a system based on tribal committees was a possibility; but in the altered condition of the race and its surroundings this is no longer possible. There are no longer the communistic habits amongst the race which were predominant forty years ago. The race has been sifted with fire. English gold flowing over the country has modified them very materially. I do not think it would be right to allow the transactions under the present Native Land Acts to be shut up for any length of time. The Natives, or a very large number of them, are living on what they can get for their land. That is a point which is, of course, a very serious matter for reflection, and one which any Government ought to have constantly before its mind, and not go to sleep upon, because the time cannot be very far distant when that source of subsistence to the Native race must cease. Until the Government have time to consider the matter fully I think it is expedient that we should do away with the Act, which, to my thinking, was, I might say, *primâ facie* one which would not work; and

practice has shown that there is no disposition on the part of the Natives to take advantage of its provisions. The Native Affairs Committee, to whom this Bill was submitted, felt that they would be doing less than their duty if they were to recommend the Council to pass the Bill through all its stages without a very distinct intimation with regard to this point—namely, that they consider it a very temporary measure. The last clause of the Bill, which has been recommended by the Committee, is to the effect that the Act shall continue in force until the end of the next session and no longer. Thereby they throw on the Government the responsibility of bringing forward a Native-land policy next year. We have, at all events, long experience and a quantity of machinery at our disposal, and it will be difficult to do worse than we have done in the past. The clause saving inchoate transactions needs examination. Every one who looks at the question must very much regret that he has to take a pessimistic view; but, if a pessimistic view is the right one, it behoves us to take it home and do the best we can. I hope the Council will make up its mind to go on with this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—The Hon. Mr. Menzies said the Natives would not be satisfied; but the Natives will never be satisfied with any Bill in which the Government retains the right of pre-emption. What they want is to deal with their own lands, and I doubt whether the Parliament is inclined to give them that privilege again. The honourable gentleman wishes the present Act to get a fair trial. When that measure was before Parliament nobody ever expected that it would succeed; but some honourable members did try to get that measure on the Statute Book because it brought back the right of pre-emption to the Government, and gave the right of sale to the Government through the Waste Lands Boards. It was predicted that it would not work. Any one looking on the face of that measure must have known it was impossible for it to work—that the clauses constituting the Native Committees could not work. I should like to see the Committee clauses struck out of the Act. If that cannot be done I do not see much objection to this Bill, because it really brings matters back to the Treaty of Waitangi, and we shall be in the same position as we were in after that treaty. If we cannot do what I should like to see done, at all events we shall get a “clean sheet,” and be ready to start legislation fairly; and the Government will be compelled to bring in a Native Land Act next session, because this Bill cannot last past next session of Parliament. I do not think we can do much harm by placing this Bill on the Statute Book. As for those people who have got a certain time under the Bill in which to complete their transactions, whether they get two or three months more or less I do not think matters much. I know nothing of the transactions referred to. I am happy to say that I have never had anything to do with Native land, and I am thankful to say that

*Hon. Mr. Menzies*

I have had very little to do with any land. If a certain time is given to these people to complete their arrangements, a few months more or less will not alter the principle that they have a right to do so. If a certain time is given, they will know that they must complete their arrangements in that time, and they will endeavour to get the matters settled. Land is not looked upon at the present time with the same hunger that it was a little while ago. Land now is only worth what people can make out of it. A great number of those who have gone into Native-land dealings will be ruined through their transactions; and I never could see the force of this craze for buying Native land. The method of acquiring it is such that a person can never tell whether he will pay 5s. or £5 an acre for the land. It is startling to look at some of the old Native-land purchases and see how much money has been paid away. I must admit, however, that there were times when it was very desirable that roads should be made through these lands, and probably the best thing that could be done was to spend money on the lands in this way. We have now reached a time when there need be no fear of further trouble with the Natives. It is time now that we should treat them firmly, fairly, and honestly, and treat them as we treat other people. The sooner we come to do that the better it will be for the Natives and the better for ourselves; and they should pay rates towards the support of roads when money is spent to make the Native lands more valuable: at all events, it ought to be charged on the land, no matter at what time the land is sold. I still think we should allow this Bill to proceed, notwithstanding the disadvantages we labour under in dealing with the Bill now.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—It will be remembered that when I moved the second reading of this Bill I proposed that we should go into Committee and discuss the Bill in Committee; and I think it would have been much better if we had done so. I stated the grounds on which the Government brought forward this Bill; but, apparently, these grounds have to a certain extent been forgotten by some honourable gentlemen. Therefore I trust the Council will bear with me, although a good deal of what I say now will be but a repetition of what I said on the second reading of the Bill. The first part of the Native Land Administration Bill, as I have already pointed out, has reference to the future, and the second part of the Bill refers to the past. When this Bill was proposed it was thought that, in shutting up altogether the old mode of dealing with Native lands, past transactions should have an opportunity of being completed, and therefore some distinct clauses were introduced providing altogether for the past. The early part of the Bill refers entirely to the future—to the mode in which the land should be disposed of. I do not think there is much necessity for the Act to be repealed, or that it very much matters whether it is repealed or not, simply for this reason: that it has been entirely inoperative. There has not been a single case

under it, so I am informed, and there is not likely to be one. I may say, for my part, I should be quite willing to let the Act remain on the Statute Book till the Government can come down with an amending measure; but the Natives have been pressing that the Act should be repealed. Those who have watched the Order Paper of the House of Representatives will have noticed that the Native members there have given notice of repealing the Native Land Court Act and the Native Land Administration Act in particular. I am quite sure of this: that, whatever we do in reference to Native lands, unless we carry the feelings of the Natives with us we shall do no good whatever. My honourable friend said that when the Native Land Administration Act was introduced it was said that it would not meet the views of the Natives, and that the Natives would not come under it. I myself stated that, I believe, in this Council. The result is that the Government, in bringing forward this part of the Bill, have done so in deference to what they consider the wishes of the Natives. Deputations from different parts of the country have waited on the Premier and Native Minister, and I understand that another deputation is waiting to see them now. These deputations have requested that the Native Land Administration Act should be repealed. The Hon. Mr. Menzies says that I shall, no doubt, be able next session to introduce a Bill which will be perfectly satisfactory to all parties. I will just shortly remind the Council of the different Native-land laws which have been in operation for the last forty-eight years. We began by reserving to the Crown absolutely the right of pre-emption. Nobody was permitted to deal with the land of the Natives in any way. That was under the Treaty of Waitangi and under the Act passed in the early days of the colony prohibiting the purchase of Native lands; and subsequently it was rendered penal to "squat" on Native lands, or to use them in any way. We then went from that extreme to the other extreme. Proclamations were issued by Governor Fitzroy for the purpose of allowing people to deal with the Natives, waiving the Crown's right of pre-emption in favour of certain individuals. Everybody who asked for this right got it; and that lasted for, I think, about twelve months. Sir George Grey then came, and reverted to the right of pre-emption altogether. So in five years we had three different systems. This went on for several years, until the General Assembly was established and the new Constitution Act came into force. What happened then? We began meddling with the right of pre-emption. There was a demand throughout the country by both Natives and Europeans that the right of pre-emption should be modified, and that the Natives should have opportunities of dealing with their lands themselves. These facilities were from time to time increased. That continued for some time. In 1865, I think it was, an Act was passed enabling Europeans to buy Native lands; and the Government and private persons, in purchasing these lands, were in competition with

each other. That, I think, was about the worst system we ever had. The next step was a Proclamation, when Mr. FitzGerald was Native Minister, declaring that all the Government Native Land Purchase Commissioners were withdrawn, and it was declared that the Government would make no further purchases. That went on for some time. At the same time facilities were afforded for private purchasing, and in 1873 an Act was passed facilitating purchases but putting certain restrictions upon the purchasers. That continued till recently, when the present Administration Act was passed. This Act goes exactly in the opposite extreme. It prohibits any purchase from Natives direct, and provides for Natives selling lands through the Crown. We have tried all these systems. It is perfectly clear that the country must have been dissatisfied with them, because the Legislature, which represents the feeling of the country generally, has made all these alterations from time to time. During the last thirty or forty years there have been, I think, thirty-one or thirty-two Native Land Acts passed. If I were asked—and of course I know something about the matter, because I have been in Parliament when most of these Acts were passed—if I were asked to frame a Bill which would please both the Maoris and Europeans, I should admit my inability to do so. I do not think it is possible for any one to do that. It was promised in the Governor's Speech that a temporary measure should be brought in suspending the operation of the law as it stands at present. And it was stated that a permanent measure should be brought in during next session of the Assembly which, I think the Premier said, should be satisfactory to everybody. The Premier has promised that the matter shall be dealt with next session, and that in the meantime the Natives will be consulted in different parts of the country and asked what provisions they would like to have under the new Act. I predict that the answers will be as various as the tribes are numerous. It will end in the Natives in one part of the colony asking for something which is not wanted in another part; and I do not know that any advantage will come from inviting the Natives to express their views on the subject. I am quite satisfied that it will be impossible to produce a Bill which will satisfy the tribes in the different parts of the colony. However, that is a matter to be tried. This Bill has been introduced in deference to the wishes of the Natives themselves. I think it is a matter of no moment, so far as the repeal clause is concerned, with regard to future dealings with Native Land Acts. There have been no transactions hitherto under the present Act; and I am quite satisfied in my own mind that no transactions will take place under it. It was framed, I think, rather without consultation as to the wishes of the Natives on the subject. I think the Natives have determined, so far as they can, that they will not have other people meddling with their lands. They are jealous of the Government meddling with the land; and, in fact, they are jealous of

*Hon. Sir F. Whitaker*

any interference with their land in any way. I have no doubt that that will be found to be a very great difficulty in dealing with the question. I need not go into what has to be done in the future. Future inquiries will show what is to be done. I need not now pursue this part of the subject any further. If my honourable friend thinks it is not desirable that the repeal clause should be passed, he could simply move that the clause be struck out. That would not injure the remaining part of the Bill. I come now to show why the second part of the Bill is required. Under the Act of 1873 and subsequent Acts the Europeans were authorised to purchase land from the Natives under certain restrictions, and one restriction was that they should not be able to get a title to the land from the Crown, or be able to prove their claim, unless they had got every Native interested to sign a deed. Persons have bought land in this way from time to time. Where there were but a few Natives many transactions have been completed; but in other instances a large number have not been completed simply because of the very large number of Natives interested in the land, and the exceeding difficulty of getting the signatures of so many. In fact, in many instances it has been found impracticable, if not quite impossible. Probably twenty, thirty, forty, or even a larger number of Natives would execute the deed, but the signatures of many others had to be obtained. Clauses 32 and 33 of "The Native Land Administration Act, 1886," provide the most stringent prohibitions against private persons acquiring land from the Natives except under that Act, and impose most severe penalties on those who break the law. Of course, this absolutely, by itself, would have stopped all these parties who had partly purchased according to the law from completing their titles. This, of course, it was felt by the Government of the day—by the Government of which my honourable friend Mr. Buckley was a member—would be a great injustice, as no doubt it would have been. And therefore it was necessary that some provision should be made to enable those parties to complete their titles; and if they could not complete the titles in a certain time they were to go to the Native Land Court and have a division made between the Natives and themselves. There was a good deal of difficulty about the matter, no doubt. Provision was made by sections 24 and 25 that, whenever any person had made a purchase, he was to apply to the Court, and, if he proved that his transaction was a *bona fide* one, and a fair value had been given, then he was entitled to have a partition of the land between himself and the Natives. But he was allowed six months after that to complete his purchase; and after that the whole matter was to be wound up by the Native Land Court hearing the case, and giving to the Natives their portion of the land, and giving the Europeans that share of the land which they had purchased. No doubt this was a reasonable and fair arrangement so far. The matter came before the Assembly, and I had com-

munications with my honourable friend Mr. Buckley and with Mr. Ballance on the subject, and also with the Judge of the Native Land Court; and we endeavoured to frame clauses which would carry out this object—that is, to wind up all these past transactions within a given time, and provide that no transaction was to be entertained which had not been commenced before July, 1886. A number of cases were brought on and certificates were given under section 24, and in other cases persons paid money to the Natives and got additional signatures to their deeds from time to time, as allowed by the Act. A case then occurred in Gisborne—the case of Seymour against Macdonald—in which an application was made to the Native Land Court for the purpose of getting a certificate under the Native Land Administration Act; but in this case the certificate of title which had been obtained from the Native Land Court contained a restriction on purchase. The Native Land Court came to the conclusion that they could not grant the certificate under the circumstances, the land having been recommended by the Court to be made inalienable. Mr. Seymour was dissatisfied with this decision, and brought the matter into the Supreme Court. It came before his Honour Mr. Justice Richmond, and he gave judgment; and that judgment had the effect of entirely destroying the intentions of the two clauses 24 and 25, which were especially framed to meet such cases. The Judge came to the conclusion that the clauses which were passed by the Legislature with the full intention—and were framed for the purpose—of allowing persons who had purchased land held under certificates of title to come in in order to get their cases dealt with, could only apply to those who held under Crown grant. The number of people who held under Crown grant was extremely limited; the large number who had claims were those who held under certificates of title. The consequence of the judgment was that it stopped the operations of the Land Court, the intention of the Legislature was entirely frustrated, and people who had been induced by the legislation of 1886 to take a great deal of trouble in completing their titles and preparing their cases to come into Court with a view of obtaining partitions were entirely disappointed and completely thrown overboard. That is the position in which the matter stands at the present time. There are now, in a list which was shown to us in the Committee, something like three hundred claims in various parts of the country, some referring to blocks of many thousands of acres, down to an acre. These claims now are unsettled, and the parties concerned have taken all the necessary steps up to a certain point, and were proceeding with their cases when the decision of the Supreme Court came and entirely upset them. Mr. Seymour was not satisfied with the decision of the Supreme Court, and he went then to the Court of Appeal, and the Court of Appeal upheld the decision of the Judge; and the consequence has been that nearly the whole

of what has been intended to be done under clauses 24 and 25 of the Act has been swept away. There are no means now of proceeding, and the whole thing is in absolute confusion. A question was raised as to whether it was fair, under these circumstances, that these people should be given additional time in order to complete their titles. Personally, I think a little longer time should now be given. I cannot understand the limitation of the clauses to those under Crown grants—a point not decided by the Court of Appeal—to decide the case on the restriction point; but I dare say the Judge knows very much more than I do, and I am not going to discuss this question. But it appeared to me to be an interpretation which the Act does not bear. I say this because, with my honourable friend, opposite, and with the parties engaged in the matter, I assisted in drafting these very clauses; and the object of the Act, as everybody knew at that time, was that all these old transactions should be wound up as speedily as possible, and that no new transactions of a like kind should take place: and most specific penalties were prescribed for anybody who broke the law. As I have mentioned, the object of the law was to prevent the commencement of any new cases; but those persons who had made their purchases in accordance with the law were to be allowed to wind up their transactions by having a partition of the land between themselves and the Natives. Under all these circumstances—whatever view the Council may take as to that part of the Bill which provides the mode in which all Native land shall be acquired hereafter, whether that shall be preserved as it is or not—I submit to the Council that, if they do nothing else but provide for the winding-up of past transactions in the way intended, they will be doing no more than justice to those who have entered upon such transactions in accordance with law. This was intended under the Act of 1886; and since that Act was passed these people have an additional grievance—that the law was not sufficiently clear so that they could complete their transactions as intended. The Council, in considering the Bill which I wish to go into Committee upon, can separate the two parts of the Bill. The former part of it has reference to future transactions. This, to my mind, will be inoperative; but if it did operate it could do no harm whatever, and I shall be satisfied that it should continue, and that it should be the only law by which Natives can sell their lands in future. But this is a matter entirely separate from the subject of past transactions, and therefore when we go into Committee on the Bill the question to be considered is, whether the provision made as to future transactions is one that should be maintained or not. The provision made in the Bill before the Council is that nobody is to be allowed to purchase land from the Natives except the Crown between this and the promised new Act of next session passing. Everybody is absolutely prohibited, and everything done unauthorised by law is declared to be

void and illegal. This is in accordance, to that extent, with what the Natives desire; and the whole matter is to be considered before next session, and some Bill is to be prepared providing for the future. Therefore, whether the Administration Act of 1886 is to remain on the Statute Book or to be repealed is of little consequence. I did not interview the Natives on the subject, but the Premier and Native Minister did, and they particularly impressed on the Natives that there would be no mode between this and next session of selling the land unless it was sold to the Crown—the Natives were given to understand that there was no mode by which they could deal with their land, and the whole matter would have to stand over till next session; and I understand that it was their desire to accept these views. As far as myself and the Government are concerned, it is of no moment whether the present Act is allowed to remain on the Statute Book, or whether it should be repealed. Therefore this part of the Bill is entirely separable from the other. I ask the Council to allow the Bill to go into Committee. When we discuss this question, we can discuss it better in Committee than now, because, having spoken once, I cannot answer points that may be afterwards referred to, and I can do so in Committee. There are not many people who really do or care to understand the Native question, and therefore I prefer that all matters relating to the question be discussed in Committee, and the whole position be debated and perfectly understood; and then we could discuss both branches of the subject, and especially as to what it is necessary to do under the circumstances in order that these first transactions may be wound up and agreed to, as was the intention of the Legislature in 1886. I say that the two questions—the past and the future—are entirely separable, and I hope that they may be discussed fully. Different views may be taken in regard to them, but I do think that they are deserving of the careful consideration of the Council. My honourable friend proposes that this Bill should be laid aside for six months, and that all those people who have spent their money in preparing their cases to come before the Court shall have had all their trouble for nothing. I think that would be a great hardship. Whatever is to be done should, in my opinion, be done speedily, for speedy justice is the best kind of justice. No doubt those people have spent very considerable sums of money in the purchase of their lands, and I am quite sure that many of them will never see their money back again under any circumstances, and in these hard times it is very desirable that whatever claim they may have should be inquired into and settled without delay. It would be an unfair and unreasonable thing to allow the matter to stand over for another six months; but if the Council will go into Committee the matter may be more fully discussed, and if they think that the Bill should not, in its present or any other form, be passed, it would be quite competent for them to decide in that direction. Had the Hon. Mr. Menzies

*Hon. Sir F. Whitaker*

known the result to the country his amendment would have, I feel sure that he would not have moved it. It would cause a breach in all the expectations which the Government have held out. I therefore now ask the Council to go into Committee and let us proceed with the matter. I do not wish to press the Council. If members want time to consider it, they ought to have time. It would be quite competent in Committee, when discussing the questions, to move that progress be reported with or without asking leave to sit again. But do not let us say now that we shall consent to the amendment that the Bill be committed this day six months. Let us consider the claims of the persons who are interested. I think that will be a fair and reasonable thing to do, and we shall be inflicting an undue hardship on them if we throw out this Bill.

The Council divided on the question, "That the word 'now' be retained."

AYES, 19.

Baillie	Johnson	Richmond
Barnicoat	Lahmann	Scotland
Bonar	Mantell	Stevens
Brett	Miller	Waterhouse
Dignan	Oliver	Whitaker
Grace	Pharazyn	Williams.
Hart		

NOES, 9.

Buckley	Martin	Shrimski
Fraser	Menzies	Taiaroa
Kenny	Shephard	Wahawaha.

Majority for, 10.

Bill committed.

#### OTAGO CENTRAL RAILWAY BILL.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—Sir, it is now my duty to move the second reading of a measure of first-rate importance—the construction of a railway which will add value to more than two millions of acres of land, and practically add a new province to New Zealand. The Council will have the opportunity, by adopting my proposal, of accomplishing a work which has been called for very earnestly for many years past by a large proportion of the inhabitants of the southern part of the colony. It has been for many years a cherished desire in that part of the country to have this work completed; and so strong has been the feeling in favour of its prosecution that members of Governments have been rejected, and I may almost say that Governments have been defeated, in consequence of a prevailing feeling that this work has not been prosecuted with proper vigour. The Council now has the opportunity of getting that work proceeded with on terms so reasonable that I believe they will not be rejected. By means of this Bill the work, it is believed, can be constructed, and will cost the colony not one farthing. According to the evidence of the Surveyor-General, the sacrifice of land by means of which this work can be constructed will only lessen the pastoral revenue of the colony by £5,000 a year; and I shall show that this sum will be more than made up by the construction of the railway giving additional value



to the Crown lands. Ten years or so ago there was a Bill introduced into the House of Representatives called the Strath-Taieri and Clyde Railway Bill. The object of that Bill was to obtain the construction of most of this line by means of an endowment of land. Four hundred thousand acres of land were to be set aside and were to form the endowment by means of the sale of which the money was to be got by which this line was to be constructed. That proposal was to make the railway only as far as Clyde. The present proposal is of a more extensive character—namely, to carry the railway to Lakes Wanaka and Hawea. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee, composed of Messrs. Ormond, Pyke, De Lautour, Macandrew, Hislop, Carrington, Fisher, Bunney, Larnach, and Stout. The Committee very exhaustively inquired into the character of the proposal, and the evidence taken by it was most valuable. Mr. Donald Reid was then Minister of Lands, and he was examined by the Committee. I find in the evidence the following question put by Mr. Macandrew, and Mr. Reid's answer:—

"35. *Mr. Macandrew.*] I would put this general question: Assuming the interior of Otago is to be opened up, are you of opinion the line by Strath-Taieri is that which would affect the greatest area of available country?—Clearly the line by Strath-Taieri is the line that will do the greatest good to the interior of the province; it will open up the greatest area of land for settlement, as well as meet the requirements, in my estimation, of the interior districts; it will bring them in direct communication with the chief seaport."

Mr. Reid gave other evidence of a valuable character; and Mr. McKerrow—who is now Surveyor-General, but who was then Assistant Surveyor-General—also gave important evidence. He says,—

"From North Taieri to Strath-Taieri is a piece of extremely difficult country. The line would require to pass up a steep rocky gorge, where there would be enormous steep cuttings and the bridging of tributary streams."

"130. What is the length of the first section which you say would be so difficult?—About twenty-four miles from North Taieri on to Blair Taieri."

"131. And from Blair Taieri to Hyde?—The construction would be very easy. It passes up a beautiful level valley a distance of sixteen miles. Then from Hyde to the Taieri Lake, a distance of nine miles, it would be ordinarily easy, neither very difficult nor very easy, and a fair average. Then from the Taieri Lake to the Rough Ridge it would also be a very easy construction—a distance of sixteen miles. Then from Rough Ridge to the Poolburn Gorge, a distance of, say, eleven miles, the construction would also be very easy. Then from the Poolburn Gorge, a distance of about three miles, the construction would be extremely difficult, passing through a deep rocky gorge, which cannot be avoided. Then from the Poolburn Gorge to Clyde, a distance of about twenty-four miles, the construction

would be very easy. Then from Clyde to Cromwell, a distance of thirteen miles, it would pass through a gorge where the construction would be the average in railway-construction along the river-bank.

"132. The second question is this: What is the character of the country through which this line would pass?—We will take it in the same sections. From North Taieri to Blair Taieri the country may be described as semi-pastoral, semi-agricultural, the pastoral predominating. From Blair Taieri to Hyde it passes through a very fine agricultural district. From Hyde to the Taieri Lake the country is again semi-pastoral, semi-agricultural. Then from the Taieri Lake to Rough Ridge on to Poolburn the country may be said to be half agricultural and half pastoral. It is a great level plain; rather a high elevation, probably, for growing wheat. Then from Poolburn Gorge to Clyde it passes through a very fine valley (Manuhirikia), of which a belt four or five miles wide may be said to be all agricultural. Some of it is very shingly, but under irrigation and perhaps shelter it would grow oats."

"133. In speaking of this country between Rough Ridge and Poolburn, what kind of country is that?—It is country I have described now as semi-pastoral, semi-agricultural, and I believe it would grow oats very well; but it is at a very high altitude, varying from 1,200ft. up to 2,000ft."

"134. Now, what would you say was the total area of land available for agricultural settlement from North Taieri up to Clyde, that would be rendered accessible by the construction of such a line?—There will be 1,200,000 acres opened up."

"135. Agricultural?—Oh, no; mixed."

"136. How much would be rendered accessible for agricultural settlement?—I did not consider that point, but I think I might say a fourth of it, or perhaps a third. We do not know what will grow there, because at one time they thought wheat would not grow beyond Taieri; then we shifted to Clutha; then to Queenstown, which is now one of the finest wheat-growing districts in the colony."

"137. Your answer is that it would render available 1,200,000 acres?—Yes. Of that 1,200,000 acres the whole of it is Crown land with the exception of about 40,000 acres, which is a very important point."

"138. Of these 40,000 acres how much is the education reserve?—I excepted the education reserve."

"139. Is the 40,000 acres beside the education reserve?—Yes. I think it would be more nearly 30,000 acres when I consider it."

"144. *Mr. Hislop.*] Do you think only a portion of the land would be opened, namely, that alongside the railway-line?—I should think it would double the value of the land tinted on the map. This Strath-Taieri Hundred was opened up and advertised, and a lot of Taieri settlers went up and started farming, but they found they could not work two establishments on account of the hilly road inter-

vening, and came back. The Strath-Taieri land is at present unavailable for settlement on account of its inaccessibility.

"145. Are these mountains to the west side of the railway?—They are mountain-slopes.

"146. Can it be said the railway will open up this country?—Yes, up to the watershed.

"147. But not beyond it?—No.

"148. *Mr. Macandrew.*] You say that this line would render available 1,200,000 acres?—Yes.

"149. Have you any idea what would be the ultimate value of that land, assuming the line were made, per acre?—I really believe you could sell 400,000 acres at 30s. an acre, that is £600,000, and the remainder would sell on an average at 15s. an acre: that would bring it up to £1,200,000, after the railway is constructed.

"168. *The Chairman.*] Beyond Cromwell, do you know the country; how far towards the West Coast?—Up to the forest of the Makarora.

"169. Would that open up a large area of land?—It would. There is 1,065,000 acres from Cromwell to Makarora Bush.

"170. Supposing the railway be carried so far as Cromwell at present, would that be beneficial, and calculated to assist in opening the country beyond Cromwell that you have described?—Certainly.

"171. It is the natural outlet for all the country in that valley?—Yes.

"172. *Mr. Macandrew.*] And from Cromwell to Lake Wanaka it is almost dead level?—It rises in forty miles about 300ft.

"173. *The Chairman.*] Can you tell us the elevation at the head of Lake Wanaka?—The lake itself is put down at 1,089ft. That is a mistake. It is only 920ft. The land at the head of the lake is only a few feet more.

"174. What is the elevation of Cromwell?—700ft.

"175. There are no hills to go through—no cuttings, no bridges?—Yes; a bridge would be required where you cross the Clutha once.

"176. Not near Cromwell?—Yes; you must cross the river near Campbell's Station, Wanaka.

"177. Then, there would be only one bridge of any formidable dimensions?—Yes.

"178. Can you tell us the elevation of the Haast Pass?—1,700ft.

"179. That is the highest point between Dunedin and the West Coast by that route?—Yes; it is the only true pass in the Middle Island; the rest are going up and over spurs. There is no end of timber at the other side of the pass. From Lake Wanaka to the West Coast it is dense timber. It is important you should know that the Strath-Taieri route passes through lignite deposits which are extensive. They are adjacent to it all along. But for that lignite the diggers would very likely have had to give in long ago."

I am reading this because the evidence of Mr. McKerrow is of the greatest importance amongst that given to the various Committees which have sat on this question. Now, Sir, this is the evidence of the present Surveyor-

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General. Many of the witnesses also gave very important evidence, but I will not detain the Council with that. Well, the report of the Committee was as follows:—

"The line *viâ* Strath-Taieri commands the largest quantity of Crown lands available for settlement, presents the fewest engineering difficulties, passes entirely through Crown lands, and has the great advantage of being the nearest and most direct line from the interior to Dunedin. It has been shown in evidence that this line will directly open 1,200,000 acres of Crown lands, of which it has been variously estimated that from 400,000 to 500,000 acres are immediately adapted for agriculture. In addition it affords railway communication for 1,065,000 acres of land above Cromwell, which is the natural outlet for all the traffic of the basin of the Clutha River and the Hawea and Wanaka Lakes. This line possesses the further recommendation of having been selected by Mr. Blair, the District Engineer, after a personal inspection of the several proposed routes, as the best in an engineering and economical point of view; and Mr. Blair's opinions are fully sustained by the evidence given before your Committee by the Surveyor-General, Mr. Thompson; the Assistant Surveyor-General, Mr. McKerrow; Mr. Roberts, merchant, of Dunedin; the Hon. the Minister of Lands; and the Hon. Sir Francis Dillon Bell. The highest summit-level on this line would be 1,500ft., and it is worthy of remark that, from Cromwell to the West Coast at Jackson's and Open Bay, the highest point to be surmounted is only 1,700ft. above the sea-level—namely, in the Haast Pass; and the continuation of this line to the West Coast is only a question of time.

"Your Committee have therefore agreed to report—

"That the route to Cromwell *viâ* Strath-Taieri is unquestionably that which opens up the largest area of unsold land available for pastoral and agricultural settlement.

"That the respective County Councils of Taieri, Maniototo, and Vincent, failing the Colonial Government undertaking the work, are prepared to do so, on condition of a given area of land being placed at their disposal, and to hand over the line when completed to the Government.

"That the Committee recommend the construction of this line to the favourable consideration of the Government; and, failing the Government undertaking its construction, it is absolutely necessary, in the interest of settlement, that the work should be forthwith proceeded with, either by the counties concerned or by a private company; and that, in either case, with a view to accelerate the progress of the work, and of diffusing employment throughout the district, the work of construction should be commenced at each end of the line, and at one or more points in the centre, simultaneously.

"And your Committee further recommend—

"That a Bill should be introduced into Par-

liament during the present session, so as to give effect to their report without delay or loss of time, which in the present condition of the labour-market would, in the opinion of your Committee, be injurious, if not disastrous, to the best interests of the country."

' That is the report of the Select Committee which was appointed to consider the Strath-Tairi Bill more than ten years ago. The Bill was passed by the other branch of the Legislature, and came up to this Council, and the second reading was moved by Sir John Hall. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Hon. Mr. Miller, the Hon. Mr. Bell, the Hon. Dr. Pollen, the Hon. Colonel Whitmore, the Hon. Mr. G. Buckley, and the Hon. Sir J. Hall. The evidence taken by this Committee is very interesting, as well as that which I have read to the Council, and repeats, to a very great extent, the evidence which I have read. The conclusion to which this Committee came was, generally, to this effect: that this line is the best line of railway for opening up the lands of Otago, and that the mining interests are large and important, and that there are many points fit for settlement which until the railway is constructed there is no hope of bringing into occupation. I will read a portion of the report of the Committee to the Council:—

"The Committee approve the principle of reserving land for the construction of the railway, provided that the reservation made shall in each case be of an extent and character sufficient to insure that no charge for the construction of the line shall fall on the revenue of the colony.

"That as regards Otago the whole interior basin of the Upper Tairi, Manuherikia, and Upper Molyneux is practically locked up from profitable settlement by not being made accessible to the seaport, and is at present unsaleable at anything like £1 per acre, but that the proposed railway would render the land certainly saleable at a price above that limit."

This being the report of the Committee, the Bill would have passed this Council but for the unfortunate fact that the Committee saw fit not only to report in favour of this line, but to attach to the Bill several other lines of railway. That insured its rejection: and the loss the country has suffered from this rejection has been very great. Were it not for this, the railway would have been in use by this time, and would have proved of most valuable service to the colony. Well, Sir, in 1878, the year following that in which the Bill was introduced, this line of railway was adopted by the Government. It was recommended to Parliament, and was included amongst the railways authorised by Parliament. Money was voted for it, and it was begun; and every year since that time sums of money have been voted for it, and the work is now being prosecuted. The sums of money which have been voted are very large, but I am sorry to say that the sums spent are not so large. In the year 1878-79 there was £55,000 voted; in 1879-80, £120,800; in

1880-81, £68,000; in 1881-82, £36,000; in 1882-83, £50,000; in 1883-84, £130,000; the following year, £165,000; and the next year, £126,000; and in 1886, £140,000: making, altogether, a total of £891,400. This sum was voted for this railway. The expenditure upon it to the last date on which accounts were furnished amounted to £328,207, with a further liability of £66,554; so that the total amount actually spent on the line was £394,761, or, in round numbers, £400,000. Now, we have a proposal by the Minister for Public Works the other day, in his Public Works Statement, for a further expenditure, beyond the liability of £66,000, of £105,000—that is, to spend £170,000, bringing up the total expenditure on this line to just half a million. Well, Sir, the work done by means of this large sum is decidedly of an unremunerative character. Unless the railway is carried farther into the country, all this money will be absolutely thrown away, because the point at which it is proposed by the Minister to stop this railway, as a Government railway, is only forty miles in all, and just goes over the frontier of this promised land. The expensive character of the work and the difficulties which have been encountered in the construction of this line will be easily learned. The average cost per mile up to Middlemarch, the Government terminus, will be £12,500, while the ordinary cost per mile of Government railways is an average of a little under £6,000. Now, Sir, the result of this expenditure is that in a few months—some time about next September—we shall have twenty miles of the railway open for traffic, leading to a point which, I think, will scarcely warrant its opening for traffic. There is thirteen miles further which is partly made, and the Government propose to construct seven miles beyond that, bringing it up to forty miles, to Middlemarch, and there stop it. The principal difficulties of the line, however, have been overcome by the expenditure that has already been made; and the difficulties which will be met with in the prosecution of this work over the remaining 140 miles will be very few and trifling, compared with those which have already been encountered. The proposal is to prosecute this railway at the average cost of a little under £6,000 a mile. The route has been surveyed, and even working plans have been made, and for the last three or four years have been lying complete in the Government offices; and the cost of the whole line, beginning at Middlemarch and ending at Lakes Wanaka and Hawea, is a little over £800,000. And now to continue the history of this undertaking up to date. Owing to the want of energy shown by the Government in the prosecution of the work, the three County Councils through whose districts the railway was proposed to go joined in appointing what they called a commission to inquire into the character of the line and report upon it. The Commissioners reported in June, 1881. The report is a valuable one as showing the opinions that were come to after a more or less complete inquiry by gentlemen whose names

are known to nearly every member of this Council. The Commissioners included Messrs. Bathgate; Henry Clark, who for years past had been one of the most useful and respected members of the Otago Land Board; Mr. Donald Reid, formerly a member of the House of Representatives and a Minister of the Crown; and Mr. Horace Bastings, also a former member of the House. I will trouble the Council with one or two extracts from their report, so that the Council may know the opinions of men who went over the ground and made an examination of the condition of the country, and so on. In paragraph 3 of the report they say,—

“A general view of the importance of the line may be realised from the following facts: It would start from the Main Southern Trunk line, only seven miles south from Dunedin, thus having at one terminus a population of 45,000. The district to be traversed contains at present a number of industrial centres, including the Boroughs of Alexandra, Cromwell, and Naseby, and the Townships of Pembroke, Albertown, Bendigo, Bannockburn, Clyde, Ophir, Drybread, Tinker's, Cambrian, St. Bathans, Hill's Creek, Kyeburn, Hamilton, Hyde, Middlemarch, and Hindon. The population numbers about 10,000, all actively engaged in agricultural, pastoral, and mining pursuits, and in the various trades and manufactures necessary for such a population. There are twenty-three post-offices, ten branch-banks, and twenty-five schools, having thirty-six teachers and 1,503 scholars. A Resident Magistrate's Court is held at eleven different localities. Three newspapers are published locally—viz., the *Mount Ida Chronicle*, the *Dunstan Times*, and the *Cromwell Argus*. The annual valuation of the Counties of Vincent and Maniototo, including boroughs, is £84,424, although nearly the whole of the land is still part of the waste lands of the Crown.”

Then follows a long paragraph about the importance of the agricultural and pastoral interests; but I presume the members of the Council know something of the character of this district, so that I will not inflict upon them more of this report than I can avoid, it being simply my object to give a general review of the character of the land. The report states,—

“The various settlers examined spoke, without exception, of the remarkable fertility of the soil, and concurred in stating that from 30 to 50 bushels per acre of good wheat have been obtained, and from 35 to 70 bushels of oats. Turnips and other root-crops thrive excellently. Such is the superiority of the climate for the growth of cereals that places situated at an altitude at which grain would not grow in Britain were found to yield productively. Wheat was shown to us at Naseby of good quality which had been grown at a height above the sea of 2,000ft. Mr. Roberts states in his evidence in relation to the high land in the Hindon and Silverpeak districts, ‘Good crops are grown 1,500ft. above the sea: oats and magnificent turnips.’ The height of Strath-Taieri plain at its lowest point is about 625ft. above the sea.”

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Then the Commissioners go on to show the drawback which settlers encounter who try to pursue agriculture, owing to the distance from market to the sea. They say,—

“Cultivation, beyond what is necessary to supply local wants, is subjected at present to the prohibitive drawbacks of distance from market, and cost of carriage. We found in several instances two years' crops on hand. These drawbacks were the only complaints made by the settlers. They praised the climate and the fertility of the soil, and were all desirous to increase their area of cultivation, if facility of communication could be obtained.”

I shall not detain the Council any longer by reading this evidence, but it was necessary to give the Council some idea of the character of the country to be penetrated, and I thought that these reports would show it to us more concisely than I could. The report of the Commissioners is here, and a map attached to it, which I will lay on the table for the purpose of having it consulted by honourable members. It shows the proposed route, and the character of the land. I have also a similar map, which I have from the Surveyor-General, and it may possibly carry greater conviction to the minds of honourable members, although I have ascertained from the Public Works Department that his map attached to the report of the Commissioners was furnished by that department. That brings the evidence in favour of the line up to 1881. There is a very important item of evidence—which I should like to submit to the Council—contained in the report of the Surveyor-General presented to the House on the 10th July, 1885. It is a report on the Crown lands for future settlements. The Surveyor-General reports as follows of the districts concerned:—

“Nenthorn and Strath-Taieri, and Deep Dale Run (part of), 80,000 acres: Well-grassed land, from 600ft. to 2,000ft. altitude, well adapted for farms from 200 acres to 500 acres—one-half for agriculture and the other half for pasture. This country has been shut out from Dunedin and the coast by intervening hills. On the opening of the Otago Central Railway it will only be from forty to fifty miles from Dunedin by rail.

“Upper Taieri or Maniototo Plain (level and upland), 150,000 acres: Open grass-land; at present held in runs which can be resumed for settlement on twelve months' notice. Altitude of plain 900ft. to 2,000ft. Cereals and root-crops grow well. 10,000 acres at present open for application on settlement conditions. It would be premature to open more land until the Otago Central Railway is extended to the plain.

“Ida, Manuhirikia, and Upper Clutha Valley, 250,000 acres: Similar country to the above, and also held on pastoral lease; should not be opened until country is more advanced. About 20,000 acres of it surveyed, and now open for selection on settlement conditions.”

I shall finish the evidence drawn from official sources by referring to the report of the Waste Lands Committee of the House of Representatives, to whom was referred this Bill in May

last. The following is an extract from the evidence given before that Committee by Mr. McKerrow, Surveyor-General:—

"1. *The Chairman.*] It is the wish of the Committee to learn—first, the quantity of land which would be affected under the concession-clauses of this Bill; next, as to the quality of the land and its availability for settlement—how much of it is agricultural and how much pastoral land. Will you be good enough to make a statement on both these points, and afterwards answer questions that members of the Committee may ask you?—Yes. From this Bill I observe that it embraces that portion of the Central Railway from Taieri Lake to Lakes Wanaka and Hawea. The distance is about 110 miles. The Bill further states that all land within fifteen miles each side of the railway is to be considered in connection therewith. That includes an area of 1,820,000 acres, of which there are 170,000 acres of freehold and public reserves, leaving of Crown lands 1,650,000 acres. For the convenience of the Committee I have divided the line into two parts. It will be more convenient to do so, considering the nature of the land through which it passes. From the Taieri Lake to Clyde is a distance of sixty miles. Of Crown lands there are 1,030,000 acres. Of this area, 830,000 acres may be deemed pastoral, and 200,000 acres agricultural. Taking that portion of the land from Clyde to Hawea, a distance of fifty miles, there are of Crown lands 620,000 acres, of which 570,000 acres may be deemed pastoral and 50,000 agricultural land. In both cases I estimate the agricultural land at £1 per acre; the pastoral land in the first division, from Taieri Lake to Clyde, at 12s. 6d. an acre; the division between Clyde and Hawea (pastoral land) I estimate at 10s. an acre. The whole cash value of both divisions, pastoral and agricultural, over the whole line, as above stated, is about £1,000,000 sterling. Next as to the nature of the land. The railway-line begins at Taieri Lake, running through a large tract of level country called the Upper Taieri Plain, thence to the Ida Valley, thence to Manuherikia, thence through the Gorge to Cromwell, thence to the Upper Clutha Valley. These valleys are all very similar in respect to the quality of the land, being mostly of a gravelly soil, with a deeper soil along the margin of the mountain-slopes. Speaking as regards its suitability for agriculture, it might be described as possessing a light sweet soil, that yields crops admirably in moist seasons; but, as the climate of all the interior of Otago is rather dry, there is always an uncertainty of gathering in the crops from year to year. But wherever irrigation has been resorted to and there is water available the security of crops is a matter of certainty. Wheat will grow in this district and ripen well, in good selected spots, up to an elevation of 1,800ft.; oats to an elevation of 3,000ft. But, as all the level land, or that which is likely to be cultivated, is under an altitude of 2,000ft., that may be deemed to be the limit of cultivation.

"30. I have your report here—the report of the Surveyor-General made in 1885 [C-5]. You recommended that these lands should not be sold, but should be held in suspense until the railway is built. Will you tell me the meaning of the word 'advanced' used in that report?—Until there is more population, and until the conditions of the country should be altered.

"31. You did not think that certain lands should be sold until the railway was extended to the district?—Yes. I should like to explain to the Committee what I might call the reason of giving this return at all. It was obtained by Mr. Montgomery; and the direction given to me was not to draw up a general scheme at all, but to say what particular land would be suitable for agricultural purposes. Had I been free to give a general report I would, as I am now pointing out, have stated that it would be an unwise thing to give this land for purely agricultural purposes although it is agricultural land. The land must be associated with the high country if the most is to be taken out of the district.

"32. You spoke just now of the 'light soil.' will you give the Committee some account of the bulk of the crops grown there?—Yes. On the Crown Terrace, at an altitude of 1,800ft., they have grown wheat for several seasons, as much as 50 bushels to the acre. Oats they have grown—I hardly like to repeat the quantity to the acre, but, according to reports, as much as 100 bushels has been grown to the acre. The Crown Terrace is a flat piece of land, of a virgin soil. It has grown crops for a few years, but I do not think it will continue to do so unless fertilisers are added. But, coming to the district of Sowburn, Maniototo Plain, a digger there brought in water from the hills, and gave the land a good soak to start the crops. I never saw finer crops of wheat, oats, and barley than he produced. The elevation was about 1,000ft. These crops were grown on land that you would decidedly call 'light.' The soil consists principally of mica-schist, which, where it is decomposed, is well adapted for growing fruit. The finest fruit in Otago is grown up in the Clutha district.

"33. *Mr. Whyte.*] Can water be brought on to this land?—Yes; at the bases of the hills the farmer can take it in little streamlets from the snow-fed rivers. I might say that, in calculating the future capacity of the country, the question is not so much the nature of the soil as the amount of available water and the facilities for bringing it on to the land.

"34. *Mr. Pyke.*] There is a great deal of lime there?—Yes.

"35. There are what they call travertines there, which have the effect of an open-air hothouse upon growth?—Yes."

I think I have adduced a sufficient amount of evidence to show that this country is eminently suitable for settlement, and that at present it is undeveloped owing to the want of easy communication. The idea embodied in the first attempt—the Strath-Taieri and Clyde Railway Bill—the idea of using the land as a

means of obtaining the construction of railways has never been abandoned. It will be in the memory of honourable members that two or three attempts have been made to use land for this purpose. In 1881 the Railways Construction and Land Act was passed, and the Otago Central Railway was included in the schedule as one of the railways to be made under that Act. There were, in all, five railways included in the schedule to the Act, which the Government were empowered to enter into contracts for within a certain limited time. But, as honourable members know, the only railway which has hitherto been constructed under the Act is the Wellington-Manawatu Railway. The reason for the limited application of that Act is not far to see. It is that the endowments authorised by that Act are not sufficient to induce capitalists to embark their money in such works. The endowments in land which the Government were empowered to give under that Act amounted to 30 per cent. on £5,000 a mile. The endowment which this Bill proposes is 33 per cent. on a sum slightly less than £6,000 a mile. But, as I shall show, the endowment given to the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company was really much in excess of this 30 per cent. on £5,000 a mile, for the Council will remember that very expensive works had been begun in the neighbourhood of Wellington, amounting in cost to between £30,000 and £40,000; also that plant had been imported for that railway, and that the work and a portion of that plant were handed over to the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company. And, in addition to that, they had power given to them to reclaim from the harbour thirty acres of land, which they did at scarcely any cost, by using earth from the tunnels for that purpose, and thereby they got a very valuable endowment. I find that this sum they got in excess added to the 30 per cent. contemplated by the Act amounted to just the same thing as the 33 per cent. on the slightly larger estimate per mile with which it is contemplated in this Bill to endow this railway. Thirty per cent. on £5,000 a mile is £1,500, and 33 per cent. on £6,000 is £1,980. The difference is £480. One hundred and eighty miles at £480 a mile amounts to £86,400; and I think honourable members will find, if they properly estimate the value of the works, the plant, and the reclamation given to the Wellington-Manawatu Railway, that the extra endowment would bring up the endowment to just the same as this Bill proposes for the Otago Central. As to the character of the Bill, as I have already said the Government is empowered by it to enter into a contract with a company, syndicate, firm, or person for the construction of the line, and to endow the company with a portion of the land developed by the railway. The amount of the endowment on the estimate of £850,000 will be £280,500—that is to say, 33 per cent. I should say that this endowment is to be selected from a distance of fifteen miles on each side of the railway, and the company is to have alternate blocks with the Government. The area within the fifteen-

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mile distance is declared by Mr. McKerrow to be 1,820,000 acres, and, deducting the portion of the land already sold and the reserves, it amounts to 1,650,000 acres. And if you estimate the lands given and which will be taken by the company at 15s. per acre, the endowment will consist of 374,000 acres, or about 22 per cent. of the Crown lands within the fifteen-mile limit. That will leave the Government 78 per cent. of the lands within the fifteen-mile limit; so that, by giving the company 22 per cent., the railway will give to the remaining 78 per cent. a far greater value than will bring it up to its original value before the railway was made. I think that is quite evident. The valuation of the land to form this endowment is to be made by the Surveyor-General on the side of the Government and by a person appointed by the company, and, in case of their disagreement, by an umpire. But the value of the land is not to be less than 10s. an acre. There is also this provision in the Bill: that the land is not to be sold in large blocks, or at the will of the company. It is to be sold in accordance with the land-laws of the colony at the date when it is sold. The mining lands are not to be granted, so that that industry is protected by one or two clauses which seem to me to anticipate every objection from that quarter. These are the principal points in the Bill. The remainder, and by far the larger part of the Bill, is almost a copy of the Midland Railway Bill, and relates to the method of issuing debentures by the company. I will point out that this Bill is exceedingly modest in its requirements. It is exceedingly restrained in its dealing with the land and with the general interests of the country; and all I can say is that, by means of it a company with sufficient capital can be induced to make this railway, we shall obtain a most useful and long-desired work at really no cost at all as far as we are concerned. The land itself is good, and only awaits the construction of this line for agriculture, horticulture, and very many industries, as well as the most important industry of mining, to be encouraged and developed. The people of the world will be permitted, by means of this line, to have access to some of the most beautiful scenery which the earth contains. There is one other point which I will just refer to, and that is the present depressed condition of the colony, a matter which is by no means to be lost sight of, considering that we are spending close on £70,000 a year for the employment of the otherwise unemployed. That of itself is a consideration. If this great work can be achieved by the means which I have attempted to detail to the Council, I am sure that all will agree that the work should be proceeded with. I move, *That the Bill be read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—I wish to give my reasons briefly for voting for the second reading of this Bill. Of course I am already familiar, as I suppose most honourable members are, with the documents from which such copious extracts have been read by the honourable gentleman in moving the second reading

of the Bill. If I had never looked at one of these documents I am bound to say that the honourable gentleman has so skilfully arranged his extracts, and has made out so good a case for the second reading of the Bill, that had I been in doubt which way to vote I should most decidedly have become a convert. Even allowing a considerable margin for enthusiasm in the description of the country through which this line is proposed to be taken, still there is no doubt that the report of the Commissioners describes a magnificent country—though they do not say all the land is of surpassing richness. They do not say it is all fit for agriculture. I think what they tell us is much more promising than if they described a merely agricultural country. What is it that makes France such a rich country? She has a fine climate and a fine soil. This it is which makes France so rich: that she can grow such a diversity of crops. If one crop fails there is another to fall back upon. This it is which enables the small landed proprietors in France to pull through in all seasons, and under discouraging circumstances which would be the ruin of small landed proprietors in England, who rely upon a crop of one character only. The land in question will produce in abundance corn, fruit, and wool of superior quality. I am very glad indeed that it is proposed to carry another line into the interior of New Zealand. I wish we had more lines penetrating into the interior of the country. Owing to the manner in which the colony was settled the temptation has been too great to follow the level land and lay down railway-lines along the coast, competing with the steamboat traffic to the great injury of our coasting trade. Our railways seem to have done all the injury they possibly could do the coasting trade; and then, as if to give a lift to the coasting trade again, we spend hundreds of thousands upon harbours, to the injury of the railways we have constructed at such enormous cost. The rising generation of New Zealand has become so effeminate that it has no stomach to take a sea-voyage. People must get into a comfortable railway-train and be carried upon these easy-going lines over level country along the coast. Of course we shall hear the usual cry, that it is a bad bargain for the colony. We heard the same cry the other day about the Midland Railway. It was said that the colony was going to give away too much valuable land, although it sometimes suits the book of these gentlemen to denounce the land as perfect rubbish, which will ruin any company that has anything to do with it. Now, I have no doubt we shall be told that all this valuable land is to be given away to an outsider, and that nothing is to be left to the colony. But the same thing was said in regard to the Wellington-Manawatu line. It was then said, "What a bad bargain it will be for the colony! what a lot of money these people will make in selling the land!" Let them make money. I wish they may make money. Theirs is the enterprise, and theirs ought to be the profit. But for every pound

they make will not the colony be richer by many pounds? The plutocrats of the colony will not like this. This is not their idea of settling the country. Their idea of settling the country is shutting up country and dividing it into sheep- and cattle-runs. New Zealand must have a large accession to her population and capital before long, or it will be in a very bad state. This, in my opinion, will bring an accession of both population and capital. Therefore I hail the appearance of this Bill with very great satisfaction. It will not tempt the settlers of New Zealand to embark their capital in the railway, because, unfortunately, we are too poor to embark money in it, and the interest likely to be returned is not sufficient temptation to us. That interest, although it is small, may be sufficient to tempt persons in England to embark their money in it; and let them, by all means, do so. The proportion of land to be given I consider is very moderate. I would give away every acre we have got to persons who are capable and willing to occupy and cultivate it. I would not look to the land as a source of profit at all. I know some people think that we ought to keep an enormous reserve of land. I have heard it said that if we go on parting with our land we shall be the less able to raise loans on the London market, and that the land ought to remain as security for the foreign bondholders. Nonsense! The best security for the foreign bondholders is the progress and improvement of the colony. Every man who comes out here with money and settles on the land and increases the amount of our exports adds to the security of the colony. If we had not an acre of waste land left, yet, so long as we were an industrious people, so long as our exports were progressing satisfactorily, we should have the best security to offer to the foreign bondholders. Depend upon it the people in England do not inquire how much land we have in New Zealand as security. They turn to our exports and ask, "Are their exports on the increase? Are the people of New Zealand industrious?" Those are the questions which are more likely to be asked. The honourable gentleman has dealt so thoroughly with the matter that he has left nothing further for any one to say in praise of the Bill. He made out, in my opinion, a very good case for it; and I think it will be of very great benefit to this colony if this Bill is allowed to be read a second time and to become law during the present session. I shall have very much pleasure in voting for it.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I am not one of the great sheep-farmers, but I am one who at all times take an interest in what comes before this Chamber. As regards the private railways constructed under either the District Railways Act or the Railways Construction or other Acts, I have always recorded my vote according to my conscience. The honourable gentleman who moved the second reading of this Bill ought to be complimented on the very able manner in which he discharged that duty. No doubt he has taken a great deal of trouble to make himself thoroughly acquainted with

what he was laying before the Council. The promoter of the Bill also ought to be congratulated; for I sincerely believe that it is one of his most earnest desires to see this railway carried out. He has worked for a number of years in that direction, and at last he has succeeded in carrying the Bill through the other Chamber. Before going any further, I would ask those honourable gentlemen representing the Government in this Chamber whether they are supporting this measure or not, and I shall wait for an answer. There does not seem to be any answer. I will therefore give my reasons for asking the question. I have asked a simple question, and I expected to get an answer. It seems to me that the Government did give permission for this Bill to be introduced, because no measure of this nature can be introduced without the sanction of the Government. Any Bill dealing with the lands of the colony must have the sanction of the Government. Hence, I presume the Government has given its sanction for the introduction of this Bill. It appears that the Government intended to support this Bill, because they set aside a day for discussing the measure in the other Chamber. Therefore I come to the conclusion that the Government are in favour of passing the Bill. As far as I am concerned, I have only a few words to say. I would not have spoken so early, or have assigned any reason for the action I intend to take, if it had not been that I intend to go south, and I do not wish to give a silent vote on this matter. Therefore I intend to say a few words on the subject. The honourable gentleman who introduced this Bill, as I said before, deserves great credit. He made the district appear almost a Garden of Eden, and showed that everything good and beautiful is to be found in it. I am very happy to hear it. I know a contractor, on whose word I can depend; he is a close neighbour of mine, and has had a contract upon this very line; and I am bound to take his word, because I have no cause to think that what he stated was not the truth. He told me that it was one of the worst lines ever undertaken by the colony, and one which would never pay.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—That is true, as far as the line has been already constructed.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—Then we go a little further. If the line will not pay for the first forty miles, I should like to know how it is going to pay beyond that point. We are told by the honourable gentleman who introduced this Bill that it is intended to take the railway up to Lake Wanaka. I suppose the honourable gentleman knows very well that there is already constructed a railway which can take passengers up to Queenstown, in the Lake District; and the construction of another line will, in my opinion, be a waste of public money, even though it should be proved that anything would hereafter be returned to the Crown for the outlay. We are then told by the honourable gentleman that it will not cost the colony a penny. If it will not cost the colony a penny, I suppose

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land is to be picked up for nothing; if so, I cannot understand how people find such difficulty in getting hold of it. I ask the Government, as I have already done, whether they are going to support this Bill or not. I have also said that they have given the promoter cause and reason to believe that they would support it. I suppose they have an object in view; and I may say that, if I am not divulging secrets—though I did not think it was a secret—I was told in the lobby, within a few hours after the passing of the Bill in the other Chamber, that the Bill was a bad Bill and that the Bill ought to be rejected; and I, not wanting to participate in any further information, or to listen to what my informant wished to say, told him that I declined to be present any longer, and left him. But he told me that the gentleman who told him this was a Minister of the Crown, who had said that the Bill was bad, inasmuch as it was not constructed on the lines of the District Railways Act or the Railways Construction Act, but on the lines of the Midland Railway Act. If this is so, why do not the Government try to drop the Bill and effect an alteration in accordance with their views? But there is more behind this. The Government wanted to remove the responsibility of the shoulders of the other Chamber and place it on the shoulders of the Council. I say such conduct as this is very reprehensible. In my opinion, as far as the line is concerned, it will never pay; and the giving land to a company for the purpose of constructing the line will have the effect of leading us deeper and deeper into trouble, the same as was caused by the Midland Railway Act. In my opinion we ought to try and stop new constructions of this character. If the line is likely to pay, then by all means let the Government carry out the work; and if it is not good enough for the Government it cannot be good enough for the company, who, if they undertake the work, will be ultimately coming to Parliament and asking for compensation. I therefore intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—My honourable friend who has introduced this Bill has done so in such flowing language—taking this language from the celebrated Commission—and has read the extracts from the Commissioners' report in such a way that I began to think that I knew very little of the country through which the railway would pass, although I have been over it over and over again.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—So have I.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—Sir, my honourable friend has put forward in glowing terms the great bargain the colony is to make by handing these tracts of land over to a syndicate. Now, what is a syndicate? A syndicate consists of a few men clubbed together in order to get money out of the ignorant people in England by a scheme out of which they hope to make a very large profit themselves. That is what a syndicate is. Syndicates have taken a very large amount out of our loans and our necessities. Syndicates, it appears to me, are going



to make large amounts out of these railways now; and, whoever the poor unfortunates may be that embark in these undertakings, I have no doubt the syndicates will make money out of them. I believe, myself, in putting a thing fairly to the people, and making a bargain fair to both sides, and then standing or falling by the bargain. The honourable gentleman has read out of the Commissioners' report a number of extracts; but my honourable friend was once a Minister of the Crown, and one of the first steps the Government of which he was a member did when it came into office was to appoint a Commission to go over all these lines and see how far the Government would be justified in constructing certain railways through the colony. The Commissioners examined the Otago Central Railway-line, and in their report there is a list of railways which are "not recommended:" among them is the Otago Central Railway.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—Yes; for construction by the colony.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—If it was not a good thing for the colony to construct, how could it be a good thing for any other body to undertake? I will just read this report of practical men. The report that has been read is the report of the interested people through whose lands the line is proposed to run. The report of the Commission I have referred to is as follows:—

"We are of opinion that the circumstances and requirements of the colony do not warrant the construction of this costly line of railway, for which the engineer's estimate is £1,100,000. But a very small proportion of the land through which the route has been surveyed is at all fit for agricultural purposes, and the population spread over the district is far too limited to afford encouragement for an expenditure so large as that proposed for this line.

"The works through the Taieri Gorge, a distance of over thirty miles, are of a very difficult and expensive nature, consisting to a great extent of a succession of curves through rock-cutting; and, as there is no access from the country on either side, this portion of the line must remain totally unproductive.

"When the necessity arises for a railway to tap that part of the interior of Otago which comprises the Maniototo Plains, the Ida Valley, the Dunstan District, and the Upper Clutha, careful surveys should be made with a view to find a cheaper and shorter route, and one which would pass through a smaller extent of unprofitable country. From the evidence brought before us upon this subject, we think special attention should be given to the survey of the country between Livingstone and Naseby, as a line by this route would shorten the communication between the interior and a port of shipment by many miles.

"We desire to express our regret that so much money has already been spent between Hindon and Mosgiel, as from our examination of the line we can come to no other conclusion than that it would be for the best interests of the colony to abandon it. The entire under-

taking is, in our opinion, uncalled-for, and should not have been commenced."

An Hon. MEMBER.—Would you read the names of the Commissioners?

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—They were Messrs. Oswald Curtis, J. M. Clark, Edward Pearce, John Reid, and Edward G. Wright. Any one who had gone through this district and had seen the terrible country which the line has gone through would have hesitated before adopting this route. It ought to be a great attraction to tourists. I would point out, however, that there is another line, made up the Shag Valley, which could have been reached at the same point, the Taieri Lake, through to the Maniototo Plains. It has been stated that the money spent on this railway is £400,000, and I think that the line ought to be completed up to the Taieri Lake. But even the best friends of the railway admit that it will not pay more than working-expenses for some time. I shall be pleased if this turns out to be the case, and I think it is worth completing to the Taieri Lake, and I shall support the completion of the railway up to this point, seeing that the railway has been commenced. Now, Sir, I wish to ask why we should be requested to pass this Bill without submitting it to a Committee and without carefully examining the Bill. It is almost word for word a copy of the Midland Railway Act which has led the colony into such trouble—trouble that we are suffering from now, and which we do not know the end of. Negotiations are still going on. We passed amending resolutions, which are to be embodied in a Bill in reference to the Midland Railway. But I understand that even these are not considered satisfactory, although we have departed very much from the provisions of the Act, and given greater facilities to the people to carry on the line. And, when we are in trouble with another company, why should we take that Act as a pattern for this Bill? I am not prepared to go this length, much as it may be desired to get this railway made. With regard to the District Railways Act, it was introduced by the Government of which I was a member, and the responsibility for which I am prepared to accept. This Bill was introduced for the purpose of resisting a treble pressure that was brought to bear upon the Government for the construction of political railways. We introduced a Bill with what was thought were all the safeguards possible, and we thought we had effected the object we had in view. But what was the result of this measure and of the railways made under it? The colony has had to possess itself of them in order to get out of the trouble. Then there was the Railways Construction Act—an Act for which I am in no way responsible, and which I exerted every effort to defeat. But it was passed into law, and it is on the Statute Book now. The present Bill has been taken out of this Act word for word in regard to a number of sections; but that Act has safeguards which do not appear in this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—What safeguards?

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I could give a list

of them. But why not accept the Bill under which the Manawatu Railway was made?—a railway that has good prospects before it. The company have got bush lands for sale, and they have about 40,000 acres of valuable swamp lands, which, I believe, will only be valuable as a whole when a great deal of money has been spent on it in order to make it valuable. No doubt when this money is spent it will be a magnificent property; but the company will have to spend the money in order to attain that object. Now, the Railways Construction Act was carefully thought out and debated; and why should we not construct the present railway under this Act? Or why not allow the land—which is good grazing-land—through which the line would run to be sold for the purpose of making the railway?—and then the railway could belong to the Government. Certain County Councils have offered to make the line and hand it over to the Government on certain conditions. But I say that, when we are going into the London market to borrow for the colony, it will look bad to go there at the same time to ask a syndicate to make our railways. It would look as if we were having a scramble for railways under the land-grant system. It has been stated that an arrangement will be entered into with a company, and I would suggest that the company might take the railway already made and pay the colony for it. Then they would be allowed to make what they could out of it. With regard to what has been stated about the land in the neighbourhood of St. Bathans, and the difficulty of getting the grain to market, I may state that the chaff grown there is sold at £6 per ton, while chaff is sold at £2 5s. in Dunedin: this is a strange contrast. I was part owner of a place near there in which we used to grow oats for the use of the place. Some years we had a very good crop indeed, but several years our crop completely failed. It was high ground, and the crops were very uncertain. But I will say that a part of the ground in the high country grows particularly good root crops; and at Dunstan and down the Clutha Valley they grow fruit of all sorts of a remarkably excellent description. I was sorry to see the introduction of the ten-shilling clause in this Bill. This clause was inserted by us in our wisdom in the Midland Railway Bill. How did we come to put in this ten-shilling clause? We did it for the purpose of protecting ourselves; but, instead, it has been turned against us. It has been construed to mean that we actually pledge the colony to give a bonus of a million and a quarter to the Midland Railway Company; and now we are taking this clause and inserting it in the present Bill. What I objected to in connection with the Midland Railway contract when it came before us was the circumstance that it emphasized the fact that the company were entitled to this bonus of a million and a quarter. The trouble that has been caused by this matter is great, and we are not out of it yet. Let us therefore consider this matter carefully before we commit ourselves to anything of this sort in the future. If

*Hon. Mr. McLean*

my honourable friend succeeds in passing this Bill I take it that he will be simply standing in the way of the Government constructing the line up to a point where it is thought desirable the Government should do so. I have no doubt that if the Bill passes the Legislature the £105,000 which is to be voted in connection with this line will not be spent. Let us have this money spent first; let us get the line made to Middelmarsh, the point where they are prepared to go, and then we will talk about the other portion of the line. My honourable friend told us that the land at Strath-Taieri is very good and valuable. That is quite true; but, unfortunately, it is all in the hands of private individuals; so that we shall certainly not gain anything from that. Land is at a great discount now, but it is not likely to continue so. I do not like the idea of throwing big blocks of land into the hands of people when we are trying to effect settlement of the land. My honourable friend also stated that this work would provide work for the unemployed; but how many would remain in the country if they could come into town and get 4s. 6d. a day? I think we should encourage a spirit of self-reliance among the settlers of the country—a spirit which is the bone and sinew of any country. I have seen some of the unemployed, when they get their money, go and drink it at the publichouse. They work in a day about as much as a good man could do in a quarter of an hour. I have stood and looked at them at work in Dunedin. There are, however, some amongst the unemployed for whom one's heart beats in sympathy—men who have families and are suffering from adversity. The country ought to make its people self-reliant, and they ought to go into the country and settle down. If they have their piece of land there is not much need for them to buy much, for they can grow all they require for their sustenance. Farming is in a bad state in the colony at the present time. New Zealand, however, is not down yet. New Zealand will come to the surface. Its climate, resources, and other advantages will make the place good yet, and we shall not be disappointed. I do not wish to detract from the railway. I do not wish to prevent any one voting for it who desires to vote for it. I have never spoken to any one with the view of his not voting for it; but I like to see a thing placed fairly and properly in all its bearings before the Council. Then honourable members may take their own way and vote as they deem proper. However, if honourable members vote against this proposal I think they will do what is right, for it will mean holding over the matter for proper inquiry until next session of Parliament, at all events. It is a matter which should be still further thought over before we go into it. If you start railways under land-grants there will be a large number of railways to come; and I feel myself that, if this Bill is got through, and the railway is put into the hands of a syndicate, it will be hung up as has been done before. These people have had to be paid money in order to get rid of them. I believe, myself, that if these people who are wishing for this

railway keep this Bill forward, it is the right way to prevent their getting the railway for some time. I therefore believe, myself, that we should get the Government to make the railway, as funds have been provided for it as far as Middlesmarch; and then we should consider how we are going to make the rest of the line. My opinion is that, rather than hand over the line to a syndicate, we should set aside the land for the railway. If it is not good agricultural land it is good grazing country. At all events, it is well worth 15s. an acre. As my honourable friend has stated, it ought to average pretty well that. If we set that land aside and sell it for the railway the line need not be a large charge on the colony, and the colony will then itself possess the railway. If the line paid working expenses without interest it would do a great deal of good in opening up the country, and the colony would then be possessed of the line, and could use it along with the other railways.

Debate adjourned.

The Council rose at twenty minutes to eleven o'clock p.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 15th December, 1887.

First Readings—Porangahau Block—Import Duty on Coal—Civil Servants' Members of Education Boards, &c.—Deferred-payment Settlers—Onehunga Wharf Charges—Jurors—Marine Amuri Horse-track—Mr. Baddeley—Nelson Roads—West Coast Mail Contracts—South Island Pastoral Runs—Loan Bill.

MR. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### FIRST READINGS.

Native Land Court Bill, Maori Real Estate Management Bill.

### PORANGAHAU BLOCK.

The report of the Native Affairs Committee was brought up on the petition of Te Teira Tiakitai and eight others, stating that, as there seems to be a wide difference between the original judgment of the Native Land Court in the Porangahau Block and the judgment in the rehearing thereof, and after viewing the evidence which has been submitted, the Committee consider the application for a further rehearing a reasonable one, and recommend that it should be granted; and the Committee further strongly recommend that rules should be laid down by the Native Land Court for the guidance of the Judges of that Court in respect to Native custom and usage.

On the motion, That the report be referred to the Government,

MR. HUTCHISON said this was a matter of considerable importance, and if the House would give the subject some consideration it would be seen that the recommendation of the Committee was one which would have a most

mischievous effect especially on the Maori mind, which was always responsive to anything in the shape of facilities for litigation. The facts of the case were, briefly, as follow: Certain Natives preferred a claim to a block of land known as Porangahau. Their claims were heard before a Judge and an assessor. The judgment was not acquiesced in, and the various parties made application for a rehearing, which was granted. The rehearing came on before two Judges and an assessor. On this occasion the judgment of the Court upset that of the previous Court; and now an application was made by petition to the Legislature that the case might be again reheard. It would be known to honourable members that there was no right under the law to a second rehearing; and if this application for a further rehearing were granted it would open up an important aspect in the matter of Native claims to land. It seemed more than doubtful to him if the Committee could recommend compliance with such a petition as this, unless, indeed, corruption or partiality were alleged—charges which had no place whatever in this petition, the ground of the application simply being that there was a difference of opinion among the Judges. The practice of former Native Affairs Committees appeared to have been in agreeable contrast with the action of the present Committee. He found that in the session of 1885 there were twenty-two petitions presented to the Legislature for rehearsings, which the Committee dealt with in one report by stating that they did not see their way to adjudicating upon rehearing cases which had already been dealt with by a Court of law; and in the session of last year there were a number of petitions praying for rehearing, and the Committee invariably reported as to these that the subject was then before the House in the shape of a Bill,—which had since passed into law as the Native Land Court Act,—and they did not deem it necessary to make a report. That Act provided that judgments on rehearing should be final and conclusive; and he apprehended that to open the door, as this report would do, to petitioners to unsettle judgments which by that Act were to be final and conclusive was to circulate invitations to Natives all over the country to revive claims that should be considered finally settled. It might be that the Natives ought to have some other recourse than that provided for by one rehearing; but, if so, it ought to be provided for by Act, and be applicable to all Natives, and not merely to individual cases, at the will of a Committee which was in no sense a judicial body. In this particular instance there was reason for concluding that it was not judicial in its action. The petition was promoted by the honourable member for Napier, whose attendance at the Committee was limited to the consideration of this particular case.

MR. KELLY.—No.

MR. HUTCHISON said he had searched the minutes, and such was the conclusion he had arrived at; but if he were mistaken he would be glad to withdraw the remark. However,

the honourable member for Napier was careful to attend the meetings of the Committee while this petition was being considered, and he might say that the honourable gentleman was mainly responsible for the recommendation of the Committee. The amendment would be that the report should be referred back to the Committee for reconsideration, for he thought it was quite clear that the Government should not encourage an application for a rehearing in any particular case. It might be proper for the Government to consider whether it was right that more than one rehearing should be granted in all cases if desired; but it would be a very vicious principle to establish that a rehearing might be obtained in particular cases, especially when the ground for the application was merely that there was a difference of opinion among the Judges.

Mr. KELLY, as Chairman of the Native Affairs Committee, thought it right to say that the honourable member for Waitotara had not put the matter fairly before the House. He had stated that the honourable member for Napier was present only at those meetings of the Committee at which this petition was heard; but he (Mr. Kelly) could say that the member for Napier was present certainly on one or two occasions before this petition was heard; while, on the other hand, he knew that the honourable member for Waitotara was not present during the whole of the time that this inquiry was going on. As the honourable gentleman said the Committee had no right to make such a report and the Government had no power to grant a further rehearing, he did not see the necessity for the honourable gentleman occupying the time of the House in connection with this matter. He hoped the House would not send the report back to the Committee; because the Committee had taken the evidence of the Chief Judge, Mr. Lewis, Judge Mackay, and others. A great deal of evidence had been taken—which, in view of the importance of the matter, he intended to ask the House to allow to be printed—and he did not see how the Committee could come to any other conclusion than that at which they had arrived. The Committee had reported in a similar manner upon another petition, in reference to a block of land on the East Coast known as "Waipiro." This block of land was a very valuable one, and the conclusion at which the Committee had arrived was, in his opinion, a just and right one. The Judge who first heard the case and gave a decision upon it had been connected with Native affairs in the North Island for a great number of years, and he had given judgment for certain Natives to the extent of 2,500 acres; whilst the other Judge gave a decision against the parties who got the judgment for 2,500 acres, and gave the whole block of 42,500 acres to the other party, the latter Judge being a gentleman who had little or no knowledge of Native matters in the North Island. The decisions of the two Judges were entirely opposite, and he thought that justice could not be done unless there was a rehearing; and the

Committee thought that, in a matter of this sort, the Government should see that justice was done.

Mr. ORMOND said the honourable member who had moved the amendment had chosen to refer to him by name in connection with this matter, and he would like to say that the reason he took an especial interest in the petition was that, being resident in the district where the case was heard, he thought it was a most extraordinary judgment, and he took interest enough in the matter to go to the Committee and hear what took place, and he was one of the majority who reported that, in their opinion, this was a proper case in which to grant a rehearing. That was the whole of his connection with the petition. The case was a very important one to the Native people, and he demurred entirely to, and hoped the House would not agree to, the doctrine started by the honourable member for Waitotara, that the Natives should have no right to petition the House for redress for their grievances when they considered that a wrong had been done to them. That would be the effect of following out the line of argument adopted by the honourable member—that, because a rehearing had been once granted to them, the Natives should have no right to come to the House and ask for relief for a wrong done to them. He held that the Natives had a right to come here, and that the House had a perfect right to consider their case if the facts were shown to justify it. The petition was inquired into by a full meeting of the Native Affairs Committee, and the division showed that six were in favour of this report and two against, the honourable member for Waitotara being one of the dissentients. The Chairman was also present, and made up the number to nine, but he did not vote. The case was a very important one. The block of land in dispute was of very great value, being some forty or fifty thousand acres in extent. The first judgment—given by Judge Mair, whose acquaintance with Native custom was well known—was in favour of the petitioners to a certain extent; but the judgment of that Court was superseded by that of a Court presided over by a gentleman whose sphere of duty had been in the South Island, and who was not so well acquainted with the Native custom in the North Island. The judgment of the first Court was overruled on this ground: that mana could not be permitted in connection with such a claim, that being the ground on which the claim had been allowed by the first Court. The House would see that there was something to be said against this valuable land, worth, he should say, £150,000, finally being dealt with by Judges of the Native Land Court. The whole question rested on their own individual opinion of what was the Native custom, and what the Native customs would allow them to consider right. The Committee had the Judge who gave the judgment and also the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court before it, and it came out in the inquiry that the gentleman who was the presiding Judge at the rehearing was of opinion that the Native Land Court

*Mr. Hutchison*

had not, in its past experience, given to this mana any weight, whereas the Chief Judge, when asked immediately afterwards what had been the practice of the Court, said there had been very few judgments given by it in which this mana had not been a leading principle in the adoption of the judgment. There was this peculiarity in the case: that a large property was deliberately taken away by the judgment of the Court, acting on an entirely different principle from what had influenced the Courts in dealing with Maori lands in the past, and the judgment was in an entirely different direction from that which the Court had formerly given. Attached to the report of the Committee was a strong recommendation to the Government that they should take steps to insure in the future that there should be laid down some rules by which Judges could be guided; and he thought that nothing could more clearly show to the House the necessity of having rules for the guidance of Judges than the dealing with this particular case. It seemed a monstrous thing that, by the judgment of one or two men, they were able to do away with rights in a large property like this simply on a matter of opinion, and that opinion opposed, as it had been in this case, to the general judgment which had guided the Courts in all cases before. He had given a very brief outline of the case, and had shown by the evidence of the Chief Judge that he was of opinion that the question of mana was one which had been recognized as something that ought to guide the Courts, whereas the Judge who had given judgment in this case was of opinion that it was not. In this respect alone he thought the Natives had a grievance, and that it was a proper thing for the House to agree with the report of the Committee. The Committee was strongly of the opinion expressed, and so were a majority of the Native members present. He did not think the House should take this very unusual course of referring the report back to the Committee.

Major JACKSON said, if he understood the remarks of the member for Waitotara correctly, they indicated his belief that the honourable member for Napier was personally interested in this matter. All he (Major Jackson) could say was that he had never heard of the petition until it came before the Committee, and, so far as he knew, he had never spoken to any one of the petitioners. That being so, he hoped the same charge would not be laid against him; and he might say this case had been very fairly considered, and, according to the evidence, no other conclusion could be arrived at than that which the honourable member for Napier stated had been come to by the substantial majority of three to one without the Chairman voting, who was also in sympathy with this report. It was correctly stated that these people had no appeal from the second rehearing. If they had had that right of appeal the House would not now have been troubled with their case. It was because the law did not permit them to appeal, and they felt aggrieved, that they applied to Parliament for redress, and he thought the House should

grant them the necessary relief. It was said very great interests were at stake; but the fact that the interests were large had not weighed with him. What had impressed him was not the magnitude of the interests, but the claim for justice and relief being a just and reasonable one. This judgment was given, in the first instance, by one Judge, and afterwards reversed on similar evidence by another Judge: that was to say, one Judge interpreted the mana custom one way and another Judge another way. If it were possible that Judges could do that, then it would depend to a great degree upon who was the particular Judge that heard the case as to who should inherit the land. He thought, with the honourable member for Napier, that it was highly necessary there should be laid down by authority some general direction regarding Maori customs within which judgments should be given. Judge Mackay, who reheard this case, stated that invariably his judgments were based upon who held the land at and prior to 1840, and that claimants must show they or their ancestors had a good title to the land at that date, since which, he held, it could not be amended. The petitioners in this case showed that their ancestor, about 1840, had sold land under the same mana they relied upon in this case, which sale had not in any way been questioned; and there was little doubt that, had those to whom the land was last awarded disputed this title of mana, they would have inherited a fate similar to that which befell the rods of the magicians who withstood Moses—they would have been also swallowed. He thought that a great many sales of land had taken place between 1840 and the time when the Native Land Court came into operation, and it would be found that they were the most satisfactory sales that had taken place. He did not know of a single instance where one had been disputed—that was, one conducted by the chief who held the mana, which, in this particular instance, had been ignored. He thought early Governments had done a great deal of harm when they systematically endeavoured to kill the mana of the chiefs, under which, instead of having each individual claimant to deal with, they had only to arrange with one. When the land was sold in this way there was no dispute about it. That these people did sell the land under a similar tenure there was no doubt; but the trouble was that the Judge ignored the question of mana in his judgment, whereas the Chief Judge told them that this was the only instance he remembered where mana had not been recognised when established.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Major JACKSON said his memory might be bad, but that was certainly his impression; but, at any rate, he did say that in a very great many other instances it had been recognised. These people ought to be able to get redress, and he hoped the House would adopt the report of the Committee, and that the Government would give effect to it.

Mr. TAIPUA might say that the Native Affairs Committee had gone into this matter

very thoroughly, and had considered the case in all its bearings. At the first hearing a certain portion of the land was awarded to the people on account of the mana; but the second judgment reversed the first one. It was on the ground that the hearings were diametrically opposed to each other that it was considered better to have another hearing. The Chief Judge of the Native Land Court was before the Committee. He (Mr. Taipua) asked him if he was not aware that another block dealt with by the Native Land Court had been awarded to Renata Kawepo on account of mana; and he said it had been, and also that other Courts were in the habit of awarding lands on account of mana. Mr. Mackay admitted that there was some force in mana, provided that it was accompanied by occupation of the land; but he said that he did not think that mana alone, without occupation, could have any effect. These were the reasons which induced the Committee to believe that a third hearing would be beneficial. He thought the House should consider that in any case where the interests were very large there should be two or three hearings if necessary. For this he thought a precedent had been established by the number of hearings in the case of Hauturu, or Little Barrier, which was only a small block. Seeing that so many hearings had been granted for that small and insignificant island, why should not three hearings be granted in the case of a much more valuable block? He had to express satisfaction with the conduct of the Native Affairs Committee, and with the way they had been in the habit, lately, of inquiring into Native grievances, and doing their best to redress them. He thought if they shut up the Native people from obtaining a rehearing it would probably lead to fighting amongst themselves. In the case of the Maungatutari Block, where the rehearing was refused, the Natives took up arms and built pas; and it was only by the persistent efforts of the chiefs that peace was maintained. He expressed his fullest sympathy with those Natives who took the consequences of coming to that House in their endeavours to seek redress. He could not understand the reason of the objection made by the honourable member for Waitotara. Surely he was not actuated by personal grounds. He (Mr. Taipua) hoped the House would uphold the report of the Native Affairs Committee. He thought it would be a very good thing for the Maoris if the Chief Judge himself heard the case for the third and last time. He had heard it stated that there was considerable dissatisfaction expressed with the judgment delivered by one of the Judges—namely, the Judge living at Taupo, who took part in this rehearing; and it would be remembered that he was only a novice, and the House might hear further complaints of the matter.

Mr. TAIWHANGA said this was a cause of the Natives complaining all over New Zealand, and he thought that the Maoris therefore should have Maori Judges and lawyers instead of English Judges and lawyers, because the English Judges and lawyers did not know any-

Mr. Taipua

thing about Maori customs about lands from ancestors. He thought, from past experience, the whole of the chiefs in New Zealand would rather have a Court of their own. They had got a Bill before the House to the effect that, as they wished, their lands should be managed by chiefs and committees appointed by themselves. He hoped the honourable member for Waitotara would then have no complaint to raise against a rehearing.

Mr. CARROLL objected to the principle attempted to be laid down, that the Maoris should have no appeal from the decisions of the Native Land Court. If they had the right of appeal to the Supreme Court they would not perhaps trouble the House; and, as this was the only tribunal they could come to with their grievances, the House should not shut out from them an opportunity of getting redress. In a matter of £5 or £10 a European could get an appeal; and in a case where hundreds of thousands of pounds were involved why should not the Natives be allowed a thorough investigation of the matter? He knew something of this case. He refrained from reflecting in any way on the decision arrived at by the Judges, because he believed the decisions in both cases were arrived at in the full belief that they were doing what was right. He did not think any imputation should be cast on the action of the Judges. The honourable member for Waitotara said that, as a matter of principle, they should not review the decisions arrived at by the Native Land Court Judges. Then, why should the decision of the Committee of that House, carried by a pronounced majority, be reviewed?

Mr. MONK wished to express his assent to the remarks which had fallen from those who had spoken in support of the decision of the Committee. The honourable member for Waitotara referred to the evidence given before that Committee as being *ex parte*; but he omitted to mention that the complainant had before her the Judge who heard the case, and subjected him to a considerable cross-examination, and the result of that examination was decidedly in her favour. He would also mention another circumstance that had been overlooked, that she alluded to a transaction of her ancestor in 1840 in selling a piece of land the tenure of or right to which was identical with that to the block which was the subject of the petition. That piece of land was sold by that person, and the sale was not dissented from by any of the tribes then present, and had resulted in no difficulty or complication whatever; and there could not be a better proof of the right of that person to sell than a transaction of that kind. It was admitted by the Chief Judge, when giving evidence before the Committee, that any rights by the Natives in 1840 were recognised by the Native Land Courts at this time, and it was suggested that there was probably an error of judgment in the decision which took away from the plaintiff the rights which were acknowledged by the Maoris in 1840.

Dr. NEWMAN thought this case, with many others that came before the House, showed

that the Native Minister should take the matter in hand and set up a real Court of Appeal, and not the sham thing there was here. There could be no question that these judgments were given haphazard. The original Judge declared that he could take mana into consideration, and the next two Judges did not. What happened? One set of people got the land in the first place, and another set later on. In this case the question was, whether a very large property was to go to one side or the other. He quite agreed with the honourable member for the Eastern Maori District that it was exceedingly hard that the Natives had such a poor Court of Appeal; and he thought if the Native Minister looked into the matter he could arrange for a large Court of Appeal by all the Judges sitting together. At present it was a mere fluke as to the party in whose favour the judgment might be. His knowledge of this case told him that these Natives had a considerable claim. Their ancestors were chiefs, and had mana and the right to this land. On all grounds of fairness and equity these people ought to have an appeal. It was a question of justice and right, and he hoped the House would not agree with the honourable member for Waitotara, but would give these people a further hearing.

Mr. MITCHELSON hoped the House would not agree to refer this report back to the Committee. The Committee had taken considerable trouble in the matter, and no doubt were convinced that a rehearing of the case was, in the interests of justice, necessary before they decided upon bringing up their report; and he understood the Chief Judge concurred in their report. He (Mr. Mitchelson) thought a rehearing of the case necessary, as hitherto in the North Island the rights of mana had always been recognised by the Native Land Court Judges when adjudicating upon Native lands, and as the judgment given by Judge Mackay had reversed the previous judgment, principally, as he (Mr. Mitchelson) understood, owing to Judge Mackay having ignored the question of mana. He thought it was only right that the report of the Committee should be adopted and a rehearing granted. He therefore hoped that the report would be agreed to by the House. As legislation would be required to give effect to the report, in the event of the Government agreeing to it another opportunity would be given honourable members to discuss the question.

Mr. T. THOMPSON submitted that the honourable gentleman who moved the amendment had not adduced any grounds to warrant the sending-back of this report to the Committee. That honourable gentleman's remarks went in the direction of showing that it would be illegal to grant this rehearing. The Committee, to his (Mr. Thompson's) mind, had a perfect right to bring up the report they had done, and if there was anything illegal in the proceedings it would be for the Government to consider whether it was wise to carry out the recommendation. He felt that it would be a grievance for the report to be sent back to the

Committee, after the whole matter had been gone into. The honourable member for Waitotara had failed to show that the matter had not been fully gone into, or that the evidence adduced had not received full consideration. Had he done that, he (Mr. Thompson) would have supported him; but, under the circumstances, he would vote against the report being sent back to the Committee.

Sir G. GREY said that what he understood was this: that the simple request was, not that the rehearing should be refused, but that the report should be referred back to the Committee. That certainly appeared to him to be a reasonable request. If it was a request to set aside what the Committee had done, he might have formed another opinion about it; but it was a very fair request to make, that the report should be referred back to the Committee, and he did not see why it should be refused.

Mr. FISH did not wish to go into the merits of the case, but he wished to demur to the extraordinary doctrine laid down by the honourable member for Napier, which was to this effect: that two Judges were capable of giving a very much worse decision than one. It would appear that this case was heard by one Judge and a decision given in a certain direction. It was then heard, he understood, by two Judges, and they differed from the one. Under ordinary circumstances he should be inclined to believe that the two were right, and that the first Judge was wrong; but there might be something peculiar about Maoris which reversed the ordinary ideas of justice. The honourable member for Napier backed up his extraordinary statement by saying that the two Judges who presided in the second trial did not understand about mana. He (Mr. Fish) presumed both sets of Judges had some law to go by, and had to interpret the law as they found it; and that made him believe that the two Judges must be more correct than the first Judge. The request made by the honourable member for Waitotara did not seem to be an extraordinary one. It was a very common-sense one. What the Committee sought to do was to ask the Government to override the law.

Mr. LEVESTAM did not know anything of the case, but the Committee had recommended a rehearing. It appeared to him that the honourable member for Waitotara was perfectly right in objecting to it, because, according to clause 75 of the Native Land Court Act of 1876, they had power to apply for a rehearing, and, if they got it, that was final. Therefore this recommendation for a rehearing was entirely opposed to the law, and the Committee had no right to make it.

Mr. HUTCHISON was afraid that his attempt in the first instance to save the time of the House by dealing shortly with this matter had failed, because every honourable member who had spoken had entirely misapprehended the position he (Mr. Hutchison) had taken up, and one after the other had gone into the merits of the question. He had himself refrained from discussing the merits of the matter, as being improper here, however much that

might be in place in the Native Affairs Committee. It was certainly not right to canvass the opinions of the Judges of the Native Land Court or any other Court, and his opinion was that, as provided by the Act passed last year, the judgment on rehearing should be final and conclusive. The House ought either to make a general rule, so that all Natives who were dissatisfied with a rehearing should have a further opportunity of appeal, or should adhere to the law. If there was to be any Court to which appeals could be made, let it be a Court of law and equity, and not such a tribunal as a parliamentary Committee, which was liable to bias through political influence. His position was this: that a recommendation such as that brought down to-day was futile in itself, because the House, unless it passed another Act, had not any power to grant a rehearing. The tendency of the recommendation was pernicious, because it would unsettle the Native mind and induce petitions of this kind to be sent to the House. He knew nothing of the case itself, or of the parties interested; and he had refrained from discussing anything which had come out before the Committee; and to him it was incredible that the Native Minister should get up and say that a rehearing would be granted. How was it to be granted? By a fiat of the Native Land Court, by some Order in Council such as they had lately seen superseding legislation, or was it to be by an Act of Parliament? If further facilities for litigation were to be given, he trusted that a measure would be brought down which would have general scope, and would not be confined to any particular case. It had been said that he was not present at the whole of the investigation into this case. That might be so; but, still, if absent, he did not see that there was any reason why he should not move this amendment, because the motion of the Chairman of the Committee sought to identify the whole of the members of the House with the recommendation of the report. His view was entirely based on the document itself. The report said, "As there seems to be a wide difference between the original judgment of the Native Land Court in the Porangahau Block and its judgment on the rehearing, . . ." Now, was it inscrutable or unusual that the judgment of a Court on a rehearing should reverse that of the original Court? And yet that was the first ground for recommending that there should be a rehearing. Then, the report went on to say, "and after reviewing the evidence which has been submitted;" the only evidence being that of one of the litigants—a mere *ex parte* statement. On these two grounds only was the recommendation made that there should be a rehearing—a most vain and impotent conclusion to weak and misleading premisses.

Mr. KELLY said the honourable gentleman had not adduced a single argument why the report should be sent back to the Committee. He distinctly stated that the Committee had not power to make this recommendation, and that the Government had no power to grant a

rehearing, and that it would be necessary to pass a law to enable that to be done. If that was the case, the measure would have to come before the House; so that the honourable gentleman would then have a full opportunity of discussing the whole question. To send the report back to the Committee was most absurd, because they had taken all the evidence they possibly could, and had merely brought up a report recommending that a rehearing should be granted.

Captain RUSSELL said this discussion, at all events, pointed to this moral: that Native-land legislation should be placed on a proper footing as soon as possible. There could be no doubt that these constantly-recurring difficulties in settling Native customs should be set at rest soon. Unfortunately, the process of time was removing those gentlemen who were acquainted with Maori custom, and the attempt of the Government to assimilate Native custom with English law led to nothing but confusion. On more than one occasion he had urged on the House that every Native should, as soon as possible, be compelled to individualise his title; and until that was done there would be a constant recurrence of these Native difficulties. His sympathies went very much with the honourable member for Waitotara on this subject. There was no doubt that it did seem strange that the Court of Parliament should interfere with the ordinary tribunals of the country. Still, so far as he knew outside, there could be no doubt that substantial injustice had been done to these Natives, who for many years had considered themselves the owners of this block of land, and if injustice had been done the House ought not to be trammelled by the technicalities of law in doing justice. They should as soon as possible compel the Natives to individualise their titles and become owners of their own lands; and the proper way to do that, and to avert these dissensions, was to increase the number of Native Land Court Judges, and to place them in fixed positions, instead of being peripatetic as they now were, and,—having acquired a knowledge of Native title, say, in the North of Auckland,—being sent away down probably to the west coast of the South Island to investigate titles there. Each Judge should be fixed in a particular district, so as to investigate titles there, and become fully acquainted with the Native mana. If they were moved about from one part of the country to another it was impossible that justice could be done in Native-land matters. He hoped when Parliament met again they would have a common-sense Bill introduced, which would have for its basis increasing the number of Judges of the Native Land Court, and making compulsory individualisation of every block of Native land in the colony. He believed this could be done without great expense to the country, and with great advantage to the Maoris; and by that simple means they would do more to settle all this difficulty than by all the high-falutin' talk they had had upon the subject.

Mr. CARROLL wished to exonerate himself

Mr. Hutchison



from the charge made by the honourable member for Waitotara, that honourable members had spoken on the merits of this question, for he had not done so.

Mr. BALLANCE said he was not present at the meeting of the Committee when this question was under consideration. He understood the honourable member for Waitotara desired to have the report sent back to the Committee in order that he might be able to adduce fresh evidence or reasons why the Committee should reverse its decision, and he could not understand why members of the Committee were so persistent in refusing to reconsider it. A large majority of the Committee appeared to be in favour of the report, and probably they would adhere to their decision, and for that very reason the Committee ought to be willing that the report should be referred back to them. In that case he presumed the Government would give effect to it by bringing down a special Bill. He thought the Native Minister was slightly premature in coming to the conclusion that this report was justifiable, for it led honourable members to suppose that he was prepared to legislate upon it, although it had not been considered by the Government. He admitted that it was dangerous to bring special cases like this before the Legislature, because it was well known that when political pressure was brought to bear they were specially noticed, whereas when there was no political influence the cases were passed over with the report from the Committee, "We have no report to make." There were cases which the Legislature ought certainly to take into consideration, and he was not in any way prejudging this one by saying that it was one of those cases. No doubt there was very great difficulty in settling which should be the final Court of Appeal; but the law provided that the Chief Judge could refer cases to two Judges of the Native Land Court, and their decision was to be final. If there was to be another Court of Appeal, as in the case of the Supreme Court, and that Court had to try every case, there would be no finality; and the result would be that the Court of Appeal would really be the Court of first instance to try these matters. He hoped his honourable friend the Chairman of the Committee would withdraw his objection, and that the petition would be sent back to the Committee, so that the honourable member for Waitotara could bring forward his special reasons why the Committee should come to a different conclusion.

Sir G. GREY differed from the last speaker. That honourable gentleman said that if they allowed these cases to go back to different Courts there would be no finality. He thought finality would come sooner than the honourable gentleman imagined, for it would arrive when the whole of the value of the property was swallowed up by the lawyers, and he knew that such was the litigious nature of the Natives that when they quarrelled about their land they would go on until that took place.

Mr. ORMOND would point out that the honourable member for Wanganui was under a misapprehension as to what the honourable

member for Waitotara had said. The honourable gentleman did not pretend that he had any fresh evidence, but his contention was that it was a wrong procedure to grant in a particular case something which, if dealt with at all, should only be dealt with by general legislation. That was the honourable gentleman's position, as he (Mr. Ormond) understood. He, on the other hand, advocated that, where a grievance was shown to Parliament, and a Committee of Parliament recommended that it was worthy of consideration, it was then the duty of the Government to take an opportunity of redressing that grievance. If there was anything to send back to the Committee no member of the Committee would for a moment object; but there was nothing at all fresh to send back. As to the contention of the honourable member for Waitotara, when the Government took action on the report of the Committee would be the time for that honourable gentleman to take his course. There could be no practical result from sending the report back to the Committee, for the Committee had, after taking all the evidence, come to its decision by a very large majority, and there was absolutely nothing whatever new to go to the Committee.

Mr. TANNER said he would not have risen but for a remark by the late Native Minister, implying that political influence had been brought to bear in this question.

Mr. BALLANCE did not say there had been in this question. What he said was that very often in these cases political influences could be brought to bear.

Mr. TANNER said they could only treat this question on its merits, and, considering that it was a dispute between two separate bodies of Natives, he could not see where political influence could come in. The honourable member for Waitotara distinctly stated that he knew nothing of the circumstances of the case—he disclaimed all knowledge of it.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—Other than what came before the Committee.

Mr. TANNER said, that being the case, it could scarcely be said, as was remarked by the honourable member for Wanganui, that the honourable member for Waitotara desired to bring forward some fresh evidence. The House had no knowledge of that; neither, apparently, had the honourable member for Waitotara. If the report were referred back to the Committee one could only presume, after what the Chairman and other members had said, that any fresh report would be merely a repetition of that now presented; and therefore what was the use of wasting time in referring it back?

Mr. SAMUEL agreed thoroughly with the honourable member for Thorndon that the sooner we had some definite system on which to decide issues relating to Native lands the better. The administration of the Native Land Court had become of very serious moment indeed in the country: its decisions were contradictory, and showed that there was an utter absence of any guiding principle in framing the decisions given. It was high time that the

Legislature stepped in and established some tribunal to settle these questions on some fixed principles, and he hoped the Government would next session take steps in that direction. He inferred, from the remarks of the honourable member for Wanganui, that that honourable gentleman contended that whenever any member of the House was dissatisfied with the report of a Committee he should be entitled to have it referred back—he need not say that he had any fresh evidence to adduce, but he could have the reference back simply because he had statements to make—probably similar to those he had already made. Now, if there was to be any finality at all in the proceedings of Committees, he, for one, strongly objected to any such principle being recognised by the House. He did not think, unless it could be shown that there was fresh evidence to adduce, that a report should be referred back, as was now proposed.

Mr. FISH thought the strongest contention for reference back was, not that there was fresh evidence to adduce, but that the Committee had made a report recommending the Government to break the law. The law now was that when there had been an appeal and a rehearing the decision on the rehearing should be final. In this particular case that process had been gone through. If the Committee thought that the law was wrong, and it had been proved to them that it had caused an injustice in this case, they should have made a recommendation that the Government should get the law altered. Whether the amended law should be made applicable to this particular case or not would be another question. If they took the Committee's report literally as it was now placed before them, it was equal to advising the Government to pass a special Act for every special case not provided for by the existing law. That, certainly, was a course that very few honourable members would support. If the law relating to these cases was wrong, by all means let it be amended; but there must be some finality. In ordinary litigation finality was reached when a case was taken to the Privy Council and that tribunal gave its decision, and it appeared to him they must have some absolute finality in reference to litigation about Native lands. It appeared that the last Parliament passed a law to give that finality, and it was that which the Committee now desired to alter by recommending the Government to quietly break the law in some extraordinary way. That appeared to him to be the position. He did not know anything of the merits of the case, or anything about Native affairs, and therefore only spoke from a common-sense view of the matter.

Mr. TAIPUA wished to reply to the remarks of the honourable member for Wanganui, who favoured referring back the report. If it were referred back it should be referred only to those members of the Committee who had not attended while this case had been before the Committee, and there should be a new Chairman elected. If the matter were referred to those who had already dealt with it, they could only again come to the same determina-

*Mr. Samuel*

tion. If the House insisted on the same members of the Committee dealing with the matter, the House should give them power to rehear the case and give judgment as to the land accordingly. Otherwise it would be quite futile to send the report back.

Mr. PARATA would not have risen had not this matter been brought so prominently before the House; but, that having been done, he would like to explain the part he took in it. He supported the honourable member for Waitotara so far as to agreeing that for all similar cases to this there should be some provision made. An exactly similar petition had been presented to the House referring to the Waipiro Block, and in that case the Committee made a similar report. He found no fault with the report, but he thought the application should be made general. It confirmed him in his opinion that a law should be passed dealing with all these questions. Many Natives were in the habit of coming to the House for relief, and the House was powerless to give it or to do anything in the matter, because there was no law by which they could do it.

Mr. CARROLL would ask permission, before the matter was decided, to present a petition in reference to this case. It was the petition of Henare Matua and others, praying for a rehearing regarding the subdivision of the Porangahau Block.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

Amendment negatived, and motion agreed to.

#### IMPORT DUTY ON COAL.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Government, if they have any knowledge of a formulated proposal of the New South Wales Legislature, now in session, to increase their import duties on New Zealand products, and that such a proposal is held in abeyance pending the issue of a motion, No. 30, on our Order Paper of this date, to the following effect: "That an import duty of not less than 2s. 6d. per ton be imposed on all coal imported into New Zealand from other countries;" and will the Government give the honourable member for Inangahua an early opportunity of either withdrawing the motion or having it discussed and finally settled? The House would remember what had taken place in regard to the motion of the honourable member for Inangahua. He did not know whether it was a coincidence or not, but the fact remained that there was a suggestion on the Order Paper of the Parliament of New South Wales to increase the duty upon our natural products, and it would be a very serious thing for New Zealand if such a thing were done. There was no doubt in his mind that the motion of the honourable member for Inangahua was calculated to have an irritating effect, and he would ask that the honourable gentleman should have an opportunity of withdrawing it.

Mr. FISHER said the Government were not aware of any proposal of the nature of that spoken of by the honourable member being before the Legislature of New South Wales, and

therefore they had not taken the matter into consideration; but he might say that if the honourable member for Inangahua desired to withdraw his motion it would be very easy for him to do so.

#### CIVIL SERVANTS MEMBERS OF EDUCATION BOARDS, ETC.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Minister of Education, Whether there is any regulation prohibiting Civil servants from being members of Education Boards and School Committees; and, if no such regulation exists, will the Government make such a regulation at an early date?

Mr. FISHER said there were at present no such regulations, and the Government did not know that it was desirable to make any.

#### DEFERRED-PAYMENT SETTLERS.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Government,—(1.) Why deferred-payment settlers are sued for arrears of payment in one provincial district, and not sued in another? (2.) On whose authority are such distinctions made?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said the Government was not aware of any instance of deferred-payment settlers being sued for rent; but it was not a matter to be dealt with by the department. The Waste Lands Boards had authority to deal with such matters.

#### ONEHUNGA WHARF CHARGES.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will give directions that the Government charges levied on the Onehunga wharf shall be in all instances assimilated to the charges levied on the Auckland wharf by the Harbour Board, in accordance with the promises made by his predecessor? He might state that in 1885 a Bill was introduced for the purpose of handing over the management of the Manukau Harbour to a Harbour Board, and, owing to the discussion that took place, a promise was made by the then Minister for Public Works that if the Bill were withdrawn the charges at the Onehunga wharf would be assimilated to those charged on the Auckland wharf. From time to time efforts had been made to have that promise carried into effect, but he was sorry to say that up to the present time they had not been successful, and hence this question was put on the Order Paper; and he trusted that the Minister, in his reply, would say that not only should the charges be assimilated, but that no new charges should be imposed; because charges were being imposed which had a detrimental effect upon the shipping of the port. He desired to read an extract from a letter which the honourable member for Manukau (Sir M. O'Rorke) had received from Mr. Jackson, a member of the Borough Council of Onehunga, dated the 25th November, on this subject, in which the writer said,—

"In the meantime I am asked to request you to bring to his [the Minister for Public Works] immediate attention a fresh charge which is just now being imposed, which will

seriously affect persons engaged in shipping to the ports affected.

"This new charge is 1s. a ton measurement on all goods shipped to Raglan, Kawhia, Hokianga, and Waiuku, and other places within the harbour.

"The officials say that this export wharfage charge has hitherto been omitted through oversight; but, as it now comes in addition to all other wharf charges, it is extra-burdensome.

"I am told that the railway takes freight right through to Auckland at a rate very slightly in excess of the sum they impose for wharf charges on goods sent by road."

That, he thought, would be sufficient to prove that he had very good reasons for placing this question on the Order Paper, and he trusted that, in his reply, the Minister would indicate that he intended to carry out the promise made some two years ago. They were constantly having new charges placed upon them, and always, when anything was said, it was replied by the officials that this was an old charge, but, owing to an oversight, had not been made previously.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the promise of the late Minister for Public Works with respect to assimilating the charges levied at the wharf at Onehunga to those charged at Auckland had been carried out, with the exception of the tolls levied upon wagons, drays, and other vehicles, as at the time the promise was given tolls were levied upon vehicles at Auckland, and the Government did not see their way to make any alteration respecting the latter at present.

#### JURORS.

Mr. WARD asked the Government, Whether they will favourably consider increasing the rate of pay allowed to common jurors? Representations had been made to him which had induced him to put this question on the Order Paper. It appeared that the rate allowed at the present time was 3s. a day when jurors came from within a distance of seven miles; beyond that they got 4s., out of which they had to pay their expenses. And what he wished to point out was this: that in cases where tradesmen and artisans were summoned to leave their employment they sustained an actual loss. He hoped that the Government would see their way to remedy this, and not allow the financial difficulty now existing to prevent an equitable rate of pay being given in these cases.

Mr. FERGUS said the Government would take the matter into consideration, but did not at present see their way to doing anything in the direction indicated.

#### MARUIA-AMURI HORSE-TRACK.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will place the sum of £2,000 on the estimates for the purpose of constructing a horse-track from Maruia Plains to Amuri County *via* Cannibal Gorge? He might point out that already surveys of this road were in hand, and that, if it were proceeded with, it would bring the most important mining district

in the colony—Reefton—into connection with a pastoral country. He trusted, therefore, that the honourable gentleman would see his way to grant the request.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said the Government recognised the importance of completing this horse-track, and surveys were in progress; but he regretted that the funds at the disposal of the Government would not enable them to push it on this year.

#### MR. BADDELEY.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES asked the Minister of Justice, if the Mr. Baddeley now acting as Resident Magistrate in Auckland is the same Mr. Baddeley who recently retired on a pension?

Mr. FERGUS replied that the Mr. Baddeley who was now acting as Resident Magistrate in Auckland was the same Mr. Baddeley who, when he retired, would receive a pension.

#### NELSON ROADS.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister for Public Works,—(1.) If there is a clerical error in the public-works estimates, seeing that in "Class IV.—Roads," in the Nelson District, the liabilities on the 31st March, 1887, are set down as being £4,988, whilst the estimated total amount required to be authorised is only set down at £4,960? (2.) If not a clerical error, out of what fund does the Minister propose to pay the £28 required to meet the deficiency? In looking over the public-works estimates he found that in "Class IV.—Roads," in Nelson District, the liabilities were set down at £4,988, while the amount set down as needing to be authorised was £4,960. It seemed strange that an amount less than the liabilities should be authorised.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said this did appear to be a clerical error; and, as to the second part of the question, the £28 would be provided for from contingencies.

#### WEST COAST MAIL CONTRACTS.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES asked the Postmaster-General,—(1.) If he will inform the House of the difference in present contract price for conveying mails from Springfield to west coast of Middle Island and the lowest tender submitted when tenders were last called for for such service? (2.) If he will state the amount of compensation claimed by present contractors for the above service in consequence of damage done to road by floods, &c.; and if he will state by whom the amount of such compensation was assessed, whether by the contractor or the Government? (3.) Will the postal authorities recognise similar claims in all other West Coast mail contracts? There had always been land-slips and flooded rivers on the West Coast; but he had never before heard of mail contractors receiving compensation from the Government. It appeared that in this case the contractors had received an extension of their contract. When tenders were called for, only about six weeks were allowed to tenderers to provide the whole of the expensive plant for the contract. He hoped

the Postmaster-General would be able to give satisfactory answers, so that the people on the West Coast might know that there was nothing behind the scenes.

Major ATKINSON said, with regard to the first part of the question, he might say that the tenders were not opened. There were two opened by mistake; but he did not see them, and the remainder of the tenders were not opened. Therefore he was not able to answer that part of the question. The amount claimed was between £1,000 and £1,100. The Government thought there was probably a claim against the Government. On a former occasion, when the Government resisted a similar claim, it was brought before the House, the Committee reported that a sum of £1,700 should be given to the contractor, and that amount was paid. Therefore the Government thought it better to compromise this matter in the way it had done by extending the contract for one year at the present rate.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What rate?

Major ATKINSON was not quite certain, but thought it was about £1,200; but that could easily be ascertained. Any just claim, of course, they would have to recognise; but unjust claims they would not. He did not see how they could have escaped this one.

Mr. SEDDON asked if the lowest tender from Greymouth was not £1,600, while this contract was £1,300.

Major ATKINSON could not reply to that, because the tenders were, as he had stated, returned unopened.

#### SOUTH ISLAND PASTORAL RUNS.

On the motion of Major STEWARD, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House of all pastoral runs in the South Island of which the licenses expire between January, 1888, and the 30th December, 1890, giving in detail the number of the run, the provincial district, the acreage, name of present occupier, and present rental paid.

#### LOAN BILL.

##### ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, the course I propose to take in resuming this debate is this: I shall principally discuss the questions raised by the Public Works Statement, and incidentally, in my remarks, I shall refer to some important questions which the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government raised last night in moving the second reading of the Loan Bill, and I shall, of course, make some remarks upon that Bill itself. The honourable member for Egmont raised some very important questions as to the duty of the Colonial Treasurer, as to the amount of money he had to pay in April, and as to the proposal for testing the public-works policy by votes in Committee of Supply. On all those points I shall touch later on. First, I have very great pleasure in offering to the Minister for Public Works my warm congratulations upon the Public Works Statement. As a Statement I think it is an exceedingly able one, very ingeniously pieced together; and,

Mr. R. H. J. Reeves

although I am not able to concur with it, yet I am none the less willing to do justice to the industry and ability with which the Statement has been produced. Especially, I think, the House is indebted to the honourable gentleman for the full tables which he has arranged in connection with the Statement, which certainly make very clear what his views are. I do not think that in the course of the discussion there will be much question as to the meaning of the honourable gentleman, whether or not we agree with that meaning. The great doubt I feel, speaking generally, as to the Statement is this: as to its being possible now, even had we a much longer time at our disposal, to discriminate and judge, to the minute extent the honourable gentleman proposes, what should be our policy and proceedings during the next three and a half years. And, Sir, there is this, besides, to be said of the Statement: that the proposals of the honourable member as regards public works and borrowing do not fit in with the financial policy, or any possible financial policy, as I shall make clear in the course of what I have to say. Now, Sir, I will go through briefly some of the most prominent points of the Statement. First, as regards the Helensville Railway Northwards, and as to the doubling of the line from Auckland to Penrose, and as to the line from Grahamstown to Te Aroha, I think the course which the honourable gentleman asks us to take in regard to those three lines, that we should definitely decide to even banish them from consideration for three and a half years, is too severe a measure. I believe, as far as I know, the honourable gentleman is wise in not making proposals for their extension at present; but as to saying what is to take place in the Grahamstown—Te Aroha district, in the North Auckland district, or in regard to the traffic in Auckland and the country with which it is connected—as to saying what may be necessary in regard to extending the railways long before three years and a half are over, it is nothing short of presumption on our part to commit ourselves to banishing these lines for that period. Especially I may say, with regard to the northern extension, I think it is a matter very much to be regretted that, at a time when there is an evident inclination to settle and colonise the land north of Auckland, such a check should be thrown upon it as is comprised in the banishment of the extension of this railway for so long a period. Now I come to a very important question, and that is the proposals in regard to the North Island Trunk line. Sir, I say that these proposals are the result of fear on the part of the honourable gentleman to deal definitely with the question—the fear of offending some Wellington members on the one hand, or of offending some Auckland members on the other. And I am of opinion that it is a question that ought to be settled, and, whether or not I may please the members whom I love so much representing Wellington or those whom I equally love in Auckland, I think it is at any rate my duty to express explicitly my views upon the subject. Now, the position is this: The line at the

north end to Murimotu can be completed for £300,000. I have calculated minutely the cost, including engagements for the purchase of Native lands in relation to the southern part of the line, and the expenditure already undertaken, and I find that there will remain out of the million loan, above the cost of the completion of the line to Murimotu, the sum of £230,000. Two or three years ago it was my good fortune to meet with a gentleman of Taranaki—I think he was the Chairman of the county—an exceedingly able and intelligent man. He went with me into the whole question of connecting Taranaki with Auckland, and I came to the conclusion that, whether or not the railway was to be proceeded with from Marton to Te Awamutu, the connection between Taranaki and the main line to Auckland should be proceeded with. I made very exhaustive inquiries on the subject, and the result of those inquiries convinced me of this: that for £600,000 a communication could be made between Taranaki and a point on the main line south of Te Awamutu. I do not think that can be done from Stratford, nor do I think it is desirable that it should be done from Stratford. New Plymouth is an important city, and, in my opinion, the line should go through New Plymouth; and, as far as I can judge, the cheapest line would be one connecting Waitara with the main line; and that could be done for £600,000, the distance being seventy-five miles. I was in favour of the Marton route three years ago for several reasons, and especially because it was said it could be completed for a little over the million voted for the North Island Main Trunk line. Again, I thought that a fast line could not be obtained by Stratford, and I thought it would be well to make a rapid line from Wellington to Auckland. There were other reasons, to which I need not specially refer, but they were all in the direction that it was more desirable to proceed with the central route than with the Taranaki line. Now, upon all these points my views are modified. I find that if the line is carried through New Plymouth to Auckland certainly not more than half a million, I do not think more than £400,000, would be necessary to be raised in excess of the North Island Trunk Loan. I undertake to say that £400,000 in excess of the amount authorised already is very probably the amount that would be required to finish what has been done in the south, to take the line to Hunterville, to purchase the Native lands, and to carry the line through New Plymouth and Murimotu to Auckland. The Minister for Public Works tells us that £1,285,000 is required to complete the line from Marton to Te Awamutu, in addition to the million already authorised. Having travelled over that road myself, I have come to the conclusion that it would be well to make New Plymouth the halting-place, and in saying so I do justice to the town which has had the honour of politically educating the honourable gentleman now at the head of the Government. I think it would not be undesirable that the halting-place should be at New Plymouth, and

then, Sir, we should have through communication between Wellington and Auckland. The line would not be so quick, certainly. I may say I have formed a strong opinion upon the subject from the fact of the very great traffic which now goes on from Wellington to Auckland by way of New Plymouth. I do not think any of us imagined, when that line was finished to New Plymouth, that many people would go by that road and take steamer from New Plymouth to the Manukau; but, as a fact, it is a very popular route, notwithstanding the drawback of having to land at the breakwater at New Plymouth; so that I think we may conclude that the main trunk route will be very popular if it go by that way. Then, I say the arguments in favour of opening up the line from New Plymouth to Auckland are irresistible. There are many reasons why it should be done, and there is perhaps none greater than the immense mineral value of the district between Mokau and Auckland. The streams running through that district uniformly show mineral wealth, including coal and valuable metals. Therefore I am strongly in favour of the line being taken by New Plymouth, and I should be prepared to support a resolution to the effect that the line shall not be taken further than Hunterville, and that all works beyond that shall be stopped. It is simply a waste of money to carry out the proposal of the Minister for Public Works; and, as I shall show further on, although the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government affects to leave to the House an opportunity of deciding on his proposals, he does nothing of the kind. These items will be considered in Committee of Supply, but a resolution of the House will be required if it is intended to determine that the route of the line shall be by way of New Plymouth. I will not only support that route, but I will support its being carried on quickly, because there is a large sum of money available now. A large sum has already been expended, and it is sheer wastefulness and extravagance to let these works stop, and lose interest on the money, instead of pushing them on as quickly as possible. Sir, I am one of those who believe that if communication be opened up between Wellington and Auckland by way of New Plymouth an immense impetus will be given to commerce, to traffic, and to the industries of this Island. As regards the proposal to complete the line between Palmerston and Woodville, that has my hearty approval. I should like to see it pushed on day and night as rapidly as possible. I am not of the same opinion with regard to the communication between Woodville and Masterton. I consider that the expenditure for that work might very well be extended over a longer period than is proposed. I am not, of course, able to judge of what engagements have been entered into, but it seems to me that the Minister for Public Works need not force on that work so rapidly, and that the expenditure on it might be extended over four years instead of two. As his proposals come down to us,

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although the expenditure up to September last was only £16,000, and although expenditure has been contracted from the commencement of the second half of the year, yet the honourable gentleman seems to think he has found a way for increasing the expenditure during that second half. In other words, he thinks that, while £16,000 has been expended on the line from March to September, he will contrive to spend £21,000 more up to the end of March next. I do not think he can do it, and the same remark applies to most of the expenditure which he has proposed for the current year. His proposal is to expend £37,000 up to March next, and £24,400 during the next year. I think this expenditure ought to be extended over three or four years, as the work is not of such a necessary character that it ought to be forced on. I recognise that it has to be done, because it is part of the schedule of the Loan Act; but I do not think there is any necessity for hurrying it. Now with regard to the railway between Greymouth and Hokitika: I contend it is a great mistake to delay the completion of that line. It is proposed to go on with that line during the next three years and a half, and yet to leave a gap between the two cities or towns, because of saving the sum of £70,000. That is a case of "penny-wise and pound-foolish," as the line will probably be a paying one. As regards Hokitika the proposal is particularly unjust. There has been a large expenditure on the Greymouth and Westport Harbours, but there has been none to speak of on the Hokitika Harbour during late years. It is therefore placed at a great disadvantage, and it is only just that it should be given communication with Greymouth, as a compensation for the expenditure on the northern harbours. Besides that, I hold that, as the southernmost town on the West Coast, it should not be left without communication with the other towns, as it will be under the proposals of the Government, which will still leave a gap of seven miles. With regard to the Southland railways, I would rather leave the Southland members to speak upon them, for I do not feel myself sufficiently able to judge as to whether or not the proposals of the Government are of a satisfactory character. As regards the Otago Central Railway, I consider the proposals are exceedingly unsatisfactory. The Government have virtually made a Government measure of the Otago Central Railway Bill. The line under that Bill is to commence from Middlemarch; but until the line is completed to Middlemarch the Bill which we passed the other day will, in my opinion, have no effect, or next to no effect. I am aware, in saying this, that I differ in opinion from the honourable gentleman whose name is particularly identified with the measure, the honourable member for the Dunstan, who thinks that the line can be commenced in both directions from Clyde. The honourable gentleman is clearly mistaken, and is evidently wanting in knowledge of how railways are always commenced. I do not believe that there is a single example to be found of a line com-

menced in the middle of the country, without communication by water or rail so as to bring up the necessary plant. The cost of bringing up material and rails and rolling-stock to a place right in the middle of the country which cannot be approached by water or rail will make the thing impossible. Therefore, in my opinion, until the line reaches Middlesmarch the making of the line beyond that point under the Bill which has passed this House cannot proceed; and I think it is a mistake to delay it. It is proposed that on this line £70,000 shall be spent the first year, £60,000 the next year, and £41,000 in the third year. In my opinion, that railway ought to be completed in the two years—that is, next year—to Middlesmarch. Another thing to be considered in relation to that is the way in which the land will be locked up by the Bill we have passed, and by the delay that will take place in the completion of the line to Middlesmarch. It will be observed that the amount involved is not a large one. The course I propose will simply mean making the £41,000 proposed for the third year payable during the second instead of during the third year. With regard to the statement made by the Minister for Public Works, that the open lines have yielded a net percentage of £2 6s., I do not consider that unsatisfactory, and I think that the honourable gentleman is under the mark in his statement that the services rendered to other departments by the railways amount to £35,000 annually in value: in my opinion, it might be put at a considerably larger sum. So that the railways as they now are do not at all show an unsatisfactory result as a whole. Now I come to the question of roads and bridges. My remarks on that head will be very few and very general, and I shall leave honourable members who have a larger knowledge of the subject to be more minute in their criticism. But I must say this: that the proposals which are made to regulate expenditure on roads and bridges for the next three years and a half are fallacious in the extreme, mere guesswork, a very prettily drawn-up plan like a Chinese puzzle, put together like mosaic-work; but I do not think that they can possibly be adhered to. I do not think that honourable members, who know how uncertain the progress of settlement is in the colony, can believe for a moment that the rate of expenditure on roads and bridges can be fixed so long in advance. We cannot tell at this time what will be the colony's urgent needs in the way of opening up the country at any given time during so long a period. The provision made for goldfields roads and goldfields contingencies is wholly inadequate. It amounts to a sum which may be very much less than may be required in a single year, if some new goldfield should be discovered requiring a very large expenditure to give access to it. Honourable members must recollect this: that not only is it asked that we should now decide the expenditure for the next three and a half years, but it is asked that we should fix it for that period, because it is in the mind of the honourable member at the

head of the Government that there shall be no further borrowing for three years from March next; and therefore it is an attempt to fix our policy in this matter for the next three and a half years. I would also point out this: that we have a sort of hope held out to us that borrowing for these matters will be reduced; and to the extent that it is reduced the consolidated revenue is to be further handicapped, or the local bodies will be, in connection with roads and bridges, goldfields roads and bridges and goldfields contingencies, subsidies to local bodies, extension of telegraph-lines, public buildings, and things of that sort. Public buildings have been erected in the past somewhat lavishly, perhaps—not of late years, for I undertake to say that there are reasonable requirements in some parts of the country, more especially in country districts, for public buildings to a very large amount; and it is only the very strong inducement there is to be economical that enabled the late Government, and will enable the present Government, to say that these requirements shall not be met at an early date. And these public buildings also are to be put on the consolidated revenue: in short, it is proposed to very heavily handicap the consolidated revenue in the future. The provision that is stated as made for the "unemployed" is £30,000 for the present and following three years. I cannot trace that expenditure in the proposed works. No doubt the honourable gentleman has particular works in his mind to which he proposes to devote the money; but I cannot, myself, discover what the works are. But there is a great deal to be said about this "unemployed" question. I am quite aware that persons who do not love to work are apt to use agitations of the kind for the purpose of obtaining assistance. But it is preposterous to suppose that that is the general position, or to fail to recognise that as the colony becomes older the number of persons who will grow old and helpless will increase, as has been the case in the Australian Colonies. And I undertake to say that—although you may put your hands on a great many cases unworthy of assistance or recognition among those who implore employment to enable them to get the means of living—there are a vast number of cases that deserve the sympathetic attention of those who have charge of the interests of the colony. In a country like this, where large seasons of labour grow up in connection with harvesting and wool-shearing, there always must be times when there is a want of employment. That has been the case as long as I can remember in New Zealand, which extends over twenty-six years. Even in the time when Otago was in its most prosperous condition we had demands for aid from persons who during the winter months were unable to find employment; and it is absurd to suppose that now, when the expenditure of public money is being eased off, and at a time when there is a tendency to offer less employment, and when local industries are less prosperous—that at such a time we are likely to require less provision for the "unemployed" than in past times. I undertake

to say that during the last twenty-five years the Colonial and Provincial Government expenditure on "unemployed" has been larger than the Minister for Public Works now proposes. The honourable gentleman proposes to extend the expenditure in that way of £30,000 over four years; or, in other words, £7,500 per annum is all the honourable gentleman proposes during this and the next three years to be devoted to providing relief for the "unemployed;" and that is a less sum than the total of what the General and Provincial Governments have devoted to that purpose during any one of the past twenty-five years. No matter how prosperous the colony may have been, or how much employment may have been offering on public works and goldfields, I undertake to say that never was a less sum than £7,500 a year expended by the General and Provincial Governments on the "unemployed" during that long period. The honourable gentleman will not be able to make £30,000 sufficient for the purpose for that period of four years. I wish to put in a respectful and humble plea for a small work in a district which is connected with the one I have the honour to represent. I allude to the Sumner Railway. I believe if it depended on the honourable member who has charge of the public works there would be no question whatever that that railway would be made. I think the honourable gentleman has given it to be understood that he is most favourable to the work. It would cost about £14,000. It was omitted, by accident, from the schedule of the Loan Act of 1886, on account of the similarity of name between it and that of another railway—the Mount Somers line. In the Loan Act of 1886 only £8,000 was set apart for the whole Provincial District of Canterbury out of the whole million and a half; and now, out of the proposed half-million for general railways, only £7,000 is proposed for that district. I am quite aware of the reason which guided us in not proposing a larger amount in 1886—it was that the best assistance that could be given to the Canterbury Provincial District was by giving larger inducements for the making of the Midland Railway, by establishing railway communication between Westport and the Midland line, and by the line through Marlborough to Tophouse. But these lines were thrown out by the House, and Canterbury was left, as I have said, with only £8,000 out of the last loan; and only £7,000 is proposed now. If the honourable member at the head of the Government will tell me that he will leave this matter to the discretion of the Minister for Public Works I shall, at any rate, feel happy on that point—that we should have the railway. I know his inclination and his sound sense of justice are in favour of making that line: in fact, a deputation that waited on him regarding it came away quite delighted with the friendly manner in which he expressed himself towards the work, and were so impressed with the certainty that it would be soon begun that they discussed whether the honourable gentleman should be asked to take the principal part in

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the jubilations connected with beginning the work, and should be asked to turn the first sod, so happy were honourable members in the assurance they received from that interview. I hope that this appeal—which I have made in as humble a manner as could be conceived—will have the effect I desire. The work would come in for the "unemployed;" and it is important to know that it would be a suburban line, which would pay well, and therefore it is one of the lines which should not be relegated to a remote period. Now, as regards the question of immigration, it is proposed to put a considerable sum on the estimates in relation to immigration. I cannot say that I am unfavourable to that proposal, because there are systems of immigration which I think should command the support of the House and the country; but I do think we should have a much larger knowledge of the way in which it is proposed to conduct this immigration than we have at present, and I suppose the Ministry will consider it reasonable that such further information should be given. The only other point which I wish to refer to before coming to the general financial aspect of the proposals is this: that, whilst admitting to the full my share of the responsibility and the late Government's share of the responsibility in the matter, I have come to the conclusion that the great expenditure which has taken place on harbour defences is to be regretted. It was commenced at a time when there was a panic, owing to the possibility of war between Great Britain and Russia. This is not the time to go fully into that, but I have come to the conclusion that really the expenditure we are making for harbour defences is more for the protection of Her Majesty's ships of war than for the purpose of defending the colony's territory. Not only will these harbour defences, long before they can reach the point it was intended they should reach, become antiquated and inefficient, but I believe also that the expenditure will have to be enormously in excess of what has already taken place. I admit my full share of responsibility in the matter; but it seems to me desirable that we should now curtail as much as possible any further expenditure in the direction of harbour defences. I shall probably have an opportunity of going more fully into that question when the Bill to provide for the naval defence of the colony is brought down. Now, Sir, I come to the general financial aspect of the question. The gist of the proposals of the Government is this: that at the 31st March, 1887, there was an amount of £575,000 to the credit of the First Part of the Public Works Fund—that is, the part which relates to the miscellaneous expenditure; that there was in the Second Part a credit balance of £674,000—that is, relating to the North Island Trunk Line loan expenditure; and to the credit of the Third Part there was £719,000. To give round figures, I am mentioning only the thousands. That makes a total in hand at the 31st March, 1887, of £2,018,000. Now it is proposed to add £1,000,000 to that amount,



making it up to £3,018,000. It is proposed to expend between the year 1887 and the end of March, 1891, £2,941,000, leaving—or it is supposed to leave—at the end of March, 1891, an amount of £77,000 to be expended, representing a balance left to the North Island Trunk Railway Loan of £54,000, and to the unexpended amounts of general loans £23,000. That is, in round figures, the gist of the proposals of the Government. Now, I would ask honourable gentlemen to consider the question of assets as at the end of September, or, rather, at the end of March next, with a view to considering how far it is necessary to embark upon the new loan proposed. The assets as regards Part I. at the end of March last were £575,000. That amount includes the sum of £33,000 for debentures or inscribed stock on account of the Roads and Bridges Construction Act in a commuted shape from various local bodies. There was to the credit of the First Part at the 31st March last of £550,000. The expenditure, the absolute expenditure, up to the end of September last was £243,000, leaving a balance at the end of September of £307,000. Now, Sir, as I shall have occasion to show directly, the honourable member proposes uniformly throughout his estimates that there shall be a larger expenditure during the second half of this year—that is to say, from September to March—than there was from March to September last. I do not know how the honourable gentleman arrives at that estimate, but I believe it is incorrect, for we had already toned down the expenditure before leaving office, and there is no reason to expect that the second half, although it is estimated higher, will show actually a larger amount of expenditure than the first half did. The expenditure was, during the first half, out of the First Part, £243,000; and I am sure that the expenditure to March next will not be larger. Taking that amount, there will be left at the end of March a balance in Part I. of £64,000. Supposing, however, I accept the estimate of the honourable gentleman for a larger expenditure in the second half of the year than there was in the first half, there will be expended £17,000 more, and the balance at the end of March will be £47,000. In the Second Part of the Fund there was expended on the 31st March last £674,000; and, as the amount is so large, I will take the full amount of the expenditure proposed by the honourable gentleman for the whole year, leaving, in this case as in the last case, a larger proposed expenditure for the second half of the year. I will take the whole amount that the honourable gentleman sets forth in his own estimates, £180,000; and therefore I find that at the end of March next there will be left in the Second Part of the Public Works Fund £494,000. In the Third Part there was, at the end of March last, £769,000. The expenditure proposed by the honourable gentleman is £442,000 up to the end of March last, and therefore at the end of March next there will be a credit balance in the Third Part of £327,000. In other words, there will be a credit in the First Part of £64,000

or £47,000 according as the honourable gentleman may expend during the second half of the year; there will be a credit in the Second Part of £494,000; and in the Third Part of £327,000. It is important to recollect that these will be the balances to the credit of the Public Works Fund in March next. The amount required to be voted for 1887–88 is no index of the expenditure, because, as I have said, uniformly throughout the estimates brought down it is proposed to spend more for the second half of the year than was expended in the first half. The additional expenditure is not really going on, but is in consequence, probably, of its being necessary to put more down than will be expended. However, it actually amounts to this: that, whilst we spent from March to September last £515,000, the honourable gentleman's estimates show that we shall spend from September to March £611,000; or, in other words, the honourable gentleman estimates that the expenditure for the second half of the year will be £96,000 more than it was for the first half; but I am convinced that that £96,000 will be entirely to the good at the end of the 31st March—that there will be no excess of expenditure over that of the first half of the year. Now I look at the question as to what was available for expenditure as a whole on the 30th September, 1887. Supposing the North Island Trunk Railway Loan to have been negotiated, and supposing, also, that the debentures or stock belonging to the Roads and Bridges Construction Act given by the local bodies were cashed and placed to the credit of the Fund, there was at the end of September no less than £1,503,000 to the credit of the Public Works Fund. Taking the expenditure from September to March at the same rate as the expenditure from March to September, and adding only the £40,000 for the cost of negotiating the North Island Trunk Loan, I have an amount of expenditure of £555,000: in other words, on the 31st March next there will be no less than £948,000 to the credit of the three Public Works Accounts. Now, Sir, I will put a simple proposition to the House, and it is this: If a new loan is required in March next, with a credit balance of £948,000, when will a new loan be required at the proposed rate of expenditure during the next three years and a half? The expenditure proposed for the year 1888–89—that is, from March next to the following March—is £986,900; so that, to all intents and purposes, it is proposed to spend a million of money next year. And, Sir, it seems to me as clear as it is possible to make anything that, if the Government are justified in asking us for permission to launch a new loan of a million in March next, when there will be nearly a million in hand, and as the expenditure during the current year to the following March will amount to a million, they will have to come down and ask for another loan in 1889. They are lodged in this absolute conclusion: Either it is unnecessary to ask for a million in March next, or they will require another million at the end of the following year—in March, 1889. I see, Sir, no way out of that difficulty,

except that it will not be necessary to allow the Government so large a loan as they now ask for. They propose to shut themselves out absolutely from borrowing till 1891; but, if the state of the finances next March requires the launching of a million loan, then I say that the following year a new loan will be required, and the Government will have put the colony in very great danger by undertaking not to borrow for two years further. That is to say, they will require to borrow in 1889, whilst they have undertaken not to borrow until 1891. Sir, in my opinion the loan proposed and asked for of one million is not required; but I believe that half a million should be granted, because the No. 1 Fund requires to be replenished almost from the beginning of the year. There will be probably £100,000 or so in the No. 1 Fund at the commencement of the next financial year; and the Fund which deals with the railways generally—that is to say, the No. 3 Account—will require some amount of replenishment, probably to the extent of £100,000, at the rate of expenditure proposed by the honourable member to carry on until 1889. Therefore, Sir, I should not be averse from a loan being permitted to the extent of half a million and no more. The honourable gentleman may say that the Public Works Fund is exceedingly loaded, and that that is why he asks for that million. I will turn to facts. On the 30th September last, supposing the advances from the North Island Trunk Loan were cleared off—and they will be cleared off as soon as that loan is negotiated—the whole of the advances which the Public Works Fund was under for outside investments was as follows: £12,000, Thames-Rotorua debentures; £37,000, district-railway debentures; £28,000 of 4-per-cent. inscribed stock; £19,000, deficiency bills; and £50,000, debentures on account of Government loans to local bodies. In other words, the whole amount, outside the North Island Trunk Railway, of investments held by the Public Works Fund on the 30th September last amounted to only £146,000. Sir, I should think honourable members must have been astonished last night, as I was, at finding that the Government proposed, besides this million of money, to raise another loan of £400,000 in the English market. The honourable gentleman at the head of the Government denied that that was the meaning of the Public Revenues Bill. I have examined it since, and can see no other meaning to it. It enables the Treasurer to appoint agents in Great Britain to borrow £400,000 to pay off the deficiency of the present and last year up to the extent of £400,000, and it provides for 5-per-cent. debentures being sold to buy up the deficiency bills. I am not generally inclined to allow English opinion to guide our counsels, because I think we know best what is to be done; still, Sir, I could hardly fancy a more audacious challenge to the English money-market than, after a long course of adoption of 4-per-cent. inscribed stock on all new loans, and systematically keeping out of the way loans for revenue purposes, that we should go to the

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English money-market and ask for £400,000 in substitution of revenue for the present year—some part of which might have been collected had the honourable member not obstinately put down his foot against going into the question of revising the Customs tariff. Sir, the honourable member, in a former period—I will not say the deficiencies wholly belonged to his Government, but more or less they did so—went upon the English money-market for no less a sum than £1,800,000 to make up for deficiency in revenue; and it was to be hoped that we were not going to do a similar thing again. I cannot help thinking that it is lamentable that this course should now be proposed, and, virtually, that we should be asked to consent to a loan of £1,400,000,—for it is nothing else; the fact that it is in two Bills does not matter. There is £400,000 to pay off deficiency in revenue, £500,000 for miscellaneous purposes, and £500,000 for railways. These, Sir, are the proposals of the honourable gentleman. And it is a remarkable fact—I do not know if it has occurred to honourable members—that the course we adopted in 1886, which met with the approval of the whole House and of the whole country, of strictly “ear-marking” the purposes and amounts for which the loans should be borrowed, has been departed from by the honourable member in the present Bill. After the extraordinary way in which the £3,000,000 proposed by the honourable member in 1882 was diverted to different objects from the purposes for which it was authorised, the House felt that we should strictly denote to what purposes any future money should be applied, and should take precautions for preventing its misapplication. The words put into the Act of 1886 were—“no other purpose whatever.” Those words are omitted from the present Bill, and words are substituted enabling the House to vary the purposes and the amounts in the schedule at the pleasure of the House. These are the words now employed: “and can from time to time be applied to the construction of the works and for the purposes mentioned in the schedule of this Act, in such amounts and within such periods only as shall be provided by any Act or Acts to be passed by the General Assembly appropriating the said moneys.” In other words, although they affect, in this schedule, to put down amounts and purposes, the Bill is so framed that it will be open to the House to look upon the whole amount of the loan as available for expenditure in any direction, so long as it does not go outside altogether the many different purposes stated in the schedule. I consider that a retrograde step, and one which the House will not agree to. Then, I should mention this: that the proposal to borrow £400,000 in England is in distinct opposition to the statement made by the honourable member in his Financial Statement, for in that he said that they proposed to issue short-dated debentures payable only in the colony; so that, without any explanation or apology whatever, the honourable member is so confident of his majority, apparently, that he has brought down this Bill with this vital and important change

without even deeming it worthy of mention. Now, the honourable gentleman last night lamented that he, as Colonial Treasurer, was so fully occupied in having to find money as it was required. Sir, I venture to say that the honourable gentleman, in making that complaint, does not fully recognise what are the functions of a Colonial Treasurer. They are analogous to the functions of the manager of a bank. If the manager of a bank were to keep a million or two millions in the coffers of the bank in excess of his requirements, to save himself trouble or anxiety, what would be the result? It would be very bad business. It is the function of a bank to see that money is employed from day to day; and that is the function of all persons in business. Why, Sir, at Home, when interest was down as low as 1 per cent. at call, I have known instance after instance of hundreds of thousands of pounds being lodged for three or four days, though the interest given was only about £3 a day for every £100,000. That was done because it was looked upon as a matter of business that no larger amount of interest should be paid than was absolutely necessary. The loan of a million will, absolutely, not be required for a very considerable time, as I have shown the House; but the honourable gentleman is going to propose to issue a loan of a million in March, when he will have a million in hand, nearly, to the credit of the Public Works Account—he will have a great deal of money at his command. Why should it be necessary, then, to issue the £400,000 of debentures? If the honourable member had said, “I want a loan of a million in order to carry over local investments, which are difficult to place in the colony,” I could have understood it; but look at the position the honourable member has taken up. He told us with a martyr-air last night that he had to find in April next £600,000—which is to be provided by the negotiation of the North Island Trunk Loan—and he has to find besides £700,000 out of revenue. Now, look at the position of the honourable member, when he speaks of that as a matter of difficulty. On the 30th March he will be able to clear off every sixpence he is owing in the way of deficiency bills—he will have £400,000 at his command under this Bill, and that will make a complete clearance of every debt he has owing, and leave a surplus. Of course, Sir, as I showed when I spoke on the Financial Statement, the honourable gentleman exaggerated the position, both as regards the expenditure and the diminished revenue; and there will not be so large a deficiency as he anticipates, unless it arises out of measures which he is proposing this session. He pays off every debt, and on the first day of April has a right to raise £900,000 in addition to paying off that £400,000. This revenue Bill allows him £1,300,000 of deficiency bills—£400,000 in the shape of debentures, which will clear off altogether that amount of outstanding bills, and on the 1st April he will be entitled to raise an additional £900,000. I do not see that there will be any difficulty then in paying off the £700,000. Honourable members must recollect

that the critical period in the finances of the colony is from the end of March to the middle of October. During those first six months we have to pay, virtually, the whole of our year's interest. October is the worst part. At the end of the year we have cleared off, if there is no deficiency, our Treasury bills, or nearly all of them, except such as may be represented by advances. Then we have recourse to Treasury bills to pay the half-year's interest due in April. Up to October we have to keep up all the revenue we can; and, with the use of the Treasury bills, we pay the second half-year's interest. Well, after October the revenue continues to accumulate and accumulate, and the whole of the property-tax comes in after October, and a very considerable amount more in stamp duties during the second half of the year than the first half. And what I want to bring before the Committee is this: that the position of the Colonial Treasurer is, and must be—and he cannot get ease from it if he does justice to the colony—his position is to examine these matters very carefully, so as to avoid paying a larger amount of interest than is necessary. The function of the officers of the Treasury is to deal with the moneys provided by the Treasurer; and the lament made by the Colonial Treasurer last night, of having to spend his time in providing the means required, would have been a legitimate lament from the Secretary to the Treasury, but not from the Colonial Treasurer, any more than it would be a legitimate lament from the manager of a bank, whose business it would be to conduct the policy of the bank and determine what funds were necessary. Now, Sir, in saying that I am not favourable to allowing this loan to be for more than half a million, I wish to add that, if I considered it was possible to give effect during the present session to the proposals which I have before referred to in this House, it would not be necessary to issue any new loan at all, to float the North Island Trunk Railway, or to provide a loan for taking up the deficiency bills. It appears to me absurd for honourable members to suppose that I, who have played so large a part in the history of the colony, would endanger my reputation by making a statement as to the feasibility of such plans unless I had good reason to know they could be carried out. But it seems to me yet more absurd that gentlemen who are inclined to ridicule the idea of such proposals should have so little idea of the resources which are open to countries, as well as to individuals, in the way of meeting conditions and circumstances which required to be met as to suppose there is no way of meeting our difficulties and the various circumstances out of which they arise, and that we must come to the deplorable policy which this Public Works Statement discloses; for there is no disguising the fact that this public-works policy is a bid to honourable members who are supporters of borrowing, in the way of saying, “If you will consent to let us borrow more at present than was contemplated, we will make you a promise of being abstinent in future.” I do not know what one would say of

a person who was habitually given to the use of strong liquor who said, "If you let me have a month's or a year's indulgence to any extent I like, I am willing to take the pledge afterwards." That is virtually what the honourable gentlemen now say. They say to those members who are opposed to borrowing, "Give us a year or two of wild indulgence, and after that we will take the pledge and abstain for the future." How far this promise may have effect upon honourable members it is not for me to say. To my mind, the Public Works Statement is neither more nor less than this: "Give us a large amount of borrowing for the next eighteen months, and we will take our chance of what we can do afterwards. We shall, at any rate, have had eighteen months' control of the colony, and something may occur to enable us to renounce the support of the members whose support now is so important to us." That is, to my mind, the character of the policy. And when I look at the Ministers smiling opposite to me I cannot help thinking I have been able to solve this conundrum and to see through it. As I have said, I put on one side my proposals; it is very evident to me I am not justified in bringing them down now. In considering proposals of the kind you have to look at them from two points of view: first, as to their advantage to the colony; and, next, their feasibility. As regards their advantage to the colony I do not think there will be any two opinions. As regards their feasibility, I am thoroughly convinced upon that point; but I know that were I to announce them now it is upon that point the Government would attempt to beat me, and the very discussion of them would aid to mar the probability of putting them into effect. It is only in the hands of those who are friendly to the carrying-out of the proposals that good effect would be likely to come from them; and, as the Government have shown such extraordinary jealousy of any member on this side of the House, or, indeed, on their own side of the House, making suggestions in regard to policy throughout the whole of the session, it would be absurd for an honourable member to think that practical advantage would be gained by making suggestions to the honourable gentleman. The Premier did, in a patronising manner, tell honourable gentlemen that he would receive their letters containing suggestions about local government during the recess; but he did not even say that he would give them the credit of their suggestions. "I will look into them; if I like them I will adopt them." That was the extent of his generosity in the way of accepting suggestions from honourable gentlemen. Well, Sir, I am dealing with the case not as it would be if I were at liberty to say it is not necessary to borrow this million and the North Island Trunk Loan, and not necessary to float debentures to take up the deficiency bills. I am dealing with the case as it stands, and I say it is not necessary, in order to make provision for such public works as will be required during the next twelve months, or to make provision for cash required

by the Treasury—it is not necessary we should raise more than half a million of money in London, especially if we accept the £400,000 placed in the Public Revenues Bill. I should like to read a summary of the criticisms I have made this afternoon and evening. I think it is arrogant and presumptuous to attempt to control the expenditure and regulate it for the next three years and a half. I think the proposals, though ably stated as a Public Works Statement, do not harmonize with the financial position of the colony. I am of opinion that some of the works that are banished altogether out of consideration, although it may possibly be the case that it is not desirable to continue them at present, should not be banished from consideration for three years and a half. I consider that the route of the North Island Trunk line should be altered. I am willing to support any amendment that may be brought in that there shall be no expenditure on the south end beyond Hunterville, and the completion of the Native land purchases: and, as I shall show directly, we have had no opportunity, either by speeches or votes, to determine that question. The question has to be determined independently by resolution. It would be a sad pity to allow the session to go by without determining that point. I consider that the Otago Central Railway should be pushed on as fast as possible to Middlemarch. Virtually, the Government have accepted the Bill for the extension of the Otago Central line, and it is therefore their duty to carry that line to Middlemarch as fast as possible, to enable that Bill to have effect; for, until the new line is commenced from the railway terminus, I am quite convinced that nothing of any importance can be done with it. I think the Mauriceville-Woodville line should be delayed as much as possible; that the amount left of "The New Zealand Loan Act, 1886," should be expended slowly; and that the Government should lend its whole strength to hurry forward with the greatest possible rapidity the filling-up of the gap between Woodville and Palmerston. That should be hurried on night and day, for it is simply a waste of previous expenditure to leave that gap open. I think that the provisions for the goldfields roads and contingencies and for "unemployed" are insufficient for the next three years and a half; and that the Greymouth to Hokitika line should be completed, and that they should not leave a gap there representing £70,000. All these objections point to the same end. We ought not to attempt during the present session to arrogate to ourselves either the right or the capacity to determine the expenditure for the next three years and a half. We should provide the Government with sufficient money to carry on the expenditure for the coming year; and we should, under the present circumstances of the colony, tone down that expenditure, unless there are particular reasons—as in the cases I have mentioned—to the lowest possible amount. We are already nearly through this year, and really it is more a question of expenditure during the time which may elapse after the end of the

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financial year to the time when we shall be able to meet next session. I am convinced that £400,000, or, say, a loan of half a million, will be sufficient; and I wish to remind honourable members that on the 31st March next there will be to the credit of Part I. of the Public Works Fund either £47,000 or £64,000 according to the rate of expenditure in the meantime; to Part II. there will be a credit of close on half a million; and to Part III., £326,000. And now I should like to ask, what is the meaning of all this flourish that we have heard during the session of reinstating our finances, and of the great necessity which the Government have to deal with the finances of the country? What does it all mean? Borrowing right and left in greater profusion than any other Ministry have ever asked for; borrowing for the year's deficiency; borrowing a million of money long before it is required; borrowing a million of money to last over three and a half years; borrowing so that they can say at the end of this year, "Oh! here is a cheque for the deficiency of the year. It ought not to come up to more than £350,000, but that does not matter: make it £400,000. Here is a cheque for it." And this is to be raised at 5 per cent. As to retrenchment, we have heard enough said of its virtues; but what do we know of it? Supposing anything should happen to close this session to-night, and honourable members were to go back to their constituents, what could they tell them of the retrenchment of the Government? They could say that they had seen a paragraph here and a circular there sent round by the honourable gentleman at the head of the Education Department; and the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government has given us the plausible excuse that he has only sent that circular round in anticipation of the House approving of their proposals. He might at least have put it in our pigeon-holes, and saved us from the humiliation of having to look to small country papers in districts which specially approve the honourable gentleman's policy to ascertain anything as to his retrenchment. I ask, again, if we meet our constituents, what can we state of this retrenchment? If an honourable gentleman goes down to Otago, he will find that the *Otago Daily Times* knows a great deal more of the mind of the Government than he does. He will find in the Press-room attached to this House gentlemen who write what is called "political gossip" to the various papers, who know much more on the question of retrenchment than members of the House do, except perhaps those honourable gentlemen who may be said to be the inner circle, and who occasionally sit on the Government benches. The knowledge of honourable gentlemen generally on this subject is not nearly so large as that of the gentlemen who write those interesting papers called "political gossip." We know of three items of retrenchment—the honorarium of honourable members, Ministers' salaries, and the Governor's salary. They have been made to travel a good way and to do a great deal of work; but what do we know of the general

question? We were told that we shall have to vote the estimates in a lump sum; but within the last day or two the Premier has told us that he will not force us through those estimates, and will give us an opportunity of discussing the education question; but as to our being in a position of meeting our constituents and telling them there is this or that plan of introducing a cheaper service for the colony—and that is what the people want—we can tell them nothing. The requirement of the constituencies is that there should be a cheaper service. They say, "We have had too luxurious a Government; it is true that it is a Government which gives conveniences from one end of the colony to the other, but we want a system which will give us less in the way of convenience and luxury, and which will consequently cost us less." But we have no knowledge of the way in which that is to be carried out, and honourable gentlemen who have no particular opportunity of obtaining information are kept completely in the dark. And now I want to say a few words about the honourable gentleman's statement that we shall be able to consider the public-works proposals when we go into Committee of Supply. He must either have said that unthinkingly, or he must have been trying how far he could play on the credulity of honourable members. That he has had encouragement during the session from honourable gentlemen to suppose that they are willing to swallow almost anything I freely admit, and I can understand that, as the session approaches to an end, he may take it into his head to try and absolutely gauge the willingness of honourable members to be—may I say humbugged?—is that a parliamentary expression, Sir? I can understand nothing else. But I tell honourable members, and especially young members on the opposite side, that when they go into Committee on the public-works proposals they will be asked to vote for so much for the year ending on the 31st March next. Nine months of the year have gone by, and very little can be done in the way of controlling the expenditure for the next three months. And if the Committee were sitting and a vote were proposed for, say, £50,000 for a line from Mount Egmont to Hawera, and I were to ask, "What is to be expended next year?" the Chairman of the Committee would very properly tell me that we were only dealing with the expenditure for the present year, and had nothing to do with the expenditure for next year. How, then, when the honourable gentleman tells us that we shall have an opportunity of considering his proposals, are we to deal with the question even by speaking, much less by voting, as to the amount that is to be expended during the next three years and a half? Since the 31st March last we have been spending money solely on Imprest Act. Imprest Act after Imprest Act has been passed, enabling the Government to spend lump sums—generally a quarter of a million—which are to be put into the Appropriation Act; and all the items of expenditure have virtually been on the scale of last year, or less, as the Government have

been able to make retrenchment; and the Appropriation Act of this year will contain an indemnity for all expenditure under those Imprest Acts, together with provision for the expenditure during the remaining three months of the year, if the Appropriation Act passes before the end of the year, which I hope it will. I ask the honourable gentleman how, under those circumstances, we are to control these votes; for we may be told at any moment that the money has been spent, or it must be spent, during the year. We might knock off £5 here and £10 there; but how is that to decide what the public-works policy is to be for the next three years and a half? It is an utter fallacy to say that we can deal with the question, and I tell the honourable gentleman that he is either mistaken himself, or he is endeavouring to mislead honourable members, when he says that it will be possible to have a fair discussion on the policy upon the votes in Committee of Supply. What we shall have to consider are the votes for the present year. For carrying on any works which we are likely to sanction this year, a half-million loan is ample; and we shall be unnecessarily straining our credit at Home and unnecessarily going in the face of the opinion of the country—which is, that borrowing should be limited to the utmost extent—if we sanction this loan for a million of money. I am obliged to the House for the attention with which it has listened to me.

Mr. FISHER.—The honourable gentleman has poked a little fun at us; we will now poke back a little common-sense at him. In some portions of his speech he assumed an altitude of affected impartiality, from which position he presumed to exercise the office of supreme interpreter, and he was good enough to give the House a great deal of criticism and advice. He took up the position of *Æsop's* quack frog, who took upon himself to prescribe for all the beasts of the field; but, as the honourable gentleman will perhaps remember, the beasts of the field in return merely recommended the quack frog to go home and prescribe for himself. The honourable gentleman, in accordance with all his old tactics, has made a bid for the individual and collective votes of members from certain parts of the colony. He has informed them, in quite a gratuitous way, that the proposals of the Government are not at all suitable to their districts, that the real interests of the districts are quite neglected, and that, if they will only return him to office, he will give them all the public works they require. But I may tell the honourable gentleman that he lives (for him) in a strange era—that if he thinks it possible to obtain the votes of particular members, or the collective votes of members of any district, by corrupt bids of that kind, he is altogether mistaken. Members of this House cannot now be bought in that way. The times when it was possible to do that sort of thing are long gone by. Now, Sir, I wish further to say that I think the honourable gentleman has been guilty of displaying the very greatest ingratitude to the people of this country. The

people of this country in times past have treated him in a uniformly liberal and generous manner, and he has told us within the past two weeks that he has in his possession a scheme which, if divulged, would immediately bring back prosperity to this colony. He said it was a scheme by which, firstly, borrowing in the London money-market might be avoided for years; secondly, it would enable our railways to be proceeded with at a reasonable rate of progress; and, in the third place, increased taxation could be altogether avoided. Now, if the honourable gentleman has in his possession such a scheme, it is simply selfish ingratitude on his part not to place it before this House and the country. I will not impute any more improper or more dishonourable motives to him, but I say this: that the honourable gentleman has been in office for three years, and, if he was not possessed of sufficient patriotism to give the people of this country the benefit of his knowledge and his skill while in office, it is his duty—to put it on no higher ground—now to give the country the benefit of this scheme, whatever it may be. In the absence of the scheme we are forced to the conclusion that the inflated and mystic language which he has used in regard to it is pure balderdash. Now, the honourable gentleman has not touched in any particular—in fact, he has studiously avoided—the main points of the Premier's speech in introducing this Loan Bill. He has altogether blinded or attempted to blind the House in regard to the financial position of the country. It was plainly and distinctly stated that the Government had to provide the sum of £1,800,000 in London in April next in order to meet the country's engagements and maintain its credit. The honourable gentleman has not answered that statement at all. He knows it to be true, and he therefore entirely avoided it. The honourable gentleman also gave no explanation whatever in regard to the vicious and dishonest system which he has introduced into our finances of borrowing from one account to aid other accounts which he had exhausted. Through the introduction of that bad system the finances of the country have become a perfect network of mystery; and the honourable gentleman is responsible for having brought that condition of things into existence. That was made quite plain by the Premier, but the honourable gentleman has not attempted to controvert his statement in any one particular. Then, the honourable gentleman, having complimented the Minister for Public Works upon the skill with which he had prepared the Public Works Statement, proceeded to say that to carry out the proposals of the Statement would be wasteful in every direction! I should have liked the honourable gentleman to go into a little more particularity with regard to that matter, for his contradictions were a little confusing. But here is a little contradiction in regard to the honourable gentleman's own administration which I would like him to explain. He tells us now that he would proceed with the *Palmer-*

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ton-Woodville line night and day, because he recognises that the line is one of extreme importance, and that it ought to be so proceeded with. Now, why did not the honourable gentleman, during his long term of office, go on with that work night and day?

Sir J. VOGEL.—I should have done so but for a want of agreement among my colleagues on the point.

Mr. FISHER.—Yes; the honourable gentleman never was in agreement with his colleagues. He knows, as every member of this House knows, that the prosecution of this work is of vast importance. We want no other evidence of that than his own statement: yet, while he makes that admission, there is the fact that he remained in office for three years and allowed the line to remain in the position in which it now is. Then, in regard to the Greymouth-Hokitika line, if the honourable gentleman believed that to be a line of such enormous importance as he now says he believes it to be, why did he not also proceed with that? Sir, this speech of the honourable gentleman is an all-round "bait" for the votes of members of this House. But he is simply now a political "Rip Van Winkle." He finds himself in opposition, and he believes it to be possible to repeat with success the tactics which he adopted twenty years ago. But I tell the honourable gentleman that the circumstances of this country are changed, the character of its public men is changed, and it is not possible now to apply with success those tactics which were tolerated twenty years ago. Neither is it any longer possible in this country to conjure with a name, much less to conjure with the honourable gentleman's name. The country is satisfied of that; and, when he speaks to us of the necessity of preserving his own reputation, I should like to tell him that he has not been quite so careful of the reputation of this country, which is a matter of very much greater concern to us. As to the necessity of providing for the "unemployed," the Government have put upon the estimates what they consider to be a reasonable sum in order to provide for those people who may be unfortunate enough, owing to the depressed circumstances of the colony, not to be able to find employment. For that purpose £30,000 has been put down, which is, as the honourable gentleman has said, at the rate of £7,500 a year; and we hope that that will be sufficient. We do not throw out any unworthy sneers such as the honourable gentleman threw out, to the effect that among the number of people in this country who rank as "unemployed" were to be found a large proportion who do not love work. That was an unworthy imputation, I think, to cast upon a large class of unfortunate people who, owing to the depressed state of the country, are unable to obtain work in the various districts of the colony.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The honourable gentleman is misrepresenting me. I said there might be some who do not love work who associate themselves with the "unemployed."

Mr. FISHER.—The honourable gentleman may qualify his statement in any way he likes. It is sufficient for me that he made the statement, which I took down at the time. Now, the whole burden of the honourable gentleman's speech was this—and to this point I call the special attention of those honourable members who object to raising any further loans: He said he considered a loan of half a million sufficient, and he objected to the colony being tied down against further borrowing for any specific term. Let that be carefully observed, for that was the whole burden of the honourable gentleman's speech. Clearly his idea is that, if he can restrict the present loan to half a million, so as to enable the country to carry on during the short period between now and next session, or perhaps the session after, there may be a possibility of himself and his late colleagues returning to office, when he will be able to propose further large loans himself. There is the key to the whole position. He expects to return to office, and he objects to be tied down, as our proposals will tie him down. The honourable gentleman objects, as he always has done, to be restricted in any way in the matter of raising loans. He has said that, in consequence of the rate at which it is proposed to proceed with public works, it will be necessary to raise another large loan by March, 1888. If the honourable gentleman wishes to do us justice, or to criticize our proposals in a fair and impartial manner, he will see that our proposals so tie up the proposed expenditure that only what is stated to be expended in any one particular year can be expended in that year.

Mr. FISHER.—No.

Mr. FISHER.—There are the figures in the Public Works Statement, and, if the honourable member for Dunedin South chooses to challenge my assertion, we must put his challenge against the statement of the honourable member for Christchurch North, who said it was presumptuous and arrogant to attempt to tie up the expenditure for three years. I think the honourable gentleman will himself admit that the honourable member for Christchurch North understands a little more about these matters than he does. Now, the advantage of these proposals, if they have any advantage at all, is this: that the loan proposals and the expenditure are specifically allocated for a particular time and for particular works. The money to be raised is to cover three years' expenditure, and the amount for each work and for each year is specifically stated. Another statement of the honourable gentleman was that we are attempting to put a stop to the principle of "ear-marking" particular moneys to be applied to particular works. Now, if this Public Works Statement has any distinctive feature at all, it is that all moneys are specifically tied up—"ear-marked," as the honourable gentleman terms it. Sir, the honourable gentleman is a great advocate for the principle of "ear-marking." So he tells us. And in this connection he has made particular reference to the North Island Trunk Loan.

Let me ask who it was, after passing a special Act to "ear-mark" that loan, who took the money and applied it to other purposes. Why, the honourable gentleman himself. And if that were the only instance of the misapplication of money by the late Government—I do not wish to use a stronger term—I would not so much complain, although that is a sufficiently strong cause of complaint. But to-night we have the honourable gentleman, of all persons in the world, suggesting that the route of the North Island Trunk line should be changed—that the whole route should be altered. The honourable gentleman, of course, is holding out an attractive bait for the Auckland and Taranaki votes, and to secure them if he can he offers to change the line of route—he, who insisted upon "ear-marking" the North Island Trunk Loan! Sir, the honourable gentleman's attitude and his conduct are altogether inexcusable.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I did not say what route should be adopted.

Mr. FISHER.—The honourable gentleman is on the horns of a dilemma. In this case, unfortunately for himself, he has not left open his usual means of escape. He must accept the consequences of his own statement, and if he expects his statements to obtain any credence in this House they must be statements of such a character as to stand analysis. When we come to analyse the honourable gentleman's statement in this respect we find it will not hold water in any particular. By any one statement we must gauge his whole argument, and if any one falls to the ground we may fairly assume that they are all equally defective. The honourable gentleman made a grand point about "ear-marking;" but, as I have said, he was the person who departed from the principle, and applied money voted for one purpose to another. I desire particularly to pin the honourable gentleman upon this question. He who has expressed such holy horror lest the Premier should divert this money has suggested that the route of the trunk line should be changed, and has expressed great pleasure that the Statement, as he says, indicates it might be changed.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Will the honourable gentleman allow me to state this positively: that there is no "ear-marking" in any shape or form to prevent the route of the North Island Trunk line being changed and the line being taken by Taranaki? The Statement of the honourable gentleman's own colleague must convince him of the fact, and therefore he must know that what he says is incorrect.

Mr. FISHER.—No; I call the special attention of those honourable members who have an aversion to any loan-proposals, as I have myself, to this point. The honourable gentleman makes the insidious suggestion—and I warn the House against its adoption—that only a half-million loan should be authorised now. He thinks—it is a vain delusion, of course—of the possibility of his coming back to these benches next year, and he therefore suggests that the borrowing should be kept down this year, and that what is borrowed should be "ear-marked,"

so that he may be left free to borrow largely next year, when, as he vainly thinks, he may be in office. Sir, I have already this session stated in this House that I have as great aversion to borrowing as any member possibly can have, but I have realised, in the short time we have been in office, what the exact position of the finances of the country is. The honourable gentleman himself knows what their condition is; but it suits him, for party purposes, to attempt to mislead honourable members. Sir, the honourable gentleman knows better than all others what the position of the finances is at the present time. He it was who brought them into that position. He has told us that there went forth a great cry from the Government and their friends of their desire to bring about a reinstatement of the colonial finance. To that I say Yes. It was, and still is, our desire to bring about a reinstatement of the colonial finances; but I am sorry to say that, after what we have discovered of the condition of the finances since coming into office, it will be impossible to bring about that reinstatement at as early a date as we had supposed it to be possible. This, too, I desire also to say: that I am confident, speaking again from an intimate knowledge of the "clever" way in which the honourable gentleman has bungled our finance, that that reinstatement will be postponed for a very long time if the honourable gentleman is to come back to office. Now, Sir, I wish to explain that, if the honourable gentleman will obtrude these matters upon the notice of the House, it becomes our duty to follow them up. He tells us he is bound to make the statements he has made this evening, because it behoves him to be careful of his own reputation. Well, it would ill become me to say anything of the honourable gentleman's reputation. His reputation is in his own keeping, and we may assume that it is in good hands; but what we have to carefully guard is the reputation of this country, which, I venture to think, is of greater moment to us than the honourable gentleman's reputation. I have warned the honourable gentleman on previous occasions that he must be prepared to hear unpleasant truths whenever he ventures to vaunt his own superiority in discussing financial questions. I wish the House to mark this: It is not we who raise these questions. But, when they are raised, we cannot help remembering, amongst other things, that, when the last million-and-a-half loan was raised, the honourable gentleman's connection with it cost the colony no less than £90,000. The loan was floated at £97 5s., while the lowest quotation for 4-per-cent. stock of other colonies was £103. That was what we paid for the connection of the honourable gentleman's name with the finances of this country. The honourable gentleman really ought to be more guarded in raising these questions. I did not wish to say one word upon that point; but, when the honourable gentleman comes here and talks of preserving his reputation, we must not forget what the effects of his reputation have been upon the finances of the colony. The honourable gentleman

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man may laugh as much as he pleases, but it is no laughing matter for this country to know—as we all do know—that our last loan brought so low a price, and that our bonds are now standing at a discount of £12 as compared with the stock of New South Wales, although when he took office in 1884 there was no material difference between the price of our 4-per-cent. bonds and those of the best of the other Australasian Colonies. The honourable gentleman, if it so pleases him, may indulge in mystifications with regard to finance, and may talk in dismal tones about our management; but the House is not likely to forget the useful results of his connection with our finance—

Sir J. VOGEL.—I wish to say that the honourable gentleman, in stating that when we left office the bonds of the colony were at a discount of £12, is entirely mistaken. They stood at par when we left office. They have fallen since.

Mr. FISHER.—Oh! we do not rely upon telegraphed versions of the price of our stock. I take the quotations in the leading financial papers, and I presume honourable gentlemen will accept such authorities as the *Economist* and *Westgarth*.

An Hon. MEMBER.—And the *Standard*.

Mr. FISHER.—The *Standard* has an aversion to New Zealand; but we may safely take the opinions of unbiased authorities such as I have named. The honourable gentleman rather ridiculed the statement of the Colonial Treasurer that he found himself under the unpleasant necessity of having to provide funds to carry on the services of the country; and the honourable gentleman, as is usual on these occasions, proceeded to deliver a treatise upon the duties of a Colonial Treasurer. Well, I believe in the principle laid down by Emerson, that a man's fortune, his reputation, is the result of his character; and, if the honourable gentleman opposite and my honourable friend the Colonial Treasurer are to be gauged in this way by results, I venture to say that the results will tell very heavily against the honourable member for Christchurch North. The honourable gentleman further tells us that the Public Works Statement is a bid for the votes of those honourable members who are averse from borrowing. Well, here again the honourable gentleman contradicts himself most strangely, for in another part of his speech he said the exact reverse; but in reality the Statement is, as the honourable gentleman describes it, an appeal to those honourable members who are averse from borrowing, for it is the first real attempt that has been made for many years to limit the expenditure of the country, and to keep our expenditure within our means. If it is an appeal to honourable members who are averse from borrowing, it is an honest and a conscientious appeal—it is a distinct undertaking that the colony shall not go upon the London money-market to borrow again for a term of three years; and I do not see how those members who are sincerely and earnestly opposed to borrowing can require anything

further from the Government. It is a distinct, definite, and well-thought-out Statement, which the Government is justified in bringing down and will not be justified in departing from. It is the complement of the policy so clearly laid down in the Financial Statement. The honourable gentleman says the Statement forms no guarantee that there shall not be further borrowing for three years; but he must know perfectly well that the guarantee will reach the London money-market, and that, if any attempt were made to raise money before the expiry of the three years, the guarantee would be produced against us. The honourable gentleman, as I have already remarked, said it would be presumptuous and arrogant to attempt now to regulate the expenditure for the next three years. Why so? I think it a plain and businesslike proposal, to which any business-man would give ready assent. It is only the politician—the politician with strong party bias—who would call it presumptuous and arrogant; but I venture to say that it will meet with the approval of every unbiased thinker. The proposal is clear, distinct, definite, businesslike; and I do not see how any person not swayed by political bias can come to any other conclusion in regard to it. If honourable gentlemen who accuse us of dealing in vague generalities will look at the figures in the Statement they will see that there is a definite businesslike plan laid down for the guidance of Government and Parliament for the next three years, and once accepted there can be no departure from it. There is no equivocation in any form. I submit that the honourable gentleman's criticisms in no way apply to this Statement. They must have been framed upon the presumption that they were to be directed against some Statement similar in character to those indefinite and "elastic" Statements which the honourable gentleman has himself been in the habit of placing before this House for some years past. Sir, I regret—as I always do regret upon these occasions—that the honourable gentleman should have thrown down such provocative challenges—challenges which induce comparisons between his financing and the financing of others to whom he is opposed—because the record is so much against him. I would advise the honourable gentleman, if he will consent to accept advice from me, not to again invite criticism upon this particular point on any future occasion. Sir, I have nothing further to say. I desire only to appeal to honourable gentlemen who have a conscientious objection to further borrowing to consider what the position of the country is, what liabilities we have to meet, and to tell the Government and the House, if they can, how these liabilities are to be met if they are not to be met in the way the Government propose. It seems to me that the position is clear as noonday to any person who honestly desires to understand. It is clear that we must provide £1,300,000 by the end of April, to meet the unpleasant legacy of liability left to us by our predecessors; and I say that, if we are not entitled to the support

of the House under these circumstances, we are not entitled to its support under any circumstances whatever.

Dr. FITCHETT.—The honourable gentleman who has just sat down may be an authority upon *Æsop*, but it will be some time before he makes his mark as a financier, if we may take the speech he has just delivered as a fair example of his capacity. He indulged very freely in recriminations and generalities, and allusions not in the best of taste; but he has not attempted to deal with the figures which the ex-Treasurer gave to the House, and until those figures are dealt with it will take a great many more of such speeches as we have just listened to to assure us that the loan-proposals of the Government are such as should receive the confidence of the House. I suppose it is owing to the late date of the honourable gentleman's studies in finance that there are gaps in his history of it. He referred to the honourable member for Christchurch North as being the proposer of that vicious principle of borrowing from one account to put another in funds; but he must have spoken in utter oblivion of the fact that that principle was, years ago, introduced to New Zealand politics by his colleague the present Treasurer. Again, Sir, he is, apparently, not aware of the difference between "ear-marking," in the sense in which the term was used by the honourable member for Christchurch North, and the mere mention of a sum to be allocated to a particular work. Are we to accept it, forsooth, that, because in the financial proposals of the Government and in the Public Works Statement certain sums are set down for certain works, those moneys cannot be diverted? Is it necessary to refer to the past in connection with this point? Shall I refer the honourable gentleman to the Three-million Loan raised by his colleague in 1882? History tends to repeat itself, and history will repeat itself here unless we take action to prevent it. How was that three million borrowed—on what condition? That a million per annum was to be spent, and on certain specified works. But what became of the conditions? I will not follow the honourable member by digging up "the wretched past." Many of us have come here in the hope of legislating for the future, and we fail to see how the ill-advised proposals of this Government are to be justified by reference to the possibly ill-advised proposals of any other Government. We want to let the dead past bury its dead, and to see what we can do for the country in the future. Now, dealing with the loan-proposals of the Government, what chiefly pleases me is the assurance of the Premier that he does not intend to insist on them. I trust that, in the interests of the colony as a whole, the amount of this loan will be discussed and determined utterly irrespective of party. It would be a grievous thing if, relying on his insensate majority, the majority which has helped him well, if not wisely, in the past, the Premier should insist on retaining a million in his Bill, when his own better judgment tells him it ought not to stay there. I

repeat that I think all sides of the House will recognise that this is not a matter to be dealt with in any way on party lines. Put it in any way you like, it amounts to this: that the Government propose to borrow £2,400,000. Sir, nobody can read these figures and remember what happened during the late elections—the cry for economy that rang through the country—and not be struck with a sharp shock of surprise. I trust we have not so soon forgotten the lesson learnt and the pledges given during the elections, but that we shall be as severely economical now as we then professed we would be. It is quite true that the North Island Trunk Loan is largely hypothecated, and that £400,000 represents deficiency bills that must be paid in some way or other; but the criticism of the honourable member for Christchurch North has shown that the million loan is not necessary, and I trust that the House will manage to modify it before the Bill becomes law. It is quite true that the million is proposed to be spread over three years and a half; but, in the light of what befel the Three-million Loan of the Premier's in 1882, what assurance have we that it will not be the same now? I venture to say we have none. I hold that we have no right, at the present time, when our credit is at such exceedingly low-water mark, to borrow money to spend during the course of the next three years and a half. There is nothing to warrant our doing so, and the fact will be that, if we float this loan, the money will come into the colonial chest and it will not stay there. The political pressure, the amount of suction, is so strong that no reasonable man can believe the money will be applied strictly to the purposes for which it is to be borrowed. As the honourable member for Christchurch North has pointed out, there is no provision for "ear-marking" the moneys, and it would simply be used either to reward friends or to placate enemies. I hope the House will not countenance that. Is it what the country has any right to expect? It is not necessary for me to refer to the "roar for retrenchment" that was raised some time ago. I hope it has not died out yet. Consider what the country said when the late Premier proposed to borrow £2,000,000, to last over seven years, and to be spent on strictly specified works. The proposal was hounded down as outrageously extravagant; the country would not hear of it: and now it is coolly proposed that we should consent to borrow £2,400,000, to last over three years and a half, and with no specific allocation. I trust we shall not do it. I do not purpose detaining the House discussing the merits of the thing. It has been sufficiently discussed and analysed by the honourable member for Christchurch North. What I rose to do was to endeavour to bring the House to the best method of adopting the suggestion which the Premier himself threw out, that this loan be reduced. His suggestion was that it could be reduced in Committee. I venture to say that it cannot be reduced in Committee. It should be reduced before we go into Committee. I

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quite grant that the principle of a Bill is supposed to be affirmed at the time of the second reading. It may be said that we should affirm the principle of the Loan Bill now, and subsequently reduce the amount. Well, I am disposed to think that all Loan Bills are unprincipled; but if there be any principle at all in them it is in the *quantum* of the loan. Therefore I affirm that we assert the principle when we fix the *quantum*. When we go into Committee each item will be dealt with separately; all sorts of conflicting interests will centre on each item, and the result will be that all efforts at economy will be utterly beaten in detail, and the Bill will pass in its integrity. Unless the reduction is effected now, I fear we shall utterly fail to amend the Bill in Committee; and therefore I move, as an amendment, That all the words after "That" be left out, with the view of inserting these words: "the amount of the proposed loan be limited to £500,000." I assure the Premier that it is with no hostile intention I do this. I do it for the reason, as I say, first, that he himself has indicated his willingness to accept a reduction.

Major ATKINSON.—No.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I appeal to honourable members if it is not so.

Major ATKINSON.—Not in the least as you put it.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I should be the last person to move this if I thought otherwise, because I know the Premier can command a majority which will insure the passage of the Bill in its integrity. But he intimated that he was prepared to accept reductions. I say that we cannot effect these reductions when we go into Committee of Supply; whereas, if the maximum amount of half a million be now fixed in the Bill, the Government can alter their public-works proposals in such a way as to harmonize with the amount of the Bill, and the Committee cannot increase it.

Dr. HODGKINSON.—When speaking on the Financial Statement about a month ago I gave it as my opinion that, however good the retrenchment proposals of the Government were, their borrowing proposals were excessive. I am sorry to say that since then I have not seen any reason to alter that opinion, and that I feel it my duty to protest in the strongest way I possibly can against these excessive borrowing proposals. Unless it is an absolute necessity, which has not been shown yet,—unless we have debts which we must meet to save our credit,—I think these proposals ought to be resisted; and I do hope that, without reference to party, every member of the House will consider this question impartially, and avail himself of the statement that the Premier made the other evening, that reductions may be effected upon each railway as it comes before us. The proposition of the Ministry, now that our debt has reached the enormous sum of £35,000,000, is that we should incur an additional debt of £2,400,000; and that, I imagine, with the deficiency bills to cover liabilities, will bring the debt up to the enormous sum of £38,000,000. That is a debt

far beyond anything which the colony should reasonably contract. I see, also, by this Public Works Statement, that, in spite of this enormous indebtedness, in spite of the utmost necessity for economy—for their efforts at which I give them credit—they actually propose to go on spending money on railways, and, I may add, unproductive railways. They know full well that nearly all these railways are unproductive, and that the largest and most expensive of them are political railways that ought not to have been made, and that they are the result of that vicious system introduced seventeen years ago by the honourable member for Christchurch North, which has led to the ruin of the colony—for, virtually, we are a ruined colony at this moment. There is no disguising the fact; we know it.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Will the honourable gentleman name the works?

Dr. HODGKINSON.—All the works, more or less, and the expenditure resulting from the large loan system. Out of the loans that have been raised some £14,000,000 has been spent on railways; and, as a necessary consequence of the system introduced by the honourable member for Christchurch North, enormous sums have been wasted upon other works that ought not to have been made. We know it who have to pay for it. It is all very well for the honourable gentleman to say it is not so. Here, I say, it is actually proposed to spend £3,000,000 more upon railways. I contend it is not at all necessary. Here is the North Island Trunk Railway. I understand the sum of £600,000 has been spent upon this railway already—possibly more. Well, of course that must be paid; but I contend there is not the least necessity whatever to spend another sixpence upon it for the next ten years. The railway ought to be stopped, utterly stopped, and I am amazed at the Minister for bringing forward such a proposal. I see by the Public Works Statement that it is actually proposed to spend another £400,000 upon this political railway, which can never possibly pay, which is intended to go through a barren tract of country, and, after all, is to cost another million. It is true the honourable member for Christchurch North, at the commencement of his speech, proposed that a diversion should be made, and that £600,000 should be spent right off in constructing the railway from New Plymouth towards Auckland. That would be a most prodigal and, I may say, a most profligate expenditure, and quite consistent with the character of the honourable member for Christchurch North. As every one knows, that honourable member is nothing unless he is spending money—in fact, it is in loans he lives and moves and has his being; without loans he is nowhere. We know that, to our misfortune. Therefore it is quite consistent with his character that he should propose to waste an additional sum of £600,000 on a railway which is entirely unjustifiable. I had it on very good authority from a settler in that district not long ago that the railway was utterly unjustifiable, and that all that was justifiable was the making of a road through the bush, by which

to drive fat cattle to Auckland. This is one of the projects of the honourable gentleman, and it would be simply hanging another millstone round our necks. I do not intend to discuss the loan-question at any length. I am always economical with the time of the House, and am not fond of hearing my own voice; but I will refer to a few points that I have gathered since I came into the House. The honourable member for Christchurch North has actually been posing before us as an advocate of economy and as opposed to large borrowing. That is most amusing. If the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots, then the honourable member may become an advocate of economy, and for the cessation of borrowing, but not till then; and, if he does advocate that, I have no hesitation in saying—what I really think—that he has some ulterior design, and if he could regain those benches we should then see him borrowing again. We know that a few years ago the honourable gentleman put forth a great scheme for the borrowing of ten millions, but the honourable gentleman found this House would not listen to it, and the proposal never came to anything. I consider that upon the North Island Trunk Loan a saving of £400,000 might be effected. Then, I see there is a railway north of Auckland. A great deal might be saved on that. The only railway I see in this Island that seems to have a good case is the Manawatu Gorge line. There is a very strong case for that; but I have grave doubts whether it is necessary to proceed with that line in the present distressed state of the colony. Coming to the South Island, we have the Otago Central. I think it would be quite possible to make arrangements with a company to take that line over. That would save the Government raising £100,000, or possibly not all that, but at any rate a large sum. I know that a considerable sum is already forestalled. Then, there are other smaller railways in Southland which might be seriously curtailed—the line from Wyndham to Fortrose, and the Seaward Bush line, and various others. We must practise self-denial in these times. Instead of that, the Premier and his Ministry are really tempting the House and the colony to go further into debt and extravagance. I must remind the Treasurer that he has been a strong advocate for this system of Responsible Government—which I think the worst possible system—and he should be consistent. The first function of Responsible Government is that the Ministry should lead the House in the right direction. He is positively leading the House into extravagance. Railways are sticking out everywhere on which large sums of money are to be spent; and he tells us that, if honourable members are so virtuous and self-denying as to resist these, then he will graciously accept their suggestions and propose a smaller amount. I consider that a very improper position to take. He ought to lead the House, and not come forward with proposals which will do no good for the country if they are carried out. Instead of that, these proposals are a temptation to the colony to go on in the old way of borrowing to the utmost

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of the credit of the colony; for these proposals do reach that limit. He makes proposals for the sake of getting money squandered about the colony upon works which every one knows will not be remunerative. There are other ways in which I think the Government might have done with less money. For instance, the roads. With the exception of those made for opening up land—which ought to come out of the Land Fund—I think the votes for these roads should be stopped, and a great saving would be effected there. Then, with regard to loans to local bodies, instead of bringing up an amendment to that measure I think it would have been better if a Bill had been brought in to repeal the Act. A saving of £100,000 could be effected there. It is of no use to send members to retrench, and then get money voted which they know full well must come out of loan. The Premier says these payments are to be made out of consolidated revenue. It will never come to that point. The utmost he can do is to pay interest, and I very much fear he will not be able to do that in a few years, at the rate we are going on. Then, as regards the property-tax, I am sorry to see there is a necessity to increase this tax. I shall not oppose it; but I think it would have been much more creditable if the Government had come forward with a proposal to remove the exemptions. That would have brought in a great deal more than this increase to a penny. In my opinion the exemptions are most unjust and impolitic. They release a great number of people from taxation; and encourage them to go on borrowing, because they do not feel the burden of taxation. As put by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, nothing conduces more to economy than that the tax-gatherer should demand the money direct from the person who has to pay it. Whilst on that subject, I may take the opportunity of protesting in the strongest possible terms I can against the heterodox views held by some honourable members on the subject of a progressive property-tax, taxing absentees and British bondholders. All these things are to the last degree injurious, as everybody who knows anything at all about politics ought to know. If you begin to impose these class taxes you will do a thousand times more harm than the paltry amount that will be got is worth. I am sorry to see so many honourable members speaking in that direction. I feel it my duty to protest against it. I always have done so. I may add that, though I have spoken strongly against these proposals of the Government, it is not from any hostile feeling to the Government that I have done so. I fully recognise that the present Ministry is the best we can expect to get at present, and we must for the present keep them in office. But still there is a limit. I do not carry party allegiance to the extent of going against my conscience and supporting proposals which I consider will be detrimental to the country; therefore I cannot vote for the £2,400,000; but I will conclude by adding that, when these railway proposals come into Committee, I hope every member of the House will assist to the utmost extent in reducing these

estimates. The Premier has told us that if we give our consent to his going to the London money-market for a much smaller amount than he now proposes he will accept that; and it is with the hope of that being brought about that I have got up to make these few remarks, though I would much rather have sat still.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, it is always very refreshing to hear my honourable friend opposite address the House. We know he does not like Responsible Government. In fact, Sir, almost everything in the way of self-government the honourable gentleman would appear to have a great objection to. He does not think so. He thinks he is a man great in local government. What he is always praying for is a good, sound despotism, tempered by assassination. He always comes to a most satisfactory conclusion so far as I am concerned. Bad as we are, the honourable gentleman is unable to find a better Government, and so he is going to keep us in office. It is therefore very pleasant to me to hear the honourable gentleman say what he does with regard to that. But the honourable gentleman is entirely on the wrong track at the present time. I am very much astonished that the honourable gentleman who moved this amendment could expect the Government to accept this; and I am very much surprised at the honourable gentleman making the speech he did about the works we have proposed. He has gone through the various items without any knowledge as to what the requirements of the country are. I venture to say that, if I were to begin to examine him on any of these items of roads, the honourable gentleman could not tell me what was the necessity or the non-necessity for them. In fact, he knows nothing about them.

Dr. HODGKINSON.—There is the North Island Main Trunk line; there is no necessity for that.

Major ATKINSON.—I am speaking now of roads; I will come to the North Island Trunk line presently. The honourable gentleman has taken up a wrong and untenable position, and a position which the Government declare the honourable gentleman is not justified in assuming. We have seen the honourable gentleman's innocence before during the session, and it may be that he is really unaware of the position which the Government have taken up in this matter. The position the Government took up was this: They said they would be very glad to go into Committee upon the items; they would be very glad, when in Committee upon the public-works estimates, to explain the reason that had induced them to propose each particular work to the House, showing what they did cut down, showing the liabilities, and giving their reasons why they thought, upon the balance of advantage and disadvantage, it would be better to go on with these particular works; and that if, after a non-party discussion—if it were possible to get it, and I hope it is—we came to the conclusion that such a work as the North Island Trunk Railway for instance ought to cease in the in-

terests of the country, we should be prepared to reduce the Loan Bill to that amount.

Sir J. VOGEL.—How can we say so in Committee of Supply? No resolutions are received.

Major ATKINSON.—The honourable gentleman ought to know. I will, however, tell him. Take the Greymouth and Hokitika line as an example. Supposing the House says that no more shall be done to that line, then the question comes, What is the amount required for it? The amount will be stated, and the House votes out that amount—say £10,000 or £20,000. Very well, we should be prepared to take that amount off the loan when we came to it.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—Do as we did with the £500,000.

Major ATKINSON.—I am not going to submit to that for a moment, because the difference between the proposals of the present Government and those of that date is as light to dark. There, the Government were proposing as extravagant estimates as were ever proposed. We knew the country could not bear that expenditure. We were not prepared to accept them, and carried an amendment that they should be reduced by a particular sum. We are not going to submit to any such proposition. We do not want a party vote, and I deprecate a party vote in the strongest possible language; but, if the House is willing to assist the Government in reducing any unnecessary expenditure, then the Government will give the Committee their assistance, and will take all the votes struck out, after proper consideration, off the schedule of the loan. Now, I hope there can be no mistake in that condition. I am not at all prepared to agree to any such proposition as the honourable gentleman has made, because it is made without any consideration of the requirements of the country. There is no man who can say that only half a million can be borrowed except the honourable gentleman opposite; and this is the meaning of the amendment: "Borrow only enough to carry on for one year, and then I will come down with a great scheme the year after." That is the proposition. I want the House to understand that there the Government take the issue. The Government stand or fall upon this: that the amount of borrowing which is authorised this session shall extend over a period of not less than three years. That is one point which the Government stand on—not upon this or that item on the schedule. We will consider these fairly and reasonably; we will give our reasons for them, and ask the House to decide; but we say this, and we say it most emphatically: that we must have the borrowing fixed for a certain time. I venture to tell the House that we may give up all idea of retrenchment in the Civil Service or in anything else unless we are prepared to fix our borrowing for a time. There is no doubt that, if we are going in for retrenchment—to reduce the public-works expenditure, to reduce the Consolidated Fund expenditure—there will inevitably, in the course of a year, be a strong reaction against reduction of expenditure; and if we do not now determine what our expenditure

shall be for a series of years—in other words, if we do not burn our boats—we shall have extravagance stalking abroad in the land again.

Mr. TURNBULL.—The next Parliament may alter all that.

Major ATKINSON.—We cannot profess to provide for the next Parliament, but we can for the current Parliament, and I wish the House to understand that the Government are not prepared to enter upon this scheme of retrenchment unless the amount of borrowing is fixed for a time. There must be no mistake about that. I can quite understand the honourable member for Christchurch North and his friends saying, "Oh yes, let us make out a good case; let us show the country that the Government only need half a million for next year"—and it is quite true, as I shall show presently, that that is what we shall want—"let us give them that and let them do all the dirty work; and then, when they have become utterly unpopular, we will step in with our great scheme." And that is a scheme outside the one which the honourable gentleman has in his breast. A scheme of large borrowing will be the one. He says he sees his way to do without going on the London money-market. That is all very well, because this House has determined not to let us go on the money-market for some years to come. I want it to be distinctly understood that that is an important part of the policy of the Government—a point from which under no circumstances will they depart. I keep repeating that, because I wish the House to understand it, and do not want honourable gentlemen to get up afterwards and say that I said another thing. What I have stated clearly is this: If the Committee thinks that any of the items in the estimates are not necessary, by all means strike them off; but it must be distinctly understood that the House knows what it is doing; that it is making provision for three years, and not for one; that the Government will not be able to raise a single farthing beyond the million, and that they will pledge themselves, in the most definite terms, not to go on the money-market before a definite time has elapsed. Of course nearly all the arguments of the honourable member for Christchurch North fall to the ground when the House understands the position which the Government take up. It is quite true, as the honourable gentleman says, that we need not take authority this session for more than half a million, if the House is willing to continue a considerable expenditure for the present year, and leave next session of Parliament to determine what loans will then be required. You will notice, Sir, that the honourable member says just the same as I do. He says there is money there, but he deprecates this Parliament binding itself for a definite time. There is just this difference between the policy of the honourable gentleman and that of the Government: He would borrow half a million simply to carry us on till next October. You must borrow that, as I shall show further on; but I hope that the House will mark the difference between our policies—that we are

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binding ourselves for a definite time, and he would not do so. There is one fallacy in the argument of the honourable gentleman which should be noticed. He tells us there will be a million and a half, supposing we dispose of all the securities now held by the Loan Fund, and if we float our million loan. I venture to say that, if we float it, next session of Parliament will be shocked at the terrible discount we shall have to pay. The honourable gentleman says, "If you have floated your loan, and disposed of all these securities, you will have about a million and a half in hand next March." But he does not tell the House all the facts. There are three funds which are all ear-marked. There is nothing practically in No. 1 Fund; there is about £400,000 in the North Island Trunk Railway loan, which cannot be used for anything else; and the third fund can only be used for the purpose to which it is devoted. Honourable members must not therefore run away with the idea that we shall have a million and a half for general purposes. We shall find that one fund is nearly dry, that another has very little, and that there is no means of getting a transfer of funds from one account to another, unless there are securities to the credit of the fund which has not cash. If we put these funds in credit by voting something to their credit this year, then, no doubt, we can borrow from one fund to the other; but I venture to say that a very great difficulty would arise if we did such a thing. I have looked at all these matters quite as carefully as the honourable gentleman, and I venture to say that I understand them quite as well as he does. I do not pretend to say of him, as he is so much in the habit of saying of me, that he does not understand them; but I say he has entirely misled the House as to the position of affairs, and has done it with the avowed intention of inducing the House only to borrow for one year. And now, Sir, just to show the House how the honourable gentleman has conducted the finances, I will point out this: that if we had not had the North Island Trunk line debentures, which could be sold, and which we could convert into consolidated revenue by means of Treasury bills, we could not have paid our interest last October. The honourable gentleman let the consolidated revenue run completely out, and he depended on the telegraph to remit £600,000 to pay interest due in that month, because he had made no arrangement until September. The consolidated revenue had only a few hundred pounds in it that month, and in the next month—October—we had to pay £600,000 in London. The honourable gentleman made no provision for that until September, and then he had to go to a local bank to borrow the £600,000, and he practically remitted the whole of it by telegraph to pay the interest due, and he got it in this way. He, fortunately, had the credit from the North Island Trunk Loan, which is supposed to be "ear-marked;" but he pledged it to the bank, and issued deficiency bills for £300,000. And all these he telegraphed Home. That is the way the honourable gentleman has

been conducting our finance, and I thought it my duty to tell the House of it when the honourable gentleman takes up such a position as he has done on this occasion. I say it is a disgrace to any colony to conduct its finances in such a way. It was just possible that the local bank could not have found the £600,000; and where should we have been then? I say that sort of thing must be put a stop to, and we have no right to conduct our business in that way. The honourable gentleman gave us a very pretty disquisition as to the duties of a Treasurer. I might tell him that if I had anything to do with him he would have to act very differently from what he did on that occasion. There is no doubt he thought that by raising a loan at the end of October, and by getting advances in London on account of the North Island Trunk Loan, he could meet these liabilities; but he found that such was the state of our credit in London that he could not get a halfpenny advance, and so had to fall back on a local institution to find, at a moment's notice, £600,000 to keep up the credit of the colony. That is the state in which the honourable gentleman got the finances, after being in office no less than three years. And now, Sir, I want to show the House what we have got to do. In April next we have to meet liabilities of something like £1,300,000 in cash. It is true we have a right to obtain a further advance from the bank to the extent of £400,000, so that we have to find, actually, some £900,000; and we have no means of finding it. The honourable gentleman says the difficulty begins in October; but I say the difficulty is greater in April, for this reason: that we have no revenue. As honourable gentlemen know, the financial year begins in April, and we have to start by finding £600,000 for interest. That is our great difficulty. It is true that October will be almost equally difficult, because by the time we have paid the April interest we shall have run on to October, and got the revenue for six months. We shall be therefore very much in the same position as in April, but not quite so bad. The honourable gentleman says that all our deficiency bills will be taken up in April, because we are borrowing to pay off the deficiency which he left from last year and the deficiency for this year; but the fallacy of the honourable gentleman's argument is, that those bills are paper, and not cash. The honourable gentleman warns us not to bind ourselves not to borrow in the London market, because we cannot get more locally. "I have got as much as I can, and therefore you must not bind yourselves not to go to the London market." And now he talks of raising £400,000 from this loan and £500,000 from deficiency bills, as if it were a very easy matter. But I tell him there is great difficulty in the matter, and I do not know whether the House recognises that we have £995,000 of deficiency bills at the present moment. It is quite true that we shall be able by the end of next year to pay off £400,000 of them, but I do not think we can pay more; and if we get authority to borrow £400,000 to meet deficiency bills, and if we get that as well,

which is not at all certain, we shall be able to take up another £400,000, and we shall immediately have to issue that again in order to meet the interest we have to pay in April. That, Sir, is the position of affairs now; and I tell the House that the honourable gentleman, like myself, must have been spending last year in perpetually worrying as to the fund from which he could get sufficient to carry on from day to day. That has been the position; and I say it is a wretched sort of finance, and a finance that no Government of such a colony as this should ever submit to, and that no Parliament should permit to continue for an hour longer than can possibly be avoided. Then, the honourable gentleman is very virtuous indeed upon the wrong the Government is going to do in asking for authority to borrow this £400,000, and taking the option of going to London for it if it should be necessary. But, Sir, I propose exactly what the honourable gentleman himself proposed in 1886. Like himself, I intend, if possible, to borrow the money locally. I should not dream of going to London if it could be possibly avoided; but I have followed the exact wording of the honourable gentleman's own proposal, when he proposed to meet the deficit that I left on going out of office in 1884. He followed the same course as I shall follow: he put the securities on the colonial market, not on the London market, though he took power to go to the London market; and I venture to say that honourable members will not desire to circumscribe the power of the Colonial Treasurer in this respect, when they know how we are pressing on local requirements. I think it would be exceedingly unwise to go on the London money-market if it could be possibly avoided, and I do not intend to do it; but I shall venture to ask the House, for the reasons given by the honourable gentleman himself, to give authority to go there, if it should be found to be necessary, at the discretion of the Colonial Treasurer, for, Sir, we must bear this in mind: that we must meet our engagements; and I venture to say that it is the honourable gentleman's finance only that has brought us to this difficulty at the present time. Without wishing in any way to press honourable members, and without saying for a moment that we shall not get out of our difficulties—for I am sure we shall—I say that, bad as our state was in 1879, the colony is in a much worse position at the present time with regard to its finances than it was then.

Mr. KERR.—It keeps on getting worse every year.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; and as long as we permit Governments to finance us out of our difficulties—and that is what we have been doing for the past three years—we shall keep on getting worse and worse. Then, the honourable gentleman said, "Look at the expenditure. The Government are already increasing the expenditure over ours. We only spent so much up to September last, and the present Government are going to spend more during the last six months of the year." If the

honourable gentleman had asked his late colleague, the honourable member for Kaiapoi, he would have told him that invariably the expenditure is greater in the second half of the year than it is in the first half. That is always the rule: the increase begins about October, and the works are pushed on during the summer months, and the expenditure steadily increases. That cannot be disputed; there is no question about it.

Mr. KERR.—My experience is that Government work is always done in the winter-time, and not in the summer, when it ought to be done, and when it can be done much more cheaply.

Major ATKINSON.—That is only the local bodies.

Mr. KERR. — Well, they cannot get the money from the Government before to do it.

Major ATKINSON.—There is no doubt at all that that has been so; but I shall try, while I am in office, to see if I cannot give you the money for expenditure during the summer months.

Mr. KERR.—Oh, I do not want it. We have got no works this time.

Major ATKINSON.—I am very glad to hear there is one virtuous constituency at any rate. That is very satisfactory. The honourable member for Christchurch North goes on to say that we propose to spend so much more next year that we must of necessity have another loan within twelve months' time. But that is what the Government mean to avoid; and we ask the House to tie our hands absolutely so that we shall not get another loan, for I venture to say that, if our hands are not tied, another loan will be proposed. We should have been greatly rejoiced if we could have proposed a reduction on what we now ask for, but our engagements are so large that it is impossible to reduce the expenditure during the next year to less than £70,000 a month; and I do hope my honourable friend the Minister for Public Works will be able to succeed in bringing the expenditure to within £70,000 a month. We propose to limit the expenditure to £70,000 a month for the next eleven months. We have reduced that rate of expenditure for the next year, and half that rate for the following year, and half that again the year after; and then the amount will be reduced so low that it will be in the power of this House to discontinue the works if it should think that desirable. The honourable gentleman has picked out certain railways with which he tells us we ought not to go on, and he has picked out certain others with which he says we should go on. These are questions to consider in Committee, but I notice—and it is a curious thing—that, wherever the honourable gentleman thinks he can improve his political position, there he says our estimates are wrong. Look at the honourable gentleman's proposals for the West Coast. He says, "What is £70,000?" Where is he going to get £70,000? Of course it means a large borrowing scheme next year. I am not going at any length into these matters; but I venture to say that in Committee, when the

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House hears our reasons for these various proposals, honourable members will think them reasonable; and I venture to say also that the House will support us in not making further expenditure on the particular railway the honourable gentleman has alluded to on the West Coast—that between Hokitika and Greymouth. There is undoubtedly great difficulty in deciding with which particular works to go on and which to leave off, and honourable gentlemen with any sense of responsibility will carefully consider the circumstances of each case as we have done. It is all very well to say that there is only a gap of four miles, and it ought to be filled up. That sounds very reasonable; but when we come to look all over the country we find so many gaps of four or five or six miles that it would take another million and a half to fill them all up, and therefore we take a stand and say we must be prepared to leave a number of works unfinished. But, as far as the Government are able to judge, they will all be brought according to our proposals to such a state that there will be no absolute loss through not completing them, and it is impossible for us to do anything more than that, and we ought not, if it can possibly be avoided, to do less. Then, there is another point which I would like to draw the attention of the House to, and it is this: The honourable member for Dunedin Central has proposed that the loan should be reduced to half a million. Does he mean that the whole of that should be spent during the next year?

Dr. FITCHETT.—No.

Major ATKINSON.—Well, does the honourable gentleman think that should keep us for the next three years?

Dr. FITCHETT.—Yes.

Major ATKINSON.—Very well. That is a different point, and so far my argument does not apply. The honourable gentleman, therefore, is taking a different stand from that taken by the late Colonial Treasurer, and cannot vote with him. Then, I will put this to the honourable gentleman: Has he considered what would be the effect of so almost complete a stoppage of public works throughout the country?

Dr. FITCHETT.—Yes.

Major ATKINSON.—Very well. I am very sorry the honourable gentleman did not tell us what would be the effect. The Government have had to carefully consider that, for they are responsible not only for the country's finance, but also for the general condition of the country, and we have to see that depression is not brought unduly on the country if it can be prevented. I venture to say that, when the House hears the reasons why the Government propose this particular amount, honourable members will see at once that to make a larger reduction would really mean to imperil the colony's labour-market and its finance. I do not say that it would dangerously imperil it, but it would very seriously increase the difficulties under which we are now labouring. It is not only the actual amount less to be spent among the working-classes that has to be considered, but we have to consider the stop-



page of works absolutely necessary for the settlement of the country. No doubt we shall be told how many men we shall knock off, and there will be honourable members who may say, "Never mind that, they must take the consequences, but let us have drastic remedies." Well, as to some of the works, it will be for the House to say if less than what the Government propose shall be done; but, for myself, and speaking on behalf of the Government, I think we have gone to a prudent limit. I would caution honourable members, before deciding, to look cautiously into the effect of a complete stoppage of borrowing now. One very important effect would be the throwing-out of our exchange; and that would very seriously affect the commerce of the country for a time. A sudden stoppage of our borrowing would mean a complete alteration in our exchange. Then, the stoppage of necessary works would be another very important point, and the general feeling of depression would undoubtedly be heightened if we discharged a thousand or fifteen hundred men, when, unfortunately, work all over the country is not so plentiful as we should like it to be. And, again, of course, another point would be that a large proportion of the works that we propose to bring to reasonably complete points would be left at stages which would involve an actual money loss. We may be told, as we have been by some honourable members, that as to some works the first loss is the best. But the Government have adopted that principle, and, where we see it would be useless to go on further, we do not propose to go on—we have determined to stop at once. So that point seems to me to be met by the proposals of the Government. Then the honourable gentleman says that the proposals of the Government are to enable them to borrow largely in order that they may spend, and that there is nothing binding in the proposal of the Government to extend this money over three years. Well, the Government are quite willing, and not only willing, but anxious, to be tied up in the most secure way the House can devise.

Dr. FITCHETT.—The most secure way is not to get the money.

Major ATKINSON.—Undoubtedly that is a very secure way, and, if the House does not want the Government to have the money to spend, that is the way to adopt. I do not want to say very much about the amount of the loan now. So long as it is kept to reasonable limits, that is all we want; but what I do want to see insisted on is that, whatever the amount is, it shall be absolutely fixed as all that there shall be for the next three years. We can discuss the items which will make up the total in Committee; but I do ask the House to fix that the amount of the total shall be all that shall be had for three years. That is all I want. But that is not the proposal of the honourable member for Christchurch North at all. The honourable member for Christchurch North says what we want to get is unlimited borrowing-powers. That is ridiculous. We do not want it. We want so small a sum that

in another breath the honourable gentleman declares that what we ask for cannot be sufficient. One argument cuts the other from under his feet. I say that the proposals of the Government are reasonable, if we are really determined to actually taper off. That is the policy we want to carry out. The honourable gentleman says that the Statement is like a Chinese puzzle—very pretty to look at, but difficult to work; but I think it will work if we are serious in our determination gradually to bring our borrowing to a conclusion. I will not trouble the House further, but I will merely sum up the position, so that there may be no mistake about it. The Government are not prepared to accept the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Dunedin Central. They were, however, prepared to go into Committee and carefully to consider each item, not resting tacit in the matter, but giving every information so as to assist the Committee in every reasonable reduction which it may think necessary; and if the Committee sees its way to strike off a certain item, if it says it will cut off the Otago Central or the North Island Trunk line, or any other work, or if it says it will not build schools this year, or hospitals, or gaols, or any other public buildings, then we shall be prepared to take out of the schedule to the Loan Bill whatever amount would have been required for those works; but further than that the Government are not prepared to go. I wish the House to clearly understand the position the Government take up.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, when a conquering race enter a country they first of all rob the inhabitants of their land. They then set them to work upon public roads, in order that they may render valuable to their conquerors the land which has been taken from themselves. Then, when they have got control of the country, they determine to burn their boats, that they may remain in possession, and that none may escape. That is the policy of burning the boats. We have seen it illustrated in America by the Spaniards, and one hoped that such a scene would not be witnessed again in the world. Now, I beg the House to remember that the transactions in which we are engaged to-night are very real transactions, and very sad ones. The present Government—and I appeal to the House to bear me out whether I am not correct in this—have not, during the present session, up to the present time, introduced a single measure which will settle the difficulties of this country—not a single measure which will relieve the farmers from distress, or which will benefit the industries of the colony,—not a single one. On the contrary they have robbed us of our lands, they have robbed the people extensively of their property, and have avowed that, having so robbed them, they will set them to work upon the public roads, to give value to the very land which they have handed over to those who are the conquerors of the colony. What has the honourable gentleman set forth to-night? He is following out a policy really of barbarians, although they are sometimes supposed to be

civilised men. I ask, is not that a true description of the policy which we have had brought before us this session? And now the Premier proposes to fix the necessary expenditure for three years. Did he not say in distinct words that he was determined to make the sums he borrowed last for that time—that he will persist in that, even though he knows that following out that line of policy will produce great distress in the country, much misery in the country, and although he knows that in consequence of that distress and that misery great dissatisfaction will arise? What does this drastic system amount to? Simply to burning the boats, so that none shall escape from the territory which he is reducing to ruin and to misery.

Major ATKINSON.—No; burning the boats is stopping the borrowing.

Sir G. GREY.—He distinctly said what I am repeating.

Major ATKINSON.—I said, Stop the further borrowing.

Sir G. GREY.—Yes; that was it.

Major ATKINSON.—Hear, hear.

Sir G. GREY.—Precisely. He would borrow so much, spend the whole of it, and produce these results; and then, by burning the boats, prevent other people from leaving the colony, while he himself would fly in some skiff from the country, abandoning his post, and leaving the blame to fall upon those who would be compelled to take his place. I appeal to the whole House: is not that the truth? Is it not a just and true deduction to be drawn from the policy which the honourable gentleman puts before us? He said he would ruin our credit in the London market, so that we should not be able to borrow any further sums.

Major ATKINSON.—No; I did not say that at all.

Sir G. GREY.—What was the meaning of what the honourable gentleman said? He said positively that he was going to borrow so much, and that he would pledge himself that for that period of time no further sums should be borrowed—that is, no further relief should be obtained from any misery he might create. Now, that is the policy which I wish to expose. I do not know what name I can apply to such a policy as that; but I wish to say that it is not a policy which angels would recommend for our adoption. It is a policy regardless of the welfare of the people. It is a policy which cannot but do injury to the colony. He said we shall carry out reductions which will injure the many.

Major ATKINSON.—No; I never said that at all.

Sir G. GREY.—The honourable gentleman really does not know what he did say. I say no one, except a person devoid of reason, or a child, could have stood up and proposed such a policy as he recommended to the House. I say it is an unfair policy in all respects. Here was the other policy presented to him: "Let us borrow what we conceive to be necessary for the present; let us carry out all reductions

that may be carried out without injury to the colony—and they are many; and then let us have a sufficient sum for a short period of time. If we find that we have made a mistake let us then borrow such further sums as we may require to meet the emergencies that may arise." We burn our boats, or adopt a boat-burning policy indeed—a policy which is to ruin the country, and to drive the people from it! Does he believe that any sensible man who had money to enable him to escape from the country would fail to do so? Does he believe that the labouring-classes, if they thought that a policy of this kind was to be adopted, would not fly from the country before the boats were burned? And what resource is there to be left open to them? I put that to the House. They are to be handed over to the tender mercies of a foreign company, and are to be put by that foreign company to work upon roads—on land that belongs to themselves as the people of the country. They will be compelled to render their own lands of great value by their own labour, and then see those lands pass away to other persons. Then reductions are to be made, which will compel them to go upon these works. Strangers are to be brought in to form what is called a Railway Board, in order to reduce the wages of the labouring-people. These Railway Commissioners are to be brought in to act as buffers between the Government and the people, so that the Government may escape the reproaches which should rest upon them for what they are now doing. People will complain, and the Premier will stand up and say, "Not upon me rests the blame. It is these gentlemen whom I have put into these offices to perform this work who are to blame." I think I have fairly exposed the new policy which he proposes to adopt. I have shown, in a very few words, that it is better that we should borrow that which we actually require and nothing more. Let us try the experiment of these reductions which are being carried out. Let us see that they are done in a merciful manner. Let us prevent the people from being handed over to this foreign company. I say that we should act mercifully in regard to our reductions, and that we should borrow no more than is absolutely necessary for twelve months, and then, if we find we have made a mistake and have not borrowed all we require, we can borrow such further sums as may be deemed necessary. But this is a wild policy, borrowing a certain large sum, based on a mere guess at our wants, and giving an undertaking to borrow no more for three years. It is burning our boats. I say that it is a barbarous policy, and one which this House ought not to adopt. I pray honourable gentlemen on the Government benches to adopt the middle course which has been recommended to them. Let us not pledge ourselves to borrow any particular sum and to stop there; but let the world see that we do not borrow a single penny which our wants do not require. Let us not put into power, and keep there, men who are determined to embark upon the desperate policy the nature of which we have

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had sketched out to us. For I say distinctly that if the boats are burned, so that the bulk of the people cannot escape, the Premier will discover some skiff in which he may fly from the misery that he has created; and that others, who take the places of himself and his friends, will have to bear the blame of his conduct, as they have had to do in former years, when he has relinquished the government of this country.

MR. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I rise to make a very few remarks on the Public Works Statement; and I feel impelled to do so not so much because I wish to say something as because I have something to say. That something may not be very important—I do not think it is; yet it is necessary to me that I should place upon record the views I hold. Still, I shall not take up much time, for all that I have to say can be said in a very few minutes. I recognise, Sir, that at this period of the session it is not of much use speaking at all. Nothing that any one can say now is likely greatly to affect the policy now before us. I have listened to both sides, and within the last few minutes I have listened to the speech of the Premier, taking a few notes; but I find that the honourable member for Auckland Central has so exhaustively answered that honourable gentleman, and refuted him on so many points on which he placed reliance, that I think it is not necessary for me to criticize him at any length. The Premier, towards the close of his speech, said something to the honourable gentleman who moved the amendment, or to some honourable gentleman opposite, to this effect: He asked him if he had considered the effect of stopping the public-works policy throughout the colony—if he had considered that it would increase the difficulties under which we were suffering. I consider that in that sentiment lies the whole gist of the policy he has now laid before the House. I believe that his policy is based more upon that than upon any other consideration, and that the Government, and probably any other Government that could be formed from the other side of the House, do borrow and will continue borrowing for no other reason than that they are afraid to stop it. It is not that it could not be stopped; it is that they are afraid of the immediate consequences of ceasing to borrow. I think, if that sentence means anything at all, it means that we are going on borrowing for borrowing's sake. But, if what the Premier says is true, that the stoppage of borrowing will cause so many evils in this country that it will deepen the depression, how then is he justified in saying to honourable members that if they choose to cut down the loan to any extent they please he will accept the reduction? If depression will follow the cessation of borrowing to the extent he claims, then I say that he ought not to so readily accept from this House the curtailment of these borrowing proposals. But I hold that no such effect will follow the cessation of borrowing. I do not believe it myself—I never did believe

it. Then, he quite forgot that the cessation of borrowing will, without any doubt, have the effect of making this country ever so much more attractive to capitalists, who would become the private employers out here, and there is no comparison between the Government as an employer and private employers throughout the country. Then, so far as concerns the employment of labour, the honourable gentleman also forgot that we are to have lines constructed on the land-grant system. There is the East and West Coast Railway, which he has taken under his wing; and a Bill has recently been passed to enable the Otago Central line to be constructed on the same principle; and it has also been proposed to construct a northern line in the same manner. I think he has overlooked the fact that many lines could be constructed in the same way, and that borrowing, so far as these lines are concerned, might cease, and yet the lines themselves be carried on. It seemed to me that when the Premier made what was apparently a slip, and said that borrowing was necessary to our salvation, he really meant it, though he changed the expression afterwards to "that it was necessary to settlement."

MAJOR ATKINSON.—I did not say borrowing; I said certain works.

MR. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I fail to see where the distinction lies, seeing that we have to borrow to make the works.

AN HON. MEMBER.—Necessary to the salvation of the Government?

MR. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I did not say necessary to the salvation of the Government, although that probably has something to do with it also; but I think the expression made use of was not so much a mistake as might appear at first sight, but that the honourable gentleman thinks a continuation of the borrowing policy is necessary for the salvation of the country. Now, Sir, about this policy—the policy we have before us—I will say candidly at once that I do not like it. From first to last it has been a pill which I have endeavoured to swallow to the best of my ability. I have endeavoured to swallow it with what my honourable friend the Minister of Education would call "heroic splendour." I notice that the House takes the proposal very easily, and that the country also takes the borrowing proposals with the same coolness.

AN HON. MEMBER.—No.

MR. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Well, Sir, I say so very sadly; it appears to me that they do. It appears to me that there is very little use in fighting them. A few months ago it appeared likely that we were to have a very different state of affairs here; and I have for some time past been speculating upon the reasons for the change, and the conclusion I have come to is this: that the public and this House are led off the scent; that the country, as it were, has its mind clouded and its judgment led astray by some of the retrenchments the Government has proposed or is now about carrying out.

AN HON. MEMBER.—They are not done yet.

MR. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—No; but I

believe that they are very honestly attempted, and are going to be done. There are some upon which I do not place much importance myself; but I think the one item of retrenchment that has led the country astray more than anything else has been the proposal of the Government to reduce their own salaries. I do honestly think that. I do not say for one instant that the Government made the proposal for that purpose. I think they have done it very honestly, very radically, and very well; but it has had that effect all the same. The Government, in this matter, is exactly in the position of an author who, in putting forth a book, should attach to it a very modest and self-depreciatory preface. It has the effect of disarming criticism. It ought not to do so, but it does. Their proposal to reduce their own salaries had upon the country, from the very beginning, that effect. The public very naturally said: If these people are prepared to deal so radically with themselves, you may depend upon it everything else is in the same proportion. That naturally would be the effect; and I believe it has been the effect with respect to these borrowing proposals. It is quite true that, like the preface I have spoken of, the act ought to disarm truculent criticism—it ought to disarm all criticism of that sort; but it ought not to disarm judicial and proper criticism. At any rate I am not going to let it do so in my case. Before I say much about the borrowing proposals, I may here repeat the substance of what I had occasion to say during a previous debate, as it is necessary to my present argument. I said the other night on the railway question that I believe what is wrong with this country now is that railway-construction has outrun the population and trade of the country. That is susceptible of almost mathematical proof; but I am not going over the entire ground again. It happens that we here in New Zealand have got the same mileage of railway that they have in Victoria and New South Wales, though they have double our population. The Victorian railways pay  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and the New South Wales  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , while ours pay £2 6s. per cent.: that is to say, those colonies, with double our population and the same mileage of railway, pay double the interest. Therefore it is quite clear that the management of our railways is not to blame, and the only conclusion that any logical mind can come to is that the railways have outrun the population and the trade. Then, again, I also pointed out—and I refer to it now merely for the purpose of argument—that ever since 1881 every mile we have added to our railway system has almost in exact proportion reduced our profits. Therefore, if that is the evil, the question arises, What should be the cure? And I venture to say no one will dispute that we ought to cease railway-construction—so far, that is, as concerns loans—and let the population and trade grow. Now, these being my views, I naturally regard with some suspicion any attempt to unduly expand the public-works policy while the population is all but stationary. I maintain that a few

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months ago this colony was ripe for a radical change on this very subject; and I maintain with equal confidence that no radical change is indicated in the Public Works Statement that I have now before me. It follows slavishly upon the old lines, with this difference alone: that it has dropped out of the general schedule a few unimportant railways; but it keeps all others going, and proposes tolerable sums—some small and some large—of borrowed money to be dribbled away over a certain number of years, with, however, the intention of reducing them as time goes on until they reach what is called the vanishing-point. Now, although the vanishing-point is mentioned, there is nothing at all to show that it is going to be reached for many many years: in fact, it is doubtful if it will be reached, according to the lines of the Public Works Statement, within this generation. Can any one believe that the expenditure upon our public works will be reduced at anything like the rate which the Public Works Statement professes it will be? Have we anything to guide us in coming to a conclusion upon the matter? I say that we have almost absolute proof in the history of the past that such will not be the case; that we are doomed to failure in the future as in the past. And I think we can get that proof if we take the trouble to compare the Financial Statement of 1882 with that of the present year. I select the Financial Statement of 1882, simply because it was the Financial Statement introduced by the honourable gentleman who is now at the head of the Government, and therefore, dealing with proposed loans, it affords us some sort of guide by which we can judge the value of the present proposals. Now, I venture to assert that if I were to read out promiscuously extracts from the Financial Statement of 1882 and that of 1887 there are very few members in this House who would be able to say at the moment which of those Statements I was quoting from. It is not only that the ideas are the same, and that the arguments are the same; but we have almost the *ipsissima verba*. I have taken the trouble to run out in parallel columns some extracts from these two Statements. We have in the Statement of 1882 arguments showing the necessity and advisableness of the loan, all of which are applicable to the present Statement, and are embodied to some extent in it. We have here in the Statement of 1887,—

“From the past we should take warning, and proceed at a very much more moderate pace than we have been doing upon the average for the past ten years. We must confine ourselves, in borrowed money, to works of necessity, or to works which are directly reproductive.”

Then we have the same necessity for moderation in 1887:—

“We want so to shape our public-works expenditure as to be able to cease borrowing entirely at an early date. We want first, and at once, to reduce this expenditure, to reduce it largely, and to reduce it at a constantly-

increasing rate, so as practically and within a short time to reach the vanishing-point."

That is the vanishing-point of which I have spoken. Then there are a few arguments about the necessity of the loan. We have in 1882,—

"The Government, then, taking into consideration all the circumstances of the colony, and acting upon the principles which I have just laid down, have determined, Sir, to propose to Parliament a loan of £3,000,000 to be raised, and expended at a rate not exceeding £1,000,000 per annum."

Then, in 1887,—

"The Government therefore, though with great reluctance, recommend that authority should be granted for a loan, during the present session, of £1,000,000, to be raised at such time as under all circumstances the Government may deem most favourable."

It will be observed that the difference is, in one case the Government, after a great deal of "consideration" agree to this, and in the other the Government express very "great reluctance," for there is always a great deal of reluctance where a loan is to be raised. Then, I have extracts about tying up; and these, I think, are really very remarkable. First of all, in 1882, we have this:—

"My honourable colleague the Minister for Public Works, when he makes the Public Works Statement, will inform the Committee in detail of the items of the proposed expenditure, and of the mode by which we hope to confine the expenditure to specific works determined upon by Parliament before the money is borrowed."

Then, in 1887,—

"If Parliament agrees to this, we shall ask that the purpose of this loan shall be distinctly defined; that no new undertakings shall be put in hand; and, further, that we shall give a distinct pledge that no more borrowing will take place for three years from March, 1888."

In this case, after having shown the House the necessity for moderation, we were told in 1882 that they were going to confine the expenditure within a million a year. I would ask, what about the million a year to which the borrowing was going to be confined? Why, according to one of the tables in the Public Works Statement the Government itself gave the figures, showing that the amount within the period the honourable gentleman was in office was, on an average, about £1,300,000 a year; so that the question naturally arises, If the honourable gentleman could not confine the borrowing within his million, then how is he likely to confine it within £750,000 now? If we were to judge by all that has been said upon the subject of tying up, every loan we borrow ought to be tied up with a thousand knots; but, somehow, these knots were loosened as fast as we tied them. I do not see anything in this Bill that is calculated to tie up the loan at all. I wish to give it as my opinion, and to state most emphatically, that, looking to the stereotyped phrases used in those Statements, it is high time the mould in which this wild bor-

rowing Statement is cast should be broken up, and the type scattered to the four winds of heaven. It is evident the type is still there. I have listened to the speeches on both sides of the House, and I have heard the leader of the Opposition and the Premier arguing hotly about the balances that are in hand, and about the expenditure we ought to make within the next few years; but the arguments on both sides are based upon the assumption that, under any circumstances, whatever the rate may be, borrowing must go on in some shape or form. Nothing satisfactory have we heard about the desirableness of stopping borrowing altogether; and the reason is very plain: It is because we have been running in a rut for seventeen long years, and those two gentlemen have been closely associated with the government during that period. We have been keeping in a rut for seventeen years, and it is not to be wondered at if at the end of that period we cannot help the wheels of the Government out of it; and I do not think either of those two honourable gentlemen proposes to do so. Every one will admit that borrowing in any civilised country under any circumstances ought to be but a mere chapter in the book of a nation's history, and not the history itself. It ought to be an incident in the life of a nation, and not the life itself. But, according to the principles we go upon in this colony now, the leader of the Opposition and the Premier have taken it for granted that we must have a loan at such periods as will enable us to have a certain amount of loan-money to spend every year. Now, I think it must be admitted that the very same arguments, the aims, and the hopes, and the expectations which are expressed now, will, at the end of three years, be expressed again; because I feel perfectly satisfied that, so far as concerns the amount of the loan and the expenditure of loan-money, before the end of the three years and a half there will be the same failure then as there has been in the past. Of that I have very little doubt. We were to keep within a million. We spent £1,300,000. Now we are to keep within £750,000, and it is easy enough to see what will be the result. And what is the prospect before us? It is just this: It appears to me the Government have arranged the thing so that for three years and a half they will have enough money to keep them going on comfortably; and it is natural, I suppose, for any Government to look at its own life and that alone. Three years is about the natural term of a Government's life in this country; and what will be the result before the three years are over,—possibly at the end of two? In two or three years' time the Government, for some reason or another which we cannot now foresee, will be overthrown. And what will the new Government find? The same old story—that contracts have been entered into, that there are liabilities to meet, large and important works to finish; and they will immediately demand another loan. Of that I have no doubt whatever. It will be a re-enactment of practically the same thing. I have said I do

not like these proposals, and in saying so I have spoken the simple truth. It seems to me, after the exhibition we have had to-night—I do not use the word offensively, but after the exhibition we have had to-night, both from the Premier and the leader of the Opposition, over this question of borrowing, and looking to the Statements made in the past when their positions were transposed, it appears to me as if, on this question of borrowing, every leader when in opposition says, like the celebrated Israelite of old, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" But when that Israelite became king he did the very same thing. The Premier and the leader of the Opposition have done the same thing. As soon as the leader of the Opposition becomes Premier he rushes into borrowing as naturally as possible, and keeps it going just as his predecessor has done. My own opinion—and I never disguised it; I said it before the country, and say so now—my own opinion is that it is high time the public-works policy was absolutely wound up, strangled. It was never intended originally to go the length it has gone. It is time the Government proposals should go this far, at any rate: They should say, "We propose to wind up the second period of our public-works policy,"—because this is the second period. The first period was for ten years; but before the ten years were out it happened, most unfortunately, most disastrously for this colony, that the portfolio of Public Works was in the hands of my late much-lamented friend Mr. James Macandrew. I say it was an unfortunate thing the portfolio of Public Works was then in my late friend's hands, because he started the ball rolling again; and the present leader of the Opposition gave it a fresh roll in 1884. It was never intended to go to the length it has gone now, and all the circumstances demand the winding-up of the second period of it. The Premier, in the course of his speech to-night, said, in reply to some honourable members, that they had not entered into particulars with regard to any of these lines as to what should be done away with and what gone on with. I do not think it is the duty of any honourable gentleman or of the House to take that line at all, and I blame the Government very much for the spirit in which they have come before the House with their proposals. I should be very glad to see the loan reduced, but I do not see much chance of getting it done; and it is not to be expected, unless the Government were to do what they have not done, and that is, have the nerve to come down to the House and tell us what railways ought to be carried on absolutely and what left out. Instead of that, they have left it to the House, and say they will reduce their loan accordingly afterwards. I maintain that they should have led the House in the matter. Amongst these lines, I think some one mentioned the North Island Trunk line, and I have no hesitation in saying that that line ought not to be carried any further. I have myself advocated that line in the past, and I would advocate it now if the colony were in a position to carry it on;

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but I do not think it is in that position, and, although it may be carried on at some future time, I think no more money should be spent on it now than is in hand for the purpose. I do not speak about that line because there is one in my district which is to be prosecuted. It must be borne in mind that the Otago Central line has been practically abandoned beyond Middlemarch, and that distance is only a very small portion of it. The original length of line authorised to be made was 183 miles, and Middlemarch is only forty miles; while all beyond that is to be carried on under the Bill of the honourable member for the Dunstan. That shows that the representatives of Otago are not acting selfishly. By consenting to support the Bill of the honourable member for the Dunstan they are permitting the Government to confide to private enterprise, beyond Middlemarch, the prosecution of a railway which has great claims on the colony. Surely sacrifices should not be demanded from them alone! But I think there are other lines which should be placed in the same position. There is the line from Helensville northward, which I think ought not to be prosecuted any further; and I have no hesitation in saying that the unexpended balance for that line should be used not for the benefit of any particular place, but for such purposes as will be desirable for the interest of the whole colony—that is to say, on lines which an impartial tribunal should say ought to be carried on for that purpose. It appears to me, from the evidence before us, that no Government can stand in New Zealand without a loan. I shall not dilate on the reasons for this; but it appears to me that that is the position, and the borrowing now proposed will entail so much more borrowing that it will amount in the end to some four or five millions altogether. We have, first of all, this loan; then there is the North Island Trunk Loan, which is already authorised; and then, inevitably, the floating debt of half a million will have to be refunded; and then the North Island Trunk line has been under-estimated by a million and a quarter, and the ordinary under-estimates of other lines will make up another half-million. Then, again, when these lines have been carried to a certain point it will be found necessary to carry them still farther. Take, for instance, the Helensville line. I think there are only about four miles formed, and to carry it to the terminus as originally proposed will take £640,000. They propose to take it four miles farther now, then another four miles, and when it has gone to that point it will have to be taken still farther; and so on till the end of time, or until some Government has courage to come down with a proposal to mark finality to this second period of our public-works policy. I have only a word or two to say on the other part of the loan, which is to be devoted to roads and bridges and telephones, and so on. Of course some expenditure will be necessary on all these things; but I think we are providing things which are really luxuries, but which, from long practice, we have come to look upon

as necessities. There is a great deal spent on roads which should not be spent at all. There has been money spent on opening up Crown lands for sale, and we have got accustomed to that expenditure and cannot do without it; but it is only seven or eight years ago that the practice began, and before it commenced we sold more land and had more settlement than there has ever been since. But it is regarded as a necessity now; and so it is with the money spent on other things which formerly were regarded as luxuries. I have only to say, in conclusion, that, so far as retrenchment goes, we have had some measures of retrenchment; but I think many of these measures are mere bagatelles compared with what could be done in retrenching our borrowing, because it is the system of borrowing which necessitates retrenchment, and so long as we keep up borrowing we shall be face to face with retrenchment and distress. Therefore I say the first thing to do is to bring down proposals to set a reasonable limit to borrowing, and these, I maintain, we have not had yet. I do not see how the amendment of the honourable member for Dundee Central can possibly be accepted, because, when he moves that the loan be cut down to half a million, he attaches no provision which closes the door to the London money-market; and, if that is the case, we do not gain much by limiting the borrowing. I hope that when we are in Committee on the public-works estimates honourable members, disregarding any local or particular consideration, will proceed vigorously to cut down expenditure to such an extent as will admit of a reduction of the loan by something not far short of half a million; and if the Committee does that it will have done the finest work that has ever yet been done in New Zealand. Still, I think the Government are very much to blame for lacking at this juncture the courage to say that this public-works policy shall cease. They have not done so, and, instead, have followed slavishly in the lines of their predecessors.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—Sir, I have listened to a speech to-night that we have expected for some time—the speech delivered by the honourable member for Mount Ida. I listened to it with great interest, with some pleasure, and with a great deal of pain; and this is what I would say of it: Words, words, words! Sir, the country will never be saved by words, especially where those words run so distinctly counter to deeds. We have heard that honourable gentleman this evening, and we have heard the honourable member for Wallace this evening, and I venture to say that a more extraordinary or humiliating spectacle has seldom been witnessed in this House. How they do crouch under the whip of their lord and master! How they do wince and flinch as they feel that thong cut into their loins! What capers they perform! What an amusing spectacle it is for the Opposition!—amusing if it were not that in this way we see how the verdict of the country is disregarded. The honourable member for Mount Ida, methinks, doth protest too much this evening. He made an excellent speech in

one direction, and followed it up by acting in precisely the opposite direction. Now, he may possibly think that his words will go to the country, and be of some weight in the nation, and that his actions will be thought very little of. If that is his opinion, it speaks very little for the value which he attaches to his action. But the country, like this House, thinks that deeds are of more importance than words, and looks not so much to what these honourable gentlemen say as to what they do. I suppose the honourable gentleman tries in his own conscience to square what he says in with what he does—tries to square his denouncing what he declares to be a wrong with his supporting that wrong. I must say, to give the honourable gentleman credit, he is very loud in denouncing the wrong. Like Ancient Pistol, he eats the leek, but he says, "I eat, and eke I swear;" and he swore with all his heart and soul. But, though he swore, yet he chewed every morsel of the unsavoury vegetable, till it all went down at one gulp. But, to do the honourable gentleman justice, he not only said he did not like it but he looked all along as if he did not like it. The honourable gentleman, and those who think and act like him, stultify not only themselves, but they stultify themselves and the verdict of the country at the recent elections. What did these honourable gentlemen—that new party of which the honourable member for Mount Ida is so distinguished a light—do? What doctrine did they go about the country preaching, from Invercargill to the Bay of Islands? It was "Measures, not men;" and they came here, and never did we see a more remarkable exemplification of "Men, not measures." Time after time they have got up and voted for measures which they not only knew to be wrong, but which they had previously declared to be wrong. And for what reason? Simply to keep one man in power and to keep another man out of power. And that is the lamentable and deplorable result of the great doctrine of "Measures, and not men." If the honourable member for Mount Ida meant what he said to-night—and we all know that he did—he meant that the policy he is going to support is positively ruining this country. Not only has he said it to-night, but it has been dinned into our ears for the last six months from a hundred platforms, and we have seen it in a thousand leading articles: the country has been deluged with pamphlets and afflicted with speeches until the electors have been nearly dead with indigestion. The party of drastic retrenchment did carry the elections—we admit that—and a great majority of them were returned to this House; and the result of it all is that, in order to keep one man in power and another man out, they themselves swallow what they have been trying to make us swallow for the last six months. Now, I am not in the position of the honourable member for Mount Ida. I came here as a party man, and, of course, I support one side and vote against another side; but I am not to be judged by the same laws as those honourable gentlemen who stood

up before the country and denounced party, and declared for "measures, and not men," as the only thing that could save New Zealand. But if they had told the country at the last elections that they were coming here and were going to be led to vote in favour of what they so strenuously denounced week after week, if they had told the country at the hustings that the "bogy" of Vogel was going to frighten them into ruining the country, do you think they would have carried the elections, or would have come back here? This "bogy" of Vogel is one of the most childish and despicable means of frightening grown men into acting like children that I think New Zealand has ever seen. I agree with a great deal that the honourable member for Mount Ida told us, but I do not agree with all. It seems to me that the honourable gentleman's opinions, his words, his doctrines, are very different from his actions—I was almost going to say his actions are different from his words. It seems to me that the honourable gentleman laid, in speaking, too much stress upon retrenchment, and that he would push his hobby—his pet notion—further than it is practicable to press it. He is a man who, if he acts up to his doctrines, ought to be the most irreconcilable opponent the Premier has in this House. He is not only against excessive railways; but he is like the Irishman who was "agin' the Government"—he is against railways and public works altogether. He gave us a most sensible and logical speech, showing that the country is going to ruin because it has got too many railways; he says we ought not to have any more, and that the only way to save the country is to stop the railways. And then, after telling us to stop all railways, he tells us that the Otago Central is a most inestimable and valuable work, and that this overburdened and over-railroaded country ought to have one more railway inflicted on it, and that is the Otago Central. Not only is the Otago Central to be made, but—if I understand aright the policy of the honourable gentleman and those who think with him and have written with him for months past—there are other great railways to be made by this land-grant system; and, instead of waiting for our trade and population to grow up to the level of our railways, our railways are to be pushed on faster than ever—but by the land-grant system. Is that logical? I say it is not. It is not a question of getting more loan-money or not getting more—it is a question of whether we have too many railways or not. And if, as the honourable gentleman says, the country is already over-railroaded, what folly it is to give away the public estate of the people of New Zealand in order to construct more, when they have too many already! I am not one of those who think that New Zealand can be saved by railways. We have made railways and made railways and made railways for the last seventeen years. Eight years ago we were reduced to a state of depression almost as deep as that prevailing now, and an opportunity was afforded then to stop the public-works policy, or to begin

*Mr. W. P. Reeves*

the policy of retrenchment about which we are talking to-day. When the Grey Government went out in 1879 the colony had a scare; and if the present Premier, who was then Colonial Treasurer, had chosen to do then what he talks of doing now, I think he would have had the country with him, and he might have stopped the public-works policy, or, at any rate, have tapered it off very rapidly. He did not choose to do that, but he went on with the public-works policy, and year after year since it has been—Borrow, borrow, borrow, in the hope of reviving our lost prosperity. We have been hunting after the phantom prosperity, and hoping to bring it back by bringing more and more borrowed money into the country; and as we have borrowed million after million, so the distress has increased, and we have gone further and further down the hill. I am not one of those who think New Zealand can be saved by railways; nor do I think that pushing on the present railways we have in hand or not pushing them on will either diminish or increase very materially the distress in the country. The evil has sunk too deep for that. I would draw the attention of the Premier to this: that it is in precisely those districts in which there is and has been the least expenditure of public money going on, and where it is now proposed to spend least, that the distress is the greatest and most acute. Take the Provincial District of Canterbury, for instance, where there has been no public-works expenditure worth speaking of for some years, and where none is proposed now, yet it is perfectly well known that that district has the unenviable pre-eminence of being, I suppose, the most distressed district in New Zealand. So, if the distress is to be remedied by public works in any part of New Zealand, it is certain that the remedy is to be applied in those districts where the evil least exists—in those parts which are most prosperous and where there is the least distress, it is there that the Premier proposes to push on the railways most actively. Take the Provincial District of Wellington as an instance. Here railways are to be pushed on in Manawatu and in Wairarapa; while in Canterbury, where the distress is very great, the railway system is not to be pushed on.

An Hon. Member.—You have the Midland railway.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—I am talking now of railways to be constructed by public loan-money. The Treasurer says he must borrow, lest we should intensify the distress in the country; and I wish to point out that, so far as his policy goes, it is in precisely those districts of the colony where the distress is greatest that his proposed remedy and preventive is not to be applied. There his remedy cannot be effective one way or the other. I do not think making a small bit of railway here and a mile or two there will remove the distress New Zealand is suffering under; it is far too deep for that. The only remedy that I and a great many other honourable gentlemen can see is to stimulate native industries by a really protective tariff. Of course there are gentlemen



here who laugh at such a proposal; but there are a larger number who consider that the only real remedy for New Zealand lies in that. A distinct majority in this House believe in that, and if it were not for the Vogel "boogy" that policy would be taken in hand this session without a week's delay. The voice of the country has declared for it, and the voice of the country will be obeyed. But there is to be an interval of waiting, a delay of three or four months before the Premier will dare to begin. And why does he wait? Because the honourable gentleman is afraid of losing the support of those Free-trade members whose votes keep him in office now. I am not going to take up the cudgels for one side or the other, or say which Colonial Treasurer has borrowed more and which has borrowed less. I am not going to claim any great credit for the Opposition now because we are advocating retrenchment and the honourable gentleman is advocating extravagance, because we well know that, for the last seventeen years, whenever one side have been out of office they have been for retrenchment, and whenever they were in office they have found it necessary to borrow, of course, "in the most moderate way." The position as regards the two Treasurers reminds me of a verse written by Dean Swift,—

The rod was but a harmless wand  
When Moses held it in his hand,  
But soon as he had laid it down  
'Twas a devouring serpent grown.

That is the position. I wish to give one or two brief reasons why I propose to vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin Central. The Treasurer has told us that borrowing must come to an end, and he proposes to stop borrowing. He has made a heroic resolve that borrowing shall cease after the expiration of three and a half years, and in the meantime he treats resolution to the extent of £2,400,000. If that had been placed before the country at the last elections the honourable gentleman would not have had the chance of getting into the office which he now holds. Then you could not stand up and talk of borrowing one million without being well-nigh hooted from every platform in the country. The Government now propose a borrowing policy which the whole colony would have hooted down during the last elections. Is that consistency? Is it decency? I say it is not. The Colonial Treasurer claims credit because he has made such proposals that in three and a half years borrowing shall cease; but, as the honourable member for Mount Ida cleverly pointed out, probably in three and a half years the honourable gentleman will be Colonial Treasurer no longer, so that his heroism amounts to this: that he is willing to shed the last drop of his successor's blood. Of all the portions of the honourable gentleman's policy, that which I consider to be worst for the country, and to be most in the teeth of what the country demanded at the late elections, is his proposal to keep the deficit outstanding instead of paying it off. We are retrenching because the

colony has got the knife at its throat, because it has lost credit, and because it has a burden that is too great to bear. And when we are retrenching to save our credit, what can injure our credit more readily than the knowledge that we have got a huge deficit which we do not intend to pay off and that we are going to borrow money to meet? That is the way the honourable gentleman proposes to restore our credit—to borrow two millions, to keep our deficit outstanding, and to borrow money to meet it. Can there be anything which is likely to be more disastrous to every enterprise that is obliged to go to London to get money to carry it on? This is the man who was put in office to restore our credit in London, and to restore prosperity to this colony by means of bringing capital here. The honourable gentleman said that, if we wished to discuss the matter sincerely, we should discuss the estimates. That is the course he suggests to us when we take up the policy of retrenchment. What was the course which he said was absolutely necessary at the beginning of the session? Did he propose to come down and discuss the matter detail by detail? He said that it was perfectly impossible to have retrenchment if we made it a matter of detail by detail. He said the only conceivable way to effect retrenchment was to take the thing *en bloc*, and leave it to the Government themselves to work out. We say the same thing. We say if we put it off until we get into Committee no retrenchment will be made that is worth making. If retrenchment is to be made it must be done in the way proposed by the honourable member for Dunedin Central. In 1883, when the honourable gentleman was asked to support a policy of retrenchment in a mild way, he laughed it to scorn. Mr. Swanson, then member for Newton, asked the honourable gentleman to take the estimates back and reduce them by £50,000. The honourable member for Caversham voted for that motion, and he ought to vote for this proposal now. When the House went into Committee of Supply and discussed the estimates detail by detail on the occasion I have referred to, they passed estimates amounting to three millions; and they made two very notable pieces of retrenchment. They reduced a Resident Magistrate from £250 to £150, and they struck off a vote amounting to £50 altogether. That was the result of retrenchment in Committee. As I said before, I consider that the brave words of the honourable member for Mount Ida are deserving of the attention of the House. I agree with him that the country will never be saved by this fiddling expenditure on railways which is going on year after year. It is the sprinkling of a drop of water on the tongue of a man dying of thirst. Year after year we have attempted to fortify ourselves and to restore prosperity by bringing in annual millions; and every million we have got has lowered us deeper and deeper in the abyss of depression. Look to history! Did the gold of the Indies save Spain? Millions were brought across the Atlantic to Spain every year, and

the gold was wasted; and Spain sank and sank, till, from being the most prosperous country in Europe, she became the by-word—financially—which she is to-day. And I say that if we go on borrowing these millions, and continue as we have been doing, we shall sink until we have become among the colonies of the British Empire what Spain is, financially, among the countries of Europe.

Mr. BARRON.—The honourable gentleman makes one little mistake with reference to the well-known motion moved by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay in the previous Parliament.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—I did not refer to it.

Mr. BARRON.—The honourable gentleman, at all events, referred to my vote on that occasion.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—No; I referred to the resolution moved by Mr. Swanson in 1883, to the effect that the Government should take back their estimates, recast them, and reduce them by £50,000.

Mr. BARRON.—I understood that the honourable gentleman referred to the motion of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. Therefore I will say no more about that. The honourable gentleman has preached a very nice little sermon from a very pretty little text. Referring to the speech made by the honourable member for Mount Ida, he said, "Words, words, words! Sir, the country can never be saved by words, especially when they run counter to deeds." If the honourable gentleman will only think of it he will there find a reason for the attitude taken by the honourable member for Mount Ida, which he condemns. The honourable member for Mount Ida has had large experience of a previous Administration the whole policy of which was, "Words, words, words." The country was not saved by their words, simply because they ran counter to their deeds. Then, he says that the cry of the honourable member for Mount Ida and those associated with him is, "Measures, not men." Yes, measures honestly devised with a reasonable prospect of their being carried out, and a prospect of their being given effect to by the men who are at present in office rather than the objectionable men who preceded them in office.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Are there no others capable?

Mr. BARRON.—I, at all events, do not intend to draw a distinction of that kind; but, so long as the honourable gentlemen now administering the affairs of this country show that they are honestly and earnestly trying to do what their supporters think they ought to do, so long should they have the support of those who have the best interests of the country at heart. The honourable member for Mount Ida did really deliver a very thoughtful and earnest speech; and that speech, which must have impressed every honourable member who listened to it, was the speech of no novice in political affairs. It was the speech of a man who thinks very carefully over the subjects he feels called upon to speak about; and if that honourable

gentleman, after reviewing the whole loan-policy of the Government and their predecessors, was forced to sit down without arriving at any practical conclusion, without offering to the House any practical suggestion in reference to the policy which we are now called upon to consider—if that honourable gentleman was forced to sit down without making any practical suggestion, how can ordinary members of the House, or young members who have not had the experience in public affairs which the honourable gentleman has had—how can they be expected to arrive at a conclusion which he, with all his experience, was evidently unable to arrive at? There are no political theories, however complete in themselves, that have ever been, or ever can be, given practical and undisturbed effect to, I believe, in any Legislature in the world; otherwise we should not still be striving, after long years of sore trouble, for some changes and improvements such as, in theory, we think should be followed. Our best devices can only be what in our judgment at the moment are best calculated to correct the evils of which we complain. The proposals of the Government as embodied in this Loan Bill are such as I do not altogether approve of. I agree that a great deal of the mischief from which we are suffering, and a great many of the evils which admittedly beset this country, are due to the fact that we have borrowed too much and too often, and that we have spent unwisely; and were it not that our engagements must be met, and that I have confidence that the Government are earnest in the proposals which they have embodied in their Loan Bill, and were it not that the Premier has invited the House to consider carefully in Committee these proposals, and to object to such items as they think should be struck out, I would not vote for the Loan Bill. But, Sir, although I feel very strongly that the more money we borrow the deeper we are likely to get into the mire, still I feel also that, when men who, I know, hold the same opinion as I do have had an opportunity of inquiring closely and carefully and minutely into the affairs of this colony, and when they come down to the House and, contrary to their previously-formed judgment, contrary to their inclination, ask the House to give effect to such proposals as are embodied in the Loan Bill; and when they have shown their reasons—and their reasons must weigh to some extent with honourable gentlemen—then, I say, a man must pause before he says we must not borrow any more. At all events, though I would do all I could to stop the borrowing of another shilling, in the face of the statement which the Government thought fit to make to the House in connection with the necessities of the country I am not prepared to vote against the Bill. Sir, this borrowing, which was practically initiated in 1870—and at that time our debt was seven and a half millions—has outgrown our population. Our debt has since increased in excess of the increase of population; and therein is to be found the evil, and therein is, I think, to be found the remedy. If you compare 1870 with

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1879 you will find that during that period our population had not doubled, but our debt and interest had become three times greater. From 1879 to 1884 our population had only increased a fifth, but our debt had increased a fourth. From 1884 to 1887 our population has only increased a fortieth, but the debt has increased a sixth. And, if you compare 1870 with 1887, the population will be found to be a little more than doubled, but our debt is nearly five times greater than in 1870. Now, I mention this in order that I may point out what I value in the loan-proposals of the present Government, and that is, a proposal for borrowing to meet the necessities of the Treasury and to cover the requirements of the country for a period of over three years. The addition they propose to make to the debt of the colony will not be beyond, but, on the contrary, will be less than, the proportion of the natural increase of the population which we may reasonably expect during that period. And, Sir, if the House does what it is in duty bound to do—to accept the invitation of the Government to object to all the items which they consider it is not necessary to borrow money for: and it is in the power of members of the House who desire to curtail mischievous borrowing to stifle these items—then the increase of our debt as compared with the increase of our population will be so much less. I only desire to say this because I think, in common with many other honourable members, that, while it is a pity we are called upon to add to our debt, there is some appearance of daylight through the darkness in the proposals of the Government. Sir, I shall vote for the second reading of this Bill in preference to voting for the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin Central. But, if that honourable gentleman, or any other honourable gentleman—even the leader of the Opposition—can establish a case for striking off an item from the schedule to the Bill when submitted, he can claim my vote, and I am quite sure he can claim the votes of a great many other honourable members who think with me, but who still think it better to vote for the second reading of the Bill than for the amendment of the honourable gentleman. And I would remind honourable members of one more reason for voting for the proposals of the Government, and that is, however great the objections we may have to the Bill, they are not so great as the objections which our dearly-bought experience has forced upon us as accompanying a hostile amendment of this kind.

Mr. WALKER.—I may begin by saying that the debate on the Financial Statement was adjourned at my request three or four weeks ago; but, for some reason or other, the Government would not give me the chance of firing off my few remarks. Possibly the leader of the Government thought there was nothing worthy of discussion in his Financial Statement, and, if so, it is not my place to quarrel with him. But to-night is given an opportunity when I may make a few remarks on the subject, and which will

enable me to unfold my views on the financial proposals of the Ministry perhaps better than I could have done three or four weeks ago, because now we have not only the loan proposals of the Government, but also the public-works proposals. Well, I must say I am surprised and astonished and disappointed at the policy of the Government as a whole; and I think, if the country would only take a calm and reasonable view of the whole circumstances, it will feel, equally with myself, disappointed also. I feel exceedingly disappointed at the attitude—that is a word which has got into an almost historic position—of certain honourable gentlemen. That is what I complain of. We have read of a gentleman—I will not call him an honourable gentleman, but a celebrated gentleman—to whom deportment was everything. And I complain that the country is ruined by gentlemen to whom attitude is everything. They are going to save the country; but I maintain they will never save the country so long as we have gentlemen like them in this House, declining action but posing as possible saviours. And the honourable member for Caversham—what has he said to-night? Simply that he will back up a broken reed. I forget for how long, but it was before I was in this House, although I read of what was going on, when he was backing up an exceedingly respectable gentleman, whom we all knew and respected in private life. And now he is backing up an honourable gentleman—the honourable member for Mount Ida—who, I venture to say, as long as he lives will never come up to the scratch. As long as the Government party has got a tail like that, I say I congratulate the Premier on having such a lot of weak vessels to follow him. They will never do any good in preventing the Premier from doing what he wishes, and they will never save the country unless the honourable member for Egmont can be forced to take a more reasonable attitude than he has taken this session. The honourable gentlemen say they were returned to carry out retrenchment and to stop borrowing, as was decided by the country. I think those honourable gentlemen constitute a very large majority of the House, constitute a far greater working majority than the colony has seen for many years, and could have done anything they chose in reason to save the country. I do not believe, judging from what we have seen, that any party has proved a more obedient or subservient party than those honourable gentlemen; and, when the honourable member for Egmont said that borrowing was necessary to carry out his policy, why should not that party have said, “No; we will not do your bidding, but the bidding of the country which has sent us here; and we will not agree to further borrowing”? That is what the party ought to say when the honourable gentleman goes into his Cabinet-room and says, “Vote as I tell you, or I will resign.” I would say, if I were the honourable member for Mount Ida or the honourable member for Caversham, or if I were any of those quasi-independents, “Resign; we will put a better

man in your place to-morrow"—not from this side of the House, for we know very well they have a majority, and of course it must be from the other side of the House the leader must come. But the leader must be a man who can act with the consent of his followers, and do the bidding of the country; and I can say this is not the policy which is the bidding of the colony.

Major ATKINSON.—What is the policy?

Mr. WALKER.—Well, Sir, the policy is that procrastination is the soul of business: that is the honourable gentleman's policy.

Major ATKINSON.—I want the policy of the country.

Mr. WALKER.—What the country wanted, and what was preached all over the country, was, "Borrow as little as possible, and retrench!"

Major ATKINSON.—Hear, hear.

Mr. WALKER.——"and restore prosperity by judicious legislation." Sir, the honourable gentleman has rather drawn me out of the line of argument on which I was proceeding; and I will allude to these points, therefore, further on. What I wish to emphasize now is that the majority on his side of the House have lost a golden opportunity of either compelling the honourable member for Egmont to do what they wish, or else of putting in somebody else who would carry out their bidding; and, having lost that opportunity, I warrant that, unless they bring him to resign, they will not save the country. Why, Sir, every honourable member in this House remembers that, during the elections, the late Premier, in a speech at Dunedin, alluded to the possibility of two millions being required to be borrowed to finish our railways, and limiting it to five years.

Mr. FISHER.—What do you know about finance?

Mr. WALKER.—A great deal more, I will guarantee, than the Minister of Education. Perhaps neither of the honourable gentlemen knows anything about finance. We had a speech from the honourable gentleman to-night, and if that is a specimen of his finance I do not believe in it. But I will come to his remarks later on. These gentlemen seem to wish to hustle honourable members out of their remarks; but I decline to be hustled even by the Minister of Education. I say that when the late Premier mentioned, incidentally almost, that two millions were required for finishing the partially-constructed railways, there was a howl all over the country in those prints which were opposed to the late Government, the prints that the honourable member for Mount Ida referred to as perfectly satisfied with the policy of the present Government. I have no doubt that if these prints are like the honourable member for Mount Ida they will be satisfied with anything. Those are the sort of prints that express independent opinions of the Government and their followers. These are the prints that came down on the late Premier because he mentioned the necessity of borrow-

ing two millions to finish the construction of our railways—

An Hon. MEMBER.—In eight years.

Mr. WALKER.—I am not particular about the exact number of years, but I know that it was to be spread over a much longer period than the present Ministry propose to extend this loan over. But what I object to is the unfairness of the thing. One man may steal a horse, while another may not look over the hedge. We have heard one honourable member refer to the Ethiopian and the leopard. I should like to know which is the Ethiopian and which is the leopard. If my honourable friend the member for Christchurch North is the Ethiopian, I should say that the Premier is the leopard; and I am as much inclined to doubt him as my honourable friends opposite appear inclined to doubt the honourable member for Christchurch North. The honourable member for Mount Ida, a few evenings ago, made a remark which I thought he was prepared to follow up with a motion—to the effect that he should move the Crown to appoint both of these honourable members to colonial governorships, for the sake of getting them out of the way. I do not know whether, at the time he said that, he thought of himself as a possible candidate for the office occupied by the Premier; but I am quite certain of this, after what we have seen to-night: that that would not happen to him, because I think that, whatever may happen, whoever may be removed out of this House, that honourable gentleman will never come into office as long as he lives. His speech to-night convinces me that he is perfectly and absolutely unpractical and useless. He is simply the result of a local inflation somewhere about Dunedin, and must have very easily pleased constituents. In this House, at all events, he does not know what is necessary in order to command respect. A man may vote wrong sometimes owing to an error of judgment, and I can excuse that; but I cannot give any respect in my opinion to a man who deliberately argues one way and then has not the courage of his opinions, or is afraid to put them in action. What I complain of most in reference to the Financial Statement of the Government and their different proposals is this: that they really give no indication of what the position of the colony is, and how it is to be lifted out of its present unfortunate position. The Government either conceal the true position or they do not know what it is. The retrenchment they propose is simply an apparent one. Reduction of the honorarium will not do alone; the lessening of salaries will not do alone. If they put everything together that they propose to get by these means, they will not have done one single thing to lift the colony out of its present position. They do not seem to realise the position. If we compare our position with that of the other colonies we must, I think, fairly admit this: that most of our services are very well and very economically conducted—such as education, Post Office, Telegraph Office, and so on—and that really very little retrenchment can take

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place in any of them. I do not deny, of course, that there may be cases where retrenchment is possible, and no doubt will be effected; but all combined will not go very far towards saving the country. The fact is that we have two heavy burdens upon our shoulders: one is the railways, and the other is the public debt; and unless the Government can devise some means of lessening these two burdens this country can never get very much better. And, Sir, what do this Government propose to do as regards these two burdens? They simply propose to increase both of them, without any remedial measure whatever. Our railways, it is admitted, have year by year become less remunerative; and the reason is that what are called "political lines" have been extended. Now, it must be admitted that what the Government propose in the way of extension of our railways in this Bill has reference to railways that cannot for many years be of a remunerative character. Therefore their proposal to borrow money for the construction of these railways will not help the colony one bit. At the same time, of course, we are increasing our debt; and it goes without saying that, if we are increasing our debt, we are also increasing our annual deficiency. What is really wanted is for the Government not only to retrench sincerely, but to take steps to promote the industries, and to increase our population and renew prosperity: and that can only be done by other measures than those which the Government have taken in hand. None of the proposals that they have made—I can conscientiously say I am sorry to say it—will have any effect in restoring prosperity to the country. In fact, their immediate effect will rather be to increase the distress instead of remedying it. We have, of course, been promised that the Government, next session, will take up the question of the tariff; and, if this means encouraging our local industries, I trust they will have the courage of their opinions. But I am sure that, if they have many supporters on their side as weak-kneed as the honourable member for Mount Ida, we cannot greatly rely upon their dealing with this subject as they ought to do. Unless their supporters are more sincere and more determined, so that they will keep Ministers up to the mark, we cannot expect much. I say most distinctly that the responsibility must rest on the other side of the House. They must keep Ministers up to the mark next session. I am sorry that the Minister of Education has left the chamber, for I was desirous of saying a few words to him, as I do not care to refer to an honourable member who is absent, especially when I am unable to refer to him in terms of commendation. But I may say I was sorry to see the line taken by him in his remarks: they were in exceedingly bad taste, coming, as they did, after the good-tempered and fairly-critical speech of the honourable member for Christchurch North. I had hoped that office and its responsibilities were exercising a restraining influence upon him. I had hoped that he had learned by this time that it is better to show, at any rate, not quite all

you feel when you are on the Ministerial benches. No doubt Ministers have their trials, like other mortals; but they should be able to bear them more philosophically than we ordinary people, especially those of us who are on the Opposition side of the House; and I am exceedingly sorry that the honourable gentleman "let out" as he did. I trust that the Government will be as good as they say, and will allow the House generally the largest discretion in cutting down these estimates, and enable us to cut down much of the prospective expenditure, to which, I think, the House has reasonable and good cause to object. The truth is that the Government hold a whip over us in this matter. The honourable member for Mount Ida said—and I believe he was thoroughly convinced of the truth of his statement at the time he made it—that if we should decide to borrow this amount proposed it would be all spent in two years. I quite believe it, judging from the past. And what will happen then, Sir? Why, the Representation Bill, which the honourable member for Mount Ida was not quite strong enough to stand up against, will then be held over our heads, and if we do not vote for another loan we shall find the Government coming down and saying to members like the honourable member for Mount Ida, "We will blot your district out of existence, by dissolving the House." That is the threat which will be held over us, and I venture to say it will be put in force as soon as the Government want more money and ask for another loan. I fear that more responsibility attaches to the action of those honourable gentlemen who went back from their votes the other night in connection with the Representation Bill than we are aware of. I trust the country will not have reason, as I fear it will have, to regret the action which was taken on that occasion. So far as this Bill is concerned, I shall certainly go into the lobby with the honourable member for Dunedin Central.

Mr. FISH.—I had no intention of making any remarks at all on the question now before the House, and should not have risen to speak had it not been for the extraordinary action of the honourable member for Mount Ida. That honourable gentleman made a speech which I thought a most excellent one, from a logical and argumentative point of view. It was a speech pregnant with common-sense, and one which ought to have had, and I have no doubt had, great weight with members of this House. During the course of that speech I was sitting alongside the honourable member for Lincoln; and I said to the honourable gentleman, remembering the course of action followed by the honourable member for Mount Ida in connection with the Representation Bill and other things, "How do you think the honourable gentleman is going to vote?" He said, "Oh, he will vote for the amendment." I replied, "I do not think he will." But the honourable gentleman said, "Yes, he will," being perfectly sure that the honourable member for Mount Ida must vote for the amendment. You may imagine the disgust of

the honourable member for Lincoln when we heard the impotent conclusion of the speech of the honourable member for Mount Ida. That honourable gentleman will always be a failure in politics while he pursues such a course of action as he pursued in reference to the Representation Bill, and as he has pursued in this House to-night in reference to this Bill. I recall the honourable member's career for the last four years, and recollect that it was by his influence, so far as it extended, that the Stout-Vogel Government came into power in 1884. The honourable gentleman was then returned to support the honourable member for Christchurch North; he came down pledged to support the party. He did support them through the first session of their existence. In the second session he wavered, and, though he spoke against them, he did not vote against them; and by his vote, I believe, they were kept in office. The next session we find that, after an amount of delay and hesitation, he ultimately made up his mind to have the courage of his opinions and voted against the Government, with the result that they went out of office. Now we find him in this Parliament pursuing exactly the same tactics that he pursued with regard to the last Government. He has spoken against the Government policy this session on more than one occasion. On the Representation Bill he said he was opposed to them—that he thought it an improper measure—and he voted for the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin West; and, ultimately, when the Premier made it a party question, he retracted to such an extent that he did not vote to maintain his previous action with regard to the Bill, although he was still opposed to it. I do not envy the Government such a supporter as this, and I am surprised the Premier has not told him that he would rather be without him than have such support as he gives the Government, for it is more damning to them than the opposition of a determined enemy. If the honourable gentleman thinks that the Opposition would like him as an ally, speaking for myself I would say that I would absolutely decline to receive such an ally, because I know that if a gentleman of that character is with us to-day he might be against us to-morrow, or, at any rate, damning our policy, if not voting against us, and that his assistance is worse than useless. That is not conduct that will tend to raise a man in political estimation. I quite admit that any member of the House has the right to continually change his opinions, and he is not bound to support a Government for ever if they go from the policy which they held when he joined them; but to be continually damning their policy and trying to upset their measures, and then to vote for them as a party, is, to my mind, most inconsistent. Then, what reason does he give for his conduct? The Vogel "bogey," and nothing else. I say that, if he has convictions, he should vote accordingly, and, if by such a vote the present Government should be ejected from office, it would not follow as a matter of course that the honour-

*Mr. Fish*

able member for Christchurch North would take the place of the Premier. We know from the history of the last Parliament that there were two or three Governments within two or three weeks, and it is quite possible, if the honourable member gave a conscientious vote, there might be a reconstruction of the present Government upon different lines. It is the expression of opinions followed by contradictory actions such as the honourable gentleman has shown to-night and on other occasions that almost makes persons who are not very strong on the other side say that they will become Government supporters if there is any fear of loss to the Government from the defection of gentlemen like the honourable gentleman I am alluding to. We have next the honourable member for Caversham standing forward as the apologist for the honourable member for Mount Ida. I can easily understand how that comes about. The honourable gentlemen are pretty well in the same position politically. When I recall to my mind the sessions of 1882, 1883, and 1884, and when I know the uncompromising hostility which animated the honourable member for Caversham against the Premier—when I recollect that, and also that there is no change of politics on the part of the honourable gentleman now at the head of the Government, and when I see the honourable member for Caversham so slavishly following him, consenting to give up his convictions in order to keep that honourable gentleman in office, I ask, what can be the cause of such strange things? Again, I shall be told, as the honourable gentleman told us to-night, it is the fear of the honourable member for Christchurch North getting into power again that makes him do as he is doing. I say distinctly that a man is not doing his duty to the country if he allows personal considerations as to individuals to influence him in his political views. The honourable gentleman, I am sorry to say, is out of the House, or I should say a great deal more about him. The honourable gentleman said he would vote for the second reading of the Bill because the schedule of the Bill dealing with the works proposed to be carried out could be amended in Committee, and he told us that that was the proper time to reduce the votes. Now, no honourable member knows better than the honourable member for Caversham that it is an utter absurdity to expect that you will reduce the million loan when in Committee. What does he seek to do? To pit one section of the House against another? And it is certain that, if after argument any particular line is struck out, then the members interested in that work will combine to prevent other works from being carried. The result would be that it would be a case of "You vote for my line, and I'll vote for yours," and the thing would be passed exactly as it is in the schedule of the Bill. If honourable members want to restrict the loan to half a million, we must do it on the proposal of the honourable member for Dunedin Central, for that is the only way by which it can be done. If we do not accept that proposal, then

we must accept the policy of the Government. The honourable member for Ashburton referred to the member for Caversham and to the gentleman who formerly represented Akaroa as being a party of two. They were a party of two, and as much alike as twin brothers. What one said the other said. Now, I think there ought to be in this Parliament also a party of two, consisting of the honourable member for Caversham and the honourable member for Mount Ida. The only justification that either of these gentlemen can give for the extraordinary votes or no-votes they are going to give to-night upon this question of the reduction of the loan is, I contend, a personal opposition to the honourable member for Christchurch North: that they have both practically admitted. Now, as far as I understood the Premier's statement in introducing the Bill, it was that he would be prepared to accept a reduction of the amount to be borrowed if the majority of the House considered it desirable. I did not understand him to say that he would only accept reductions which might be made in Committee. I do not know whether I understood him aright or not; but, at any rate, that is the conclusion I drew from his remarks, that he would be prepared to accept a reduction of the amount on the second reading of the Bill, if a majority of the House were in favour of that being done. All that I have to say further, with regard to the policy of the Government, is this: that, so far as the public-works proposals go, they seem to me to be tolerably fair, on the whole; and I think the Minister in charge is to be complimented rather than otherwise upon the businesslike and straightforward manner in which these proposals are placed before the House and the country. I do not differ from the proposals of the Government in respect to the lines, but they propose to borrow money to extend over a period of three years. Now, I am certain that, judging from the past, what was called "ear-marking" expenditure can never be adhered to, and never will be adhered to; and that before the end of two years we shall find that this million of money has disappeared. And you will be placed in this dilemma: either that you must ask the authority of the House to borrow another million, or that you must leave works in an imperfect state, to the great detriment of the colony and of the works themselves. That is where I dissent from the proposals of the Government. I think that we should borrow only half a million now, not for the purpose of restricting that half-million as our expenditure out of loan for three years, but that we should allow it to go as far as it would, and then ask the authority of Parliament at a future time to borrow a further sum. That is my view of the matter. The honourable member for Caversham said the speech of the honourable member for Mount Ida was not that of a novice, and that it evidenced thinking out. I am quite prepared to say it did, and the wonder to me is how an honourable gentleman, having thought out that subject, and having spoken in the way he did, should have

come to the lame and impotent conclusions he has done, and that he is now going to vote against the amendment which his convictions tell him ought to be carried. I cannot understand an action of that kind; and I have no hesitation in predicting for that honourable gentleman a most inglorious end to his political career, in consequence of the vacillation which appears to be the leading feature of his political conduct. I should not have spoken had I not been so thoroughly disgusted as I am with the action of the honourable member for Mount Ida and of the honourable member for Caversham, who, having pledged themselves strongly to their constituents that they would oppose borrowing and restrict it to the lowest possible sum, now give utterance to their intention with regard to the vote they are going to give.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I cannot help saying something after the speeches we have heard to-night. I myself am quite free to act in this matter in accordance with my own opinion, and what I think are the best interests of the country will alone guide me. I do not belong to either party in this House. I do not belong to the party of the honourable gentlemen who occupy the Government benches, nor do they expect to get any support from me on any political questions; neither do I belong to the party which is led by the honourable member for Christchurch North. But my opinions on this subject, I dare say, will differ from those of a good many honourable members in this House who sometimes vote with me. Before I express my own opinions on the subject before the House I should like to refer to the honourable member for Caversham; and I am sorry he is not in his place, for I have something to say of him that I should like him to hear. However, the honourable gentleman made a speech and then left the chamber before he could hear what any person said of him. Now, I have no doubt this Loan Bill is a very hard pill for the honourable member for Caversham to swallow. He, above all other honourable members in Otago, did more to injure the late Premier on this very question of borrowing than any other member of the House. Whenever before the electors of Caversham—and, indeed, whenever he stood up to speak during the whole of the election contest—he never halted from running down the late Premier, and this question of borrowing was continually in his mouth. I have no doubt, I say, that it is now a very hard pill for him to swallow this proposal of the Government. And, Sir, I might ask how it comes about that he has supported the Government so much. He belonged some time ago to the party to which I belong, and which was led in this House by the then member for Akaroa, Mr. Montgomery. And, Sir, at that time I thought the honourable member for Caversham was a modest worker, one of the rank and file of the party; but I have discovered since that he was very much disappointed three years ago when he was not taken into office, and ever since that, on every occasion, he has turned round on his own party, and has been going further and further in his actions

against them, until at the recent election he denounced them to such a degree that he could not now possibly serve the other party, and I have no doubt the honourable gentleman is very much disgusted at his own conduct, and must find it very hard to support this Loan Bill after all he said against it. Now, the honourable member for Mount Ida has been so well dealt with by other honourable members that I think I will spare him.

Major ATKINSON.—No.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I do not see that I am bound to comply with any request of the Premier's as to whether I should "go for" him or not. I intend to tell the Premier that I am going to support his Bill. I have no doubt the Premier and his Government have found it very hard to bring themselves up to the scratch in borrowing this million of money, knowing perfectly well that there were a number of gentlemen supporting them who were strongly against borrowing, who denounced it at the elections, who actually gained their seats on the pledge that there should be no more borrowing or taxation. No doubt the Government have found it hard to do this; but they did what was right for the country. It would be an impossibility to do away with borrowing all at once, and to stop public works; it would be a dark day of disaster to this country if they were stopped suddenly. At the time of the election I distinctly declared what I am now declaring—that it was an impossibility to do away with borrowing very suddenly, that if we did so we should get into trouble for many years. What would be the result to the colony? That a very large number of public works, now half finished, would have to remain in that condition, and would be of no service to the colony, and a large sum of money would be lost. I ask, what would be the result to some of the electors in the Mount Ida District if the Otago Central line were stopped? They would simply have to give up their holdings and come into the towns to swell the ranks of the "unemployed." The honourable member for Mount Ida must know that it is an impossibility to farm land in that region and carry produce forty or fifty miles to a railway station. It is a fact that a number of these people are hanging out to see whether this railway is to be finished or not; and if they knew to-morrow that there was going to be no railway a number of them would abandon their holdings. That would not be a good thing for the country. There are in this House a number of honourable gentlemen who during the elections talked a lot of nonsense to the electors on this subject. No doubt in some parts of the colony, where public works have been finished, it was very easy for anyone to get up and denounce all borrowing. That is exactly the position of my electorate. There is not one sixpence to be raised under this Bill to be spent in it, nor do I wish for one sixpence, and I might easily declare before the electors that I would consent to borrow no more money; but I look upon it from a wider point of view than one electorate, and I say it would be an im-

possibility to stop borrowing at the present moment. But, whilst I am prepared to support the second reading of this Bill, I wish it to be distinctly understood that when the public-works estimates come down there are some railways in that schedule I shall vote against—railways which, I think, could be stopped without any serious loss to the colony. And then I shall expect the Premier to carry out his promise and reduce the loan by the corresponding amount. And if he does not do that, we shall have an opportunity, when his Loan Bill is in Committee, to reduce it in that way. I am glad to find that the Premier considered the colony first in this matter, and party second. There are some of his supporters in this House who are endeavouring to balance themselves on a rail, and I believe the operation is a difficult one on this Loan Bill. I think the speeches of the honourable members for Mount Ida and Caversham show this House exactly how they can balance themselves on a rail, ready at any moment to jump down on either side according as it suits them best. We have been told to-night that the idea of making railways under the land-grant system was very much in favour, and that that was the proper system to make railways by. Now, I object to that distinctly, and I would sooner borrow money at any time to build a railway than grant any land to make it. I hope this House will not be led away by this claptrap about getting railways made more cheaply by land-grants. We are taking the assets we have borrowed money upon, and blinding the eyes of the money-lenders at Home from whom we have borrowed money, if we give away any part of our principal—of which our landed estate is part—to make railways; and I am quite sure that, in the long-run, it will be much dearer to make railways in that way than if we had borrowed the money straight out to make them. I do not intend to keep the House at this early hour of the morning, but I wish to say that I consider it necessary, in the interests of the colony, that this money should be borrowed. I am quite satisfied of the impossibility of doing without it, and any one who, during the elections, thought it could be done without could not have considered the subject very carefully. There are some railways which I think the country can very well do without for many years to come, and I shall vote for their being struck out of the schedule of the Loan Bill.

Mr. ALLEN.—I am only going to make a very few remarks, as the hour is very late; but I must say that, so far as most of the speeches have gone, at any rate those from the Opposition side of the House, they seem to me to be mostly an attempt to stigmatize members on this side of the House, members who came in, suppose, as independent candidates. Well, I let that go for what it is worth—I do not think it is of much value. But, Sir, I do think that we have not rightly estimated the position in which we are placed at the present moment. I think that most of us—most of those, at any rate, who have thought on the subject at all—have made up their minds that a policy of

Mr. J. McKenzie



borrowing is a ruinous policy, and especially at the present time; and if we could get rid of it at the present moment it would be the right position to take up. But, after all, one has to consider whether the position is a tenable one; whether it is possible, in the present state of the colony, that all works that are in progress should be suddenly put a stop to. Now, so far as I myself am concerned, I stated when I was a candidate that I did not think it was right or reasonable to leave certain railways in an unfinished state, in an unworkable state: that is to say, it would not be right, for instance, to leave a railway-bridge half constructed—that we should, at any rate, carry those railways to some point or other where they might be worked. Having taken up that position, let me now ask whether it is possible to make any large savings, to abandon this loan of one million. And I may say, at the outset, that I do think it is possible, if we like to undertake the task, to largely reduce this million loan; and I do think the proper position to take up is to accept the Premier's suggestion and, when we go into Committee, attempt to get some of the items struck off. I think a mistake has been made in considering that it is only under Part III. that large reductions can be made: in fact, my opinion is that under Class III. only small reductions can be made. With regard to the railway policy, I do not believe any large reductions can possibly be made without doing enormous injury. Sir, there was laid upon the table of this House some time ago a return which showed that there were only three railways, I think, in hand—those three railways were the Rotorua Section, and the Manawatu Gorge Section, and the Otago Central Section—these are the only sections in progress or on which work has been commenced that cannot be carried to some definite place, according to that return, out of the money at present in hand. For those three it seems to be absolutely necessary that some money will have to be borrowed. Then, with regard to the other great railway scheme, the North Island Trunk Railway, I must say that I speak with a certain amount of ignorance of the country, but I cannot help thinking that it is possible for us at the present time to put a stop to a large portion of the North Island Trunk Railway construction. It seems now that the cost of it has been largely under-estimated, and that if we spend a million on it we cannot get very far. A million and a quarter more, at any rate, will be required to complete it; and I think it would be a question for us to consider in Committee whether we cannot make a stop here, and, by cutting off £300,000 or £400,000 from this line, so reduce the loan proposals. But what I got up mainly to say was this: that, apart from the North Island Trunk Railway altogether, and apart from Part III. of these estimates, there is another fund which very few honourable members have really touched upon, and which is a fund in the items of which I think we could make very large reductions. That is the fund in Part I. First of all, there

is immigration, and I am not at all sure that we are justified in spending out of the new loan so large a sum as £70,000 within the next three years. Then, with regard to roads and bridges, and things of that kind, I think there too we are exceeding the amount we should apply to such purposes out of loan. Under that head there are grants in aid; and there are, unfortunately those liabilities for village settlements to the extent of £70,000, which must be met, but for which this Government are not responsible, but their predecessors. Then, there are a large number of public buildings which come under this head. There is £70,000 for lunatic asylums, some new ones, for instance. In a place where there are already two asylums it is proposed to enlarge one very much; and they are going to build doctors' residences at Sunnyside, Seacliff, and other places. The amount for lunatic asylums might very well be reduced. There are several other items; but I shall not go through them now. There are many, however, which I think ought not to be put down here, but ought to be charged to consolidated revenue, and, if we cannot meet them out of that, then buildings of this kind should be stopped. At any rate, I am quite sure of this: that so long as we go on constructing these buildings out of loan so long will our difficulties continue. I have made a great many more notes, but I will not detain the House at this hour.

Mr. MOSS.—It has always been usual, if we intend to borrow at all, to have the Loan Bill read a second time. When the Opposition in a previous session, comprising in great part the honourable gentlemen who now sit on the Government side of the House, proposed to reduce the loan very largely, and succeeded in reducing it by a quarter of a million, they first decided that the estimates must be reduced, and, when that was done, reduced the loan. The question before us now is, Are we to borrow at all or not? If we are prepared to say that we will cease to borrow, we might vote against the second reading of the Bill; but, if we are to borrow, I do not see how we can do that. The course laid down by the Premier is, I think, the right one: that, after the second reading he will take the public-works estimates. That will be the time to make reductions, and, if honourable gentlemen are in earnest, there are a large number of items which can be very well reduced. Take, for example, the Blenheim-Awatere line. It is proposed to spend £31,700 on that line; and, when you look into it as explained by the Minister for Public Works, you find that five and a half miles of the line are to be made: that they propose to make a road to the Awatere from the end of the five and a half miles of line, and then erect an expensive bridge over that river at a cost of from £15,000 to £20,000. That is an old item, which has been resisted in this House, and was successfully resisted by the late Government, who refused to make the bridge. That bridge will open up about one hundred and forty thousand acres of land owned by absentees. We certainly ought not to borrow money for that purpose, but should

leave the persons interested to make the bridge for themselves. There are other items of the same kind which might be struck out. It is a doctrine which I have long fought for that we ought not to borrow money, and burden those who come after us with a great debt—in fact, sell this country, as we have been doing, to money-lenders in London—unless it be for works that will be directly reproductive. I have always thought that is the sole principle on which we should act—that we ought not to burden those coming after us, unless it be to enable us to increase the productions of the country. If we had confined our borrowing to that we should be in a much better position to-day. And look at the position into which this borrowing has brought us. We are in the humiliating position that this great colony cannot go on the Stock Exchange unless we pledge ourselves not to borrow any more for a definite time. Our debentures have been falling for a long time past, and now are quoted at some 8 or 10 per cent. below those of other colonies. To me the passing of the estimates is always the saddest part of the session. They are left to the last, and never closely scrutinised. Money is borrowed, and we scramble for it; and, unless we change our old course in that respect, I do not see how we are to extricate the colony from its present position. The honourable member for Mount Ida has justly quoted the speeches of the Premier on different occasions, and I dare say I could quote him, and he me; but I do not think any good will come from prolonging the debate, or that we shall mend matters until we determine that we will not borrow except for the definite purpose of increasing our productions and, with them, the solid wealth of the country.

Sir J. VOGEL.—At this late hour I shall not reply to the extraordinary charges made by the honourable member for Egmont in respect to the late Government as to paying the interest due in England. I will only say, at present, that the honourable member clearly does not understand the practice which he himself has adopted for years. He has taken exception to a course whilst, acting under the directions of the Treasury officers, he has been pursuing precisely the same course for years past. Instead of complaining that I telegraphed part of the interest Home on one occasion only, the honourable gentleman should have acknowledged that for more than a year before he left office he did the very same himself on account of all the interest payable in England. As to the question of selling deficiency bills when the revenue was short at a particular period of the year, that is a practice which has always obtained here and in other countries in order to raise revenue. The honourable gentleman ought to know that it is impossible to pay interest on the date it is due unless the Auditor-General is satisfied that there is sufficient to the credit of the consolidated revenue to meet it; and the question of paying it in England or here is a financial detail of a not very difficult character. The honourable gentleman has no

*Mr. Moss*

need to worry himself about meeting the payment in England of £1,300,000, if he has £1,300,000 at his command either here or in England. It is a very simple financial question; but I will go through it more at length on another occasion. I will only say, in conclusion, that a great set has been made against the honourable member for Mount Ida this evening because, after having expressed very strong opinions against the Government, he is going to vote with them. I am not sure that the honourable gentleman is not carrying out the practice of party government, for, having very strong views of his own, which do not quite coincide with those of either party, he has to choose with which party he will work. He makes his election, and it is not because, on a particular occasion, a vote arises on which he cannot agree with them that he can feel himself at liberty to leave his party, an announcement of the kind which the honourable member at the head of the Government made this evening having been made. It is no doubt an unfortunate thing for the honourable member for Mount Ida that he has so often to speak on one side and vote on the other; but he is not the only member who has done that, for I recollect a charge having been made against another gentleman years ago of doing something of the same kind. I myself feel that the honourable member for Mount Ida has certainly very strong views, which do not approach to the views held by either of the two principal parties in the House; and therefore it would not be reasonable to suppose he could work cordially with either party. The honourable gentleman is as different as wine from water from the honourable gentleman who is sitting next him; for, whereas the votes of the honourable member for Mount Ida are, I am convinced, always guided by a careful consideration of the questions with which he has to deal, the honourable member for Caversham is, unfortunately, the sport of personal passions and personal prejudice. If anybody who was on the scene when a similar Government to the present one was in office formerly should remember the part the honourable member for Caversham then took, and could see now the eagerness with which he always tries to make the best of the views of the Government, views with which the honourable gentleman entirely disagrees, he would have before him a strange study of human nature—a strange illustration of how it is possible for any honourable gentleman to put small questions of a personal kind far above questions of a large and national character, with which he is sent here to deal, and which you, Sir, almost solemnly ask him to deal with when he is first introduced to the House. I am obliged to the honourable member for Caversham for the great importance he attaches to me personally, and therefore I am one of those who would be glad to think that, as he grows older and attains a riper age, he will take a higher view of matters than he is now able to do. There is another honourable gentleman—who is not now present, and to

whom, therefore, I shall not refer—the honourable member for Wallace, who has extremely strong personal feelings. Sir, I have to say this, in conclusion: that honourable members are entirely deceived if they suppose that they can decide a three years' policy on the votes we may now pass in Committee of Supply. The Premier has told them they can do so, and I tell them the contrary. They can discuss the question of simply how much they can vote for the present year. There is not one vote in ten among the estimates now before us on which honourable members will have an opportunity of expressing by their votes whether or not they approve the system of deciding three and a half years' expenditure now. The amendment moved by the honourable member for Dunedin Central is an amendment which says this: "We will give you sufficient money to provide you with what you will require for financial purposes, and we will give you sufficient means to carry on necessary works in the two parts of the Public Works Fund that may possibly be deficient before we shall have an opportunity of providing you with a larger amount next session, if we approve of doing so. At present we desire to curtail very much the expenditure of borrowed money, and therefore we shall give you the smallest possible loan that we think will be sufficient to provide both for financial necessities and to carry on public works which are being carried on, and which we agree with you, should not be put an abrupt end to." That is the difference between the views of the honourable gentleman who moves the amendment and those of the Government. The Government want to bind the House for a longer period. The statement made by the Minister of Education, that the Government are bound by the Public Works Statement, is entirely erroneous; it is entirely deceiving the House; it is a mere speech in *Hansard*, and in no way binds the House in future. All the House will be bound to will be the votes for the current year that will be passed in Committee and afterwards in the Appropriation Act. The fact then will be that, in either case, we shall simply provide sufficient money for the expenditure till we meet again. But the Loan Act is so framed that, while it purports to give effect to the Public Works Statement, it leaves it open to the House to do in effect what it likes with the balance of the money afterward, which can be spent or put to such uses as the House chooses. It is a strange caricature on the opinions which were expressed during the elections that the Government should come down and ask for a larger loan than they can by any possibility require before the House has had an opportunity of meeting again and further considering what should be the future course in regard to public works. I shall support the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin Central, and I feel that those other honourable members who do so will at least be able to say that they have voted consistently with their promises to their constituents, whilst they will be able to feel a charitable sympathy with regard

to those who find themselves compelled by other pledges to vote in a manner greatly against their conscientious views, and against the conscientious views of those who feel that during the first session of a Parliament, as well as during the next two sessions, they owe an obligation to the constituents who have elected them.

Mr. TURNBULL. — Unfortunately, I find myself differing from both the Premier and the late Colonial Treasurer. The opinion I have formed is that the Premier has not asked for a large enough loan, as I think it would be far wiser if he had asked so much as would have let us push on the railways at once, and complete them as fast as possible, in order to get the country out of its difficulty. It has been stated by one honourable member that it would take another million and a half to complete all the unfinished railways contemplated by the public-works policy; and in my opinion it would be far wiser to raise so much money at once as would enable us to push on all the lines with vigour to completion. Then, I think there is another very serious omission. We must know that in the future it will be impossible to provide for school-buildings out of loans, and I very much regret that in any loan-scheme brought forward there should not be a proposal to provide another half-million to be set apart in the hands of commissioners, the interest of which should be used for school and other buildings. This is a question which will cause great difficulty in this House in the future, and lead to a great deal of unpleasant legislation; and the only way to avoid it is what I suggest. Sir, the question of public borrowing is not a question that is forced on us so much by the necessities of the country as by the excessive borrowing of private individuals. If honourable members will look back for ten years they will see the difference between the rate of public and the rate of private borrowing in that time. Ten years ago the amount lent in the colony on mortgage under the Land Transfer Act was five millions, and to-day it is thirty millions. Therefore in ten years the amount of private indebtedness has increased sixfold, while the public debt has not quite doubled—it was nineteen millions ten years ago. There you get the plague-spot at once. It is of no use for the Government to stop borrowing: in fact, the very necessities of the country demand that the Government should borrow. It is very much better for the Government to borrow at 4 per cent. than for private individuals to borrow at 5 per cent. During the last year private individuals borrowed two millions. They had to do it in order to meet the necessities of the country, because the Government did not borrow; and that was a very great loss to the country. Honourable members may talk about the necessity of not further borrowing; but what have we been doing for years? We have been paying £28,000 a year for salaries in the Public Works Department; and I say it would be far better and cheaper for the Government to finish off the railways at once, and so save the

cost of that department. The Government should come down with a complete scheme for finishing off the railways as fast as possible, and so save the cost of that great department, for which we are asked to vote £25,000 this year. That expensive establishment is kept up simply because the railways are not finished off and done with, as they ought to be—simply because we deal with them in a shilly-shallying manner, instead of pushing them vigorously to completion. One of the greatest objects proposed by the late Government was that there should be a vigorous prosecution of our railways; that there should not be grass growing on our uncompleted railways, but that they should be completed at once. If the late Government had taken the wise step of pushing on our public works to completion with great vigour, we should not find ourselves in the lamentable condition in which we are. I say it is a necessity that the Government should at once borrow the money to complete our railways. The securities of no country in the world should stand higher than those of New Zealand, and the returns from our various sources of revenue—the railways, Customs, property-tax, and other sources—are quite sufficient to warrant us in borrowing another four millions of money. It has been said by one honourable member to-night that to attempt to borrow much money now would lower the value of our securities, and that we could only get money at a ruinous rate. But, if there is any doubt as to that, what would be easier—though I own it would not be a plan which would be generally approved—I say, if there is any doubt as to the goodness of the security of New Zealand, what would be easier than to appoint a commissioner to whom should be handed over at once the proceeds of our Customs, our property-tax, and our railways for the payment of interest on the money borrowed? That would enable us to pay interest on another four millions of money. With £1,200,000 a year from Customs, £400,000 from property-tax, and the large sum which is the net return from our railways, there would be ample security for a large further loan to complete our railways. If those sums were paid over into the hands of commissioners there would be a guarantee for any amount of money we might raise—even if we went to the extent of four millions more than now. For the one reason alone that it would be possible by completing our railways to do away with the Public Works Department, and so save that large annual cost, the lines ought to be finished as fast as they possibly can be, for the cost of that department is equal to the interest on three quarters of a million of money every year. But so long as we keep to this system of making a little bit of railway here and a small piece there it will be necessary to maintain this large establishment; and therefore a large part of the money that should go towards the completion of our public works is being paid to the officers in that department solely to keep things going. I should be sorry to speak of any of these officers disrespectfully; but we have heard that there

*Mr. Turnbull*

is “a way not to do it;” and it appears to me that, from the time those gentlemen have been there, the whole of the plans and preparations for all the railways should be completed long ago, and that if we had the money we might at once commence with the reduction of the expenditure. If any member of this House chooses to consider the position of the country, to look at our imports and exports—and these can now be estimated correctly from the returns—if it is calculated what we have exported and what we have received, it will be found that this country is going backward every year to the extent of a million and a half, and of necessity we must either support it by borrowing two millions privately, as was done last year, or we must borrow money to carry on our public works. There is a great advantage in choosing the alternative of borrowing to carry on public works; as, if we can complete the railways, they can be worked at very much less expense than now, because it must be obvious that, with a number of incomplete lines, with terminal stations at different points, and therefore extra officers employed, these alone must be a great cause of our railways not paying interest. A great deal of the loss is solely due to their incompleteness. I regret very much that the present Government have not shown a bold front and asked for a larger loan; for, if we are going to extend the spending of what is proposed to be borrowed over three years, instead of being a benefit the public works will be carried on at a very great loss to the colony. These works, instead of being dragged out so as to extend over three years, should be completed in eighteen months. The question is asked, When you stop borrowing publicly, what is to be the condition of the country? I say, if we borrow this money we shall enable prudent men, men who have taken notice of the coming storm, to put themselves in such a position that the blow, when it comes, will not fall heavily upon them. I look on borrowing as an inevitable necessity. Rather than bind ourselves not to borrow for three years, it would be far better to borrow enough money at once to complete the lines, so that our railways might be returning a considerable amount of money, and thus help to pay the interest on our debt. Then, instead of their returning 2 or 2½ per cent. as they now are doing, they would yield 4 per cent; and 4 per cent. on fifteen millions would pay half the interest on our colonial debt. During the elections I pointed out the necessity for borrowing, and I say the Treasurer has shown wisdom in having the courage to bring down a Loan Bill, and I should have been very much more satisfied if he had brought down a Bill for another million and a half, so as to complete the public-works policy, and then to say that borrowing should cease altogether. Then, there is the question of those harbours which will have to be taken over by the colony; they will not, however, increase our liabilities. It is said that the further we extend our railways the less they pay; but the reason for that must be

obvious to every one. We are carrying these railways through private property of many thousands of acres in extent, and there is not enough traffic to justify the extensions. A wise system of taxation would in a short time remedy that. I shall support the Loan Bill, and, unless very strong reasons are given against any individual vote, I shall find myself, in the main, supporting the proposals.

Mr. MILLS.—We have heard the old story to-night of charges levied against the independent members of this House—charges against those honourable gentlemen that they have formed themselves into a servile following of the Ministry. I should not like it to go forth unchallenged that we have been false to our election-pledges, and I can only say, for myself and for several others who are acting with me, that it is only after very careful consideration that we have given that general support to the present Ministry which we have given so far; and it has been purely because they have brought down measures which were in entire accordance with those pledges which we gave to our constituents during the late elections. I would point to the several measures that have so far been passed by this House as an evidence of this—as an evidence that the present Ministry have gone as far in the direction of retrenchment as the most exacting could desire, and as far as could be expected of them during the short time they have had at their disposal to bring this about. They have, in the first place, carried through measures effecting very drastic retrenchment in the salaries of Ministers, and in the salary attached to the position of Governor. They have carried through Bills reducing the number of members of this House, and reducing the honoraria of members of both Houses. They have carried through land measures which are calculated to encourage settlement on the land, settlement of all classes, and to do away with many of the objections that have characterized the land-administration for some years past. They have also carried through a measure for placing the management of our railways under a Board, which I am very hopeful will have very beneficial results, and which I hope will lead to very much more satisfactory returns from the railways in the future. These measures are so much in accordance with the attitude which many of us took up during the elections that I cannot see how it can reasonably be expected that we should do otherwise than give a fair support to the Ministry during this session. What attitude we shall take in the future it is hard to say. That depends very much on how far these honourable gentlemen carry out the promises they are making to us. I hold that the position we have taken up is such that we are not pledged to them in any way, at all events beyond the present session. I shall be very much interested to notice how some honourable members on the other side of the House will reconcile their conduct to their constituents when they go before them again. Many honourable members, to my knowledge, took a very strong stand during the election on

these very questions to which I have alluded and which have been carried successfully through the House. Those honourable gentlemen indicated their intention to advocate a reduction of Ministers' salaries, a reduction of the Governor's salary, a reduction in the number of members, a reduction in the honorarium, and a change in the administration of railways; and yet these same honourable gentlemen have taken a most active part in harassing Ministers during this session, and have done all in their power to prevent the carrying of these measures into effect. With regard to this loan, I do not feel myself in the same delicate position in which some honourable members have felt themselves, because, although during the election I strongly advocated retrenchment and a tapering-off of borrowing, at the same time I very clearly let it be understood that, however desirable it might be to stop borrowing in theory, I looked upon it as an impossibility and very undesirable in the circumstances of the colony. It is all very well to say, "It is all nonsense, this borrowing: stop borrowing, stop these public works"—I am perfectly certain that to do so would lead to very disastrous results. It strikes one with terror to think what would be the result of a sudden stoppage of public works: thousands of people would be thrown out of employment, and this would increase to an alarming extent the distress and depression which now exist in the colony. I feel perfectly free, therefore, to support this proposal to borrow, and to taper off public-works expenditure in such a way as is shown in the proposals attached to the scheme of the Minister for Public Works. No doubt it is impossible for any Minister to indicate exactly what shall be the course of public works during three years; but the present Ministry have indicated a tapering-off policy. As regards the loan itself, I should certainly like to have seen some provision made for borrowing in the colony. I feel convinced that, if the Minister would so formulate the proposals in the Loan Bill as that he could borrow, say, half a million within the colony, he would have no difficulty in raising the money, and he could delay going on the London market for perhaps another year or eighteen months, during which time the effect of the retrenchment and the new management of railways would be shown, and the investing public of London would be thoroughly satisfied that the honest desire of the colony is to retrieve its position and make its revenue meet its expenditure; and so, when the time came to go on the London market, we should be able to sell our loan at a very satisfactory figure. I would strongly urge the Minister to give his attention to this question of borrowing a moderate amount—say, half a million—in the colony.

An Hon. MEMBER.—At what rate?

Mr. MILLS.—I believe it possible to get it at 5 or, at all events, 5½ per cent. I contend that it would pay us to give 5½ per cent. in the colony. I would only explain that a loan in the colony would be liable to property-tax, and

that we should thus do away with the heavy commissions, exchanges, and discounts on our loans raised in London; and the difference would be very little against the colony, and that little we could afford to give, because the loan would be floated within the colony and the money would be spent amongst ourselves. I think on public grounds, also, it is desirable that some such fund should be created, into which trust funds could be placed. Trust funds in the colony are increasing, small and large, and there is great difficulty in finding investments. If some such loan were set apart purely for the investment of trust funds, I am sure it would be very much appreciated. I would simply reiterate that I think such a course would tend to increase our credit in London, and would improve the prospects of our loan very much when it becomes necessary to go on the London market.

Mr. PERCEVAL.—I must congratulate the Government upon having such a hearty supporter as the honourable member for Port Chalmers. His speech has been a panegyric upon the economies of the Government. Nobody was more prepared to support a policy of retrenchment than I was, and I have endeavoured to give the Government a hearty support in their retrenchment proposals, but it seems to me that these retrenchment proposals, so far, are really very trifling. We have had the Honorarium Bill, and we have had the reduction in the Governor's salary—which, however, does not take effect for some time—and we have had the Ministers' Salaries and Allowances Bill. But the total amount saved by these measures is really very trifling, and the main question of retrenchment has really not been touched yet: that has to come. I only hope the Government will carry out the pledges they have given to the House in this direction; and I think that our time would have been better occupied if we had had more time given us to consider the retrenchment proposals of the Government in detail. I fear that when these proposals come before us we shall not have an opportunity of giving them the attention that they demand; and I think, instead of wasting the time that undoubtedly has been wasted this session, if we had given full consideration to this question we should have been doing more valuable work. Now, Sir, with regard to the present loan proposals, I must say that I have been very much surprised at the absence of criticism of the borrowing proposals of the Government. The policy of the Government may be divided into three heads—their retrenchment policy, their borrowing policy, and their taxation policy. In respect to their retrenchment policy, both sides of the House were willing to assist them in carrying that out; but, when we come to the borrowing proposals of the Government, I must say I have thought it most extraordinary that so few honourable members should have risen to oppose that policy; and I have been amusing myself this evening with turning up two or three election speeches, and I will ask the

Mr. Mills

House to listen to them for a few minutes, to show what I consider the inconsistency of certain honourable members. I shall, first of all, begin with the honourable member for Eden. He is the author of the Public Works Statement which is now before us; and in turning up his speech I find the following:—

"He [the Minister for Public Works] had always voted against the borrowing system but once, when it was absolutely necessary. Their present indebtedness was £34,000,000, and he thought that at present the colony would rest. The Premier [referring to Sir Robert Stout] evidently thought differently, for he said in a recent speech that he was in favour of another two-million loan. This was said to be for the completion of the Otago Central and Helensville North Railways. Well, much as he would like to see the Helensville North Railway done, he felt that he could not give his support to such a loan.—(A Voice: 'Sorry for that.')—Yes, and so was he, for he believed that line would be the saving of Auckland, for it would open up some really excellent land. Still, he thought that they should not borrow any more until they could pay the interest of the loan from the ordinary revenue without increasing the burdens of the people. No doubt the time would arrive when that could be done."

Now, it seems to me that when the honourable gentleman gets into office he plays a different tune altogether. I am not going to read any more speeches, but I will mention the following honourable members as members who have been the most strong in their advocacy of retrenchment during the late elections. We have the honourable members for Dunedin East, Caversham, Selwyn, Ponsonby, Wairoa, Ashley, Gladstone, and Mount Ida—who are now loud in their demands for further borrowing, or rather, I should say, silent in their opposition to it. I do not say that each of these honourable members I have named goes so far as some of the advocates do. I hear the member for Ashley protesting; but, if the honourable member would like me to quote him verbatim, I can do so.

Major ATKINSON.—We would rather have the proof another day.

Mr. PERCEVAL.—I do not wish to do the honourable gentleman any injustice. What he said was this: "Any further borrowing was not necessary, and on works of this kind would meet with his strongest opposition." He was referring to the Otago Central Railway and the railway north of Auckland. "The time had arrived to cease borrowing."

Mr. PEARSON.—May I ask what paper that is reported in?

Mr. PERCEVAL.—This is from the paper which gave its strongest support to the honourable member for Ashley—the *Press* newspaper.

Mr. PEARSON.—That is not a correct report.

Mr. PERCEVAL.—I am well pleased to give the honourable member an opportunity of denying it. We have been told to-night by a great many honourable members that if we stop

borrowing we shall inflict a very great injustice on the people of the colony. What I want to know is this: whether our public-works policy is to develop the works of the colony, or whether it is to be another means of distributing charitable aid. Honourable members seem to rely on it to provide work for the "unemployed." This, I contend, is a wrong view to take of the public-works policy; and, if it is the right view, we ought to stop it at once. We shall have to stop some time, and shall have to face the matter, and the sooner we face it the better. But it seems to me that it would have been much better if the Government, seeing the present difficulty in which the colony is, and seeing that we are to meet early next year, had said, "We will only carry out existing engagements and complete the contracts now in hand during this year." We should then have had an opportunity of criticizing the retrenchment proposals of the Government, and of testing further the paying capacity of many of these lines, because I feel assured that very many of these lines should never have been undertaken; and if you go through the papers which have been furnished by the department they seem to show this: that the farther the line is open the less it pays. There are some lines, undoubtedly, that cannot pay until they are completed; but it does not seem at all correct to say the farther you go with a line the more it pays. Now with regard to the construction of railways by means of land-grants. A good deal of our attention has been taken up with this topic; and I should like to say this: that, if we were in a different position, there would have been no stronger opponent of this system than I myself should have been; but, looking at the present circumstances of the colony, I really think it the best means of constructing some of our lines; and I shall be only too pleased to see the North Island Main Trunk line and the Otago Central line constructed on the principle of land-grants. The honourable member who spoke last made a suggestion, which I think is deserving of some notice, as to raising a small loan in the colony. If it could be done, I think it would be an excellent thing; but I think the honourable member for Port Chalmers is too sanguine in his expectations. I do not think there is money available in the colony at the present time for this purpose. I feel certain the loan would not be taken up with such readiness as he anticipates. I intend, Sir, to vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin Central, because it is in accord with my election-pledges that I should vote for the least possible amount of borrowing. There are, certainly, lines in the colony which must be made. There is the line between Woodville and Palmerston—I consider that a line which cannot be delayed; and there may be one or two other lines which may be in the same position. I feel perfectly satisfied of this: that there are several lines in the schedule which we should not proceed with further; and I hope that when we get into Committee of Supply we shall have an opportunity of

cutting out some of those lines. It seems to me that the course pursued by the proposer of this amendment is a proper course. It is very much wiser, in my estimation, to say, first of all, "We will only borrow so much; we think the colony cannot afford to borrow more than a certain amount, and then we will consider the works which would pay the best to construct." This seems to me to be the proper plan. I think we should do more justice to the colony by following such a course as this than by following the system proposed of considering the various works proposed in Committee, and then lessening the loan by the amount of the reductions. The reason I propose to support this amendment is this: that it is only natural that honourable members should put their heads together to assist each other to get the works they want. I think this is an invitation to "log-roll;" that is the right word, I think. It seems to me to be an invitation to this course, and that has been the ruin of the colony in the past. There is one point which I wish to lay stress upon. It is that there is no doubt that this is the worst time we can go on the market, and, as the Premier himself says in his Financial Statement,—

"If the House should so determine, it will be possible with the money at our disposal to find the funds to carry on necessary works to a moderate extent by borrowing from one Account in aid of the funds exhausted in another. And by doing this, and limiting our public-works expenditure to an average of £70,050 a month for the next fifteen months, which, I am informed, it can be gradually worked down to—as compared with an average of £97,000 a month, which it has been during the last twelve months—namely, from the end of September, 1886, to the end of September, 1887—it will be possible to find the means of carrying on our public works until the end of December, 1888."

To draw from one Account to assist another is certainly rather a pernicious system; but I think that, in the present circumstances of the country, it is better to do that and to postpone the floating of this loan for the present time, for it can only be floated with disastrous results to the country.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I regret to say that I am unable to support the amendment moved by the honourable member for Dunedin Central, although I am against borrowing, because that amendment does not fix the period over which the loan is to be spread. If the mover will make it £500,000, and no more borrowing for three years, I will support him. I think a million is more than this House should sanction, and I see no reason why a number of these small lines should be continued. For instance, I see no reason why the Helensville Railway should be continued at the present time. About £50,000 was granted out of the 1886 loan to that work, and yet we have it proposed that this line should receive an allocation out of the present loan, simply to form it some eight miles more; and it follows that, if we carry out this proposal, in the course of

three years it will be necessary to raise a further sum for supplying this railway with rails and rolling-stock. I think that line might very well stand over, so far as further extension is concerned, for the present. Then, again, we have a line going up to Rotorua. That line had some £93,000 out of the 1886 loan, and now a further allocation is asked for it. It is astonishing to me that we should be asked to push on lines going through very indifferent country or opening up Native lands. Then, we have a further proposal to extend a line in the Blenheim district, though, I think, our experience of lines in that part of the colony shows us that the expenditure brings in no return. There is already in existence a Blenheim-Pictou line, on which £198,000 has been spent, and, calculating we have to pay 4½ per cent. for the money expended on that line, it yields us so little in return that we lose actually £8,900 per annum over that little line. Last year we only received back from that line towards paying interest on its cost about £98, or 11d. per cent. It seems to me a strange thing that, while the Government are passing a Bill creating a non-political Board of Management, in order to get better returns from our railways, they should proceed to construct lines which every one must know must be unproductive. Then, we have another instance in the case of a line running to Taranaki, upon which we lose £50,000 a year. If our non-political Board is to be of any use at all we must turn over a new leaf in connection with the construction of our railways, and decide not to make any lines which will not bring us in, say, 2½ per cent. on the outlay; because a non-political Board cannot be successful if new lines are constructed which will never pay. It may exercise its power in a wrong way by trying to reduce the rate of wages paid to the people who are working on the lines, and at the same time increase the price charged for carrying goods. I think this proposed loan ought to be reduced, and, though I shall support the second reading of the Bill, I shall in Committee move that certain proposed items of expenditure be lessened. I hope that the Premier will assist us as far as possible in reducing this amount. That is the object I have in supporting the second reading of this Bill. The honourable member for Port Chalmers expressed very clearly the sentiments which I intended to express as regards the Government. I agree with most of their policy; but I do not consider that the Land Act is a wise measure. I have my doubts about that measure. I am afraid that under it we shall have large blocks taken up by monopolists, and that we shall find we have begun upon a course which will not be very satisfactory in its results to the colony. The land ought not to be sold in such large blocks.

Mr. TAYLOR.—The honourable member for Christchurch South has referred to a speech made by the Minister for Public Works. It is something to this effect: that at the elections the Minister for Public Works did not consider it was absolutely necessary to have a further loan. It is quite true that he may not have

considered it absolutely necessary at that time, but he was not then on the Government benches. What was considered absolutely unnecessary then may be absolutely necessary now. That is where the distinction comes in. I do not mean to say that the Minister for Public Works did not express his views honestly and fairly; but we all know that circumstances alter cases, and that what might have been very undesirable in a certain set of circumstances is very desirable now. That is what it amounts to. I have listened to the speeches of several members of this House to-night, and all I can say is this: that, so far as I am personally concerned, I should not like to be in their position. They speak one way—and what are they going to do? They are going to walk out of the House; they are not going to vote. They denounce the proposals of the Government, and yet they are going to swallow the leak. I think that it is a position in which no honourable gentleman should place himself.

Mr. HOBBS.—Oh!

Mr. TAYLOR.—The honourable member for the Bay of Islands says "Oh!" No doubt he is an intellectual and intelligent gentleman, but I have not yet heard him say one word with reference to the Government proposals. I am not certain that he is not pledged to a non-borrowing policy. We do not know. Sir, he is too astute to let us know what he was really pledged to; therefore I trust that we shall hear from him before the close of the debate. I regret extremely the action of the honourable member for Mount Ida. I have great respect for that honourable gentleman, but I can have no respect for a man who speaks one way and is not prepared to give his vote in the direction in which he speaks. I know that the Government have an absolute majority, but we have honourable members supporting them who are in a very peculiar position. I do hope that when they go before the people they will be able to justify themselves for the vote that they are giving to-night. If a public man is not prepared to stick to his opinions I do not think much of him; and I am afraid that we have a good many men in this House who have not the courage of their opinions. I can only say this: that so long as I have a seat in this House you will not find me blindly following the lead of any Government. It is all very well for the Premier to smile, as I see he is smiling. I noticed that when the honourable member for Mount Ida was speaking this evening the Premier smiled just as he did the other night when the honourable member for Mount Ida was going back from his word. The Premier, no doubt, says of that gentleman, "He may speak strongly against us, but when he is wanted he will vote for us." But are these the kind of supporters that the Premier places confidence in? Why, they may smile the other way to-morrow. I believe that no party is safe when it is kept in office by honourable gentlemen of that character. The honourable member for Caversham was quite as bad as the honourable member for Mount Ida. He does not like these proposals, but I know he is not

Mr. T. Mackenzie



going to vote in favour of the amendment. What a nice state of things we are coming to, when we find honourable gentlemen who do not like the financial proposals of the Government, who do not want to borrow, and yet have not the courage to vote against those proposals! I am going to vote in favour of the amendment of the honourable member for Dunedin Central, because I vote upon principle, and it is monstrous to me to conceive that any honourable gentleman should act as some are doing. I have never spoken one way and voted another; nor am I going to talk palaver of that kind. I am sorry the Premier sighs. I suppose he is getting tired and weary.

Major ATKINSON.—I am thinking of the estimates. We shall only have about two hours on the estimates to-night.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I understood the estimates were not coming on to-night. Of course we know that the hour is late, and that we are getting rather too much, and especially when you consider the gentlemen reporting.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They have stopped reporting.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Well, you cannot wonder at it, because they are absolutely obliterating any political sense when honourable gentlemen talk one way and vote another. I hope the Minister of Justice is not getting angry.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Never mind him.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Well, he is not worth minding much, excepting when he has got a little Bill on the board.

Major ATKINSON.—I would ask the honourable gentleman to remember that the Speaker is in the chair, and that Ministers have an immense amount of work to do.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I have been subjected to continual interruptions by the prominent supporters of the Government, and I have yet to learn that the honourable member for the Bay of Islands has a monopoly of speech in this House: and if he had he would not instruct many honourable members. I do trust that none of these interruptions will recur. I will content myself by simply voting for the amendment, and I am sorry that by my remarks I should have caused that serious sigh.

The House divided on the question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

#### AYES, 34.

Anderson	Marchant	Seymour
Atkinson	McGregor	S.-Menteath
Beetham	McKenzie, J.	Tanner
Brown	Mills	Thompson, R.
Bruce	Mitchelson	Thompson, T.
Fergus	Moat	Turnbull
Graham	Monk	Wilson
Hobbs	Moss	Withy.
Jackson	Pearson	
Kelly	Ross	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lawry	Russell	Allen
Mackenzie, T.	Samuel	Barron.

#### NOES, 8.

Blake	Guinness	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duncan	Larnach	Fitchett
Goldie	Taylor.	Hutchison.

#### PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan	Grimmond
Cadman	Perceval
Carroll	Pratt
Cowan	Buxton
Dodson	Kerr
Fisher	Jones
Fitzherbert	Joyce
Hall	Ballance
Hamlin	Loughrey
Hislop	Reeves, W. P.
Izard	Walker
Macarthur	O'Callaghan
Mackenzie, M. J. S.	Vogel
Newman	Lance
O'Connor	Fraser
Ormond	Feldwick
Seddon	Stewart, W. D.
Richardson, G. F.	Levestam
Smith	Steward, W. J.
Taipua	Fish
Taiwhanga	Grey
Valentine	Reeves, R. H. J.
Whyte.	Richardson, E.

Majority for, 26.

Word retained, and Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past two o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 16th December, 1887.

Second Readings—Third Readings—Culverden-Hammer Plains Road—Mangopapa and Mangoiira Blocks—Divisions—Joint House Committee—Wellington College and Girls' High School Bill—Native Land Administration Act Repeal Bill—Land Bill—Wairarapa North County Council Empowering Bill—Oamaru Harbour Board Loan Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

#### PRAYERS.

#### SECOND READINGS.

Otago Harbour Board Bill, Pukekohe Borough Bill.

#### THIRD READINGS.

Civil Service Reform Bill, Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill, Christchurch Hospital Bill, Christchurch Drainage Board Reserves Sale and Exchange Bill, Building Societies Bill.

#### CULVERDEN-HAMMER PLAINS ROAD.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK asked the Government, If they will take such steps as may cause the road from Culverden to the Hammer Plains Hot-springs to be placed in fair order, so that the springs may be made use of by the public without undergoing torture to reach them? He might say that he had recently visited these springs, and had found great difficulty in getting to them. It was a difficult matter even

for persons in good health, much more therefore for invalids. He believed if the Government could manage to do as he had requested they would enhance the railway revenue and increase the revenue derived from the baths themselves.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said that, the Christchurch Labour Bureau having stated that this work was suitable for some of the "unemployed" to be employed upon, the following steps had been taken: The Minister for Public Works had authorised the expenditure of a moderate sum to improve the road, and steps would be taken at once to have that work proceeded with. He could hardly undertake to say whether the amount to be expended on the road would be sufficient to obviate travellers being put to the torture referred to in the question; but, at all events, it was hoped that it might alleviate their sufferings.

#### MANGOPAPA AND MANGOIRA BLOCKS.

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND, in moving the motion standing in his name, said the document he asked for referred to a matter which was a portion of the subject of two petitions which were now before a Select Committee of the Council. He would not detain the Council with going into details upon the subject; but he desired to press the motion, because the document was of so peculiar a nature, and it appeared on the face of it to be so thoroughly irregular, that he thought it would be expedient that the Council should have before it a sample of the style of administration which prevailed, he believed, to a large extent in the Native Land Court. He begged to move the motion standing in his name.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND begged to second the motion. Only that morning, before the Public Petitions Committee, a petition was under consideration which alleged that certificates had been improperly granted by Chief Judge Macdonald in a certain case. He thought that, considering that the third reading of a Bill would come on before the Council presently which, if passed, would legalise the transactions complained of, it was necessary that honourable members should have copies of all these certificates before them; and he hoped the Council would not allow the Bill to be read a third time until this matter had been properly cleared up.

Motion made, and question put, "*That there be laid on the table copies of all certificates granted by Chief Judge Macdonald under sections 24 and 25 of 'The Native Land Administration Act, 1886,' relating to the Mangopapa and Mangoira Blocks, Mokau; and of all documents on which such certificates were founded.*"

—(Hon. Mr. RICHMOND.)

Motion agreed to.

#### DIVISIONS.

The Hon. Captain BAILLIE, in moving the resolution standing in his name, said he thought it was desirable that a different system of recording votes in divisions of the Council should be adopted. The proposal which he

now brought forward was not a new one, because in August, 1873, he tabled a resolution to almost the same effect. It had been brought to the notice of the Council within the last two or three days that there had been some error in the record of the votes of honourable members. Such blunders should not be placed on record in the Journals of the Council. In the Imperial Parliament during divisions members passed to the right or left of the chamber, as the Speaker directed. In Canada there was a departure from this method which might perhaps meet the convenience of members of the Council. That was, the Speaker or Chairman of Committees for the time being directed the "Ayes" to stand, and during that time the Clerks at the table took down the names of the members. Then the Speaker directed the "Noes" to stand, and their votes were similarly recorded; and the Clerk, having completed the lists and counted the numbers, handed the lists to the Speaker. Perhaps that system might meet the views of the Council. At all events, he would beg to move the motion which appeared in his name.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND seconded the motion. He thought there might be one inconvenience in the latter method referred to by the Hon. Captain Baillie. Suppose honourable members were called upon to stand, and one honourable gentleman was unable to stand—an honourable gentleman might be physically incapable of rising to his feet. He knew of an honourable member who had come into the Council Chamber on crutches; so that that method might be rather inconvenient in some cases.

Motion made, and question proposed, "*That the divisions in this Council should in future be taken in the same manner as in the Upper House of the English Parliament, namely, the members should pass to the right and left of the Chair, as may be directed by the Hon. the Speaker or by the Hon. the Chairman of Committees.*"—(Hon. Captain BAILLIE.)

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER thought the proposal of the honourable member would be an inconvenient one. There were two methods of taking divisions in Canada—one method adopted in the Senate, and the other in the House of Commons, as it was called there. Perhaps the method adopted in the House of Commons in Canada would be better than that recommended by the Hon. Captain Baillie; and he proposed, *That all the words after the word "taken" be omitted, with the view of inserting the words "by members rising in their seats."* That was a simple method. When the "Ayes" were called the honourable members voting with the "Ayes" would rise in their seats, and the Clerks would take down the names. A similar method would be adopted in recording the votes for the "Noes." This method would not put honourable members to inconvenience, and then they would always have accurate division-lists. It was entirely the fault of honourable members themselves when errors occurred at present, because he noticed that

Hon. Mr. Peacock

some honourable members never spoke out. There were some few who did; and he himself always endeavoured to make himself heard on all occasions. If all honourable members did the same the present difficulty would not have arisen. The best system to adopt, he thought, would be that in force in the Canadian Assembly, where members, on the voices being called, rose in their seats.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN did not think the Council ought to alter the present mode of procedure in taking a division, as it was a very simple mode, as was proved by the fact that whilst it had been in use only one mistake had taken place. Such a mistake was not likely to occur again, and he noticed in a division that day that honourable members had spoken out more loudly than before. He thought it was a pity to alter the present system, which had been found a very satisfactory one, and he hoped that both the motion and the amendment would be thrown out.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL thought it would be well for the Council, before giving way to a sudden impulse on the part of the Chairman of Committees, to adopt in this Chamber a method of taking divisions similar to that which existed in the other Chamber. He would remark that under the present system, which had existed for fourteen years, he had only seen one mistake.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Two.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL granted that there were two, though he did not know of more than one. The present method was so simple that he noticed the last division had been taken in two minutes and forty seconds; and he objected to the "hugger-mugger style" suggested by the Chairman of Committees, of hustling honourable members away into corners in order to take their votes. The suggestion of the Attorney-General might be better, but it was rather a school-boy way of taking a division. But it should be insisted upon that honourable gentlemen should give their answer in a loud tone of voice. He had actually known a Ministry to be thrown out simply from the accident of one weak-minded member rushing into the wrong lobby to ask a friend of his how he was going to vote. This was how the Stafford Ministry, in 1861, came to grief; and this incident showed the uncertainty which would ensue from altering the present style, which was plain and straightforward.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER thought that the present system was capable of being made quite good enough if honourable members would give their votes in an audible tone of voice; but he much preferred the suggestion of the Chairman of Committees to that made by the Hon. Sir F. Whitaker. It appeared to him that if they adopted the plan proposed in the amendment there would be a great liability to mistake, as when the "Ayes" were taken down, and the "Noes" were called upon to stand up, some of them might retain their seats; and there would thus be a greater chance of making a mistake than under the present system, or that which was proposed by

the Hon. Captain Baillie. He thought there was a disadvantage, however, in connection with the present mode of taking votes, because the Clerk always commenced on the same side of the chamber, giving members on the other side of the chamber an opportunity of seeing which way the voting was going.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL thought the honourable gentleman ought not to impute motives, and he believed that he was referring to him in what he had said. It seemed to be thought that he would vote in fun; but in the whole course of his experience he had never associated fun with anything he had done. He gave that assurance most solemnly to the Council, and he always gave his vote with a proper understanding of the question, as far as he could appreciate it, and with a distinct desire of expressing his vote according to his opinions.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER disclaimed any intention of imputing motives to the honourable gentleman.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said he thought the honourable member did not quite apprehend the nature of the proposal he had made. This proposal was that the names should be taken precisely as they were now, but, in order that there should be no mistakes in recording the votes, instead of sitting an honourable member should stand whilst giving his vote. A Bill was lost the other day simply through a mistake of the Clerk in not catching which way a vote was given; and the method proposed would not retard business any more than the present system.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS suggested that, if this system were adopted, in many cases members might retain their seats in both cases, and not give their votes with either the "Ayes" or the "Noes." He had seen that done in the other branch of the Legislature, where members had been lying down in their seats and had afterwards been called upon to record their votes. Such a thing might happen if this system were adopted in this Council. He did not see, however, what harm there would be done by adopting the motion, as it would be a great advantage for honourable members to go boldly forward and record their votes. He trusted that the method would be adopted, as it would do away with the practice which was followed now, of certain honourable members counting the votes as they were given, and giving their own votes accordingly.

The Hon. Captain FRASER would have much pleasure in supporting the motion. He pointed out that sometimes honourable members were apparently asleep, and had to be roused up in order to give their votes under the present system.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK said, if the resolution were carried, he did not know how they were going to give effect to it, nor did he think that there was room enough in the Council Chamber to carry out the plan suggested. He preferred the plan suggested by the Hon. Sir F. Whitaker; but he thought it would be a mistake to alter the present system, as it would lead to confusion.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES said it was easy for the Council to insist that members should give their votes in a loud tone; but he thought any change would not be for the better, such as this that had been proposed. In his opinion it was a matter for surprise that so few mistakes had occurred in the past.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER thought the amendment of the Hon. the Attorney-General would simply result in nothing. It was all very well to say that honourable members must stand up; but they knew very well that standing up would very soon degenerate into a sort of gesture, by which not a great amount of space would be seen between the honourable member and his seat; and it would be practically giving the votes as at present. He thought the fact that there had been only one or two mistakes up to the present time was sufficient to induce them to continue the present system, instead of making such a great deal of fuss about nothing. With regard to the order of voting, from his experience in the Council he did not think it mattered which side voted first; and he believed in his own mind that every honourable member voted according to his conscience.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE thought the mistakes which were made were more numerous than some honourable members might have any idea of. If honourable members had noticed the way in which some gave their votes they would notice that in many cases it was impossible to catch the voice; and he had frequently taken down the list of the division as the votes were recorded, and found that in many cases his return was altogether different from that of the Clerk, though in some cases it accorded with the Clerk's.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD asked the ruling of the Hon. the Speaker as to whether the Standing Orders would not have to be altered if this motion were carried. The motion as it stood would amount to a sessional order, and would cease to operate at the prorogation.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said there was no doubt, if the motion were carried, it would have to be followed up by a notice to amend the Standing Orders.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD pointed out that honourable members would only be in session for a few days longer, and if they adopted this practice their experience would be too short to enable them to decide whether they should continue it next session or not. It had been pointed out that the present mode was full of uncertainties; but this arose from the comparatively inaudible manner in which honourable members gave their votes. If they spoke out there would be no difficulty. He might say there had been a distinct misrepresentation as to what was done the other day in reference to the vote given by the Hon. Major Wahawaha. It had been said that the honourable gentleman had made a mistake in giving his vote; but he did nothing of the kind. The honourable member voted rightly, but he was not taken down correctly. He (Mr. Shephard) thought it was right to say that the honourable

gentleman did not make a mistake, but that the mistake was made in the record of the Clerk.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR agreed that the method adopted at present was a very simple and correct one, as was evidenced by the fact that only one mistake had been committed under it. This question was discussed some years ago, when the Council decided to take the divisions in the present convenient form. If they were to go into the lobby, one member would follow another; and, as to taking their votes in their present order of rotation, he pointed out that members changed their places every session, sometimes sitting on one side of the room and sometimes on the other. Therefore he did not think any advantage would be derived from altering this system.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN thought there was no doubt that this change was required. The Hon. Mr. Mantell had said that during the time he had been in the Council there had been only two mistakes. These were those which had been discovered, but there were probably many which had not been discovered. He thought the remedy rested entirely with members themselves. If they gave instructions to the Clerk to ask an honourable member to repeat his vote when he was in doubt, the difficulty would be got over. For his part, if an honourable member in future did not give his vote more distinctly, he himself would ask that it should be repeated.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON gave every credit for the way in which divisions had hitherto been taken, and he must confess that he had often wondered that the Clerk had been able to carry out the work so correctly. He made it a rule, as far as he could, to count the votes as they were given, and, on referring to the Clerk's returns, he found that his own counting coincided exactly with those returns. In this particular case, with regard to the vote of the Hon. Major Wahawaha, there was no doubt that the vote was given in an undertone, and it was very difficult to hear it, though he had heard it himself. If there was any necessity for a change, they should appoint scrutineers and check each vote, as was done in the other Chamber. In his opinion, the standing-up system would still leave an opening to error, because they could not say how the vote given was recorded on paper, and it was quite possible it might be wrong. He did not think that the fact that it was recorded in a certain way on paper was a proof that there was no error.

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON thought that there would be any amount of check in the system proposed. With reference to the Ministry being last, he would suggest that next year the Clerk should begin with the Ministers, and call the names on that side first—that was, if it was decided that no change should take place. But, for his part, he would vote for the change indicated in the motion.

The Hon. the SPEAKER could not help thinking that a very great advantage would accrue to the Council if they adopted what he might call a more open manner of voting, and

consented to put themselves to the inconvenience of going into the lobbies in giving their votes.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES thought the great object to be gained was to have a correct record. The present difficulty had arisen from the fact that the vote of one honourable member was incorrectly heard. If they attained a system by which the votes would be taken down correctly, they would attain all they wanted. He had been surprised that more errors had not occurred in taking the votes, and the Hon. Mr. Mantell had stated that only one error occurred during the last fourteen years. It appeared that in 1873, through an error having occurred, the Chairman of Committees made a spasmodic attempt to alter the mode of procedure, as on the present occasion. It was suggested that the Clerk should repeat the members' votes, and then there would be less hazard of the record being incorrect. The Council would see that it would be a mistake to hurry into a change of the mode of procedure; even if a majority of the Council, or a large section, should think some alteration was required, it would be a very great mistake to act hurriedly in the way now proposed, and to make this alteration. But if it was desirable to alter the practice which had been in operation for the last thirty years, he thought the matter ought to be relegated to a Committee to consider and report upon. He should vote against both motion and amendment.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND thought that some honourable members were too far away from the Clerk to insure perfect accuracy in the recording of the votes; and, if it were not *infra dig.* for the Clerk, he would suggest that that officer should get up and walk round the chamber, and take the votes, when he would be able to hear each member more distinctly.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT said the cause of the mistakes existed in this: that honourable members were ashamed of the votes they gave, and were afraid to give them in a manly, straightforward manner.

The Council divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

#### AYES, 18.

Baillie	Lahmann	Scotland
Brett	Mantell	Shephard
Fraser	Menzies	Swanson
Hart	Oliver	Taiaroa
Holmes	Pharazyn	Wahawaha
Johnson	Reynolds	Waterhouse.

#### NOES, 15.

Barnicoat	Kenny	Peter
Bonar	Martin	Richmond
Buckley	McLean	Stevens
Chamberlin	Miller	Whitaker
Dignan	Peacock	Williams.

Majority against, 3.

Amendment negatived.

The Council divided on the question, "That the motion as printed be agreed to."

#### AYES, 10.

Baillie	Reynolds	Taiaroa
Brett	Scotland	Wahawaha
Fraser	Swanson	Waterhouse.
Oliver		

#### NOES, 23.

Barnicoat	Kenny	Peter
Bonar	Lahmann	Pharazyn
Buckley	Mantell	Richmond
Chamberlin	Martin	Shephard
Dignan	McLean	Stevens
Hart	Menzies	Whitaker
Holmes	Miller	Williams.
Johnson	Peacock	

Majority against, 13.

Motion negatived.

#### JOINT HOUSE COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Captain BAILLIE said he brought up a report of the Joint House Committee on the previous day. That report recommended that honourable members residing within twelve miles of Wellington should be the Joint House Committee during the recess, and that the Hon. Mr. Mantell be the convener. He begged to move, *That the report be agreed to.*

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL moved, *That the words "and that the Hon. Mr. Mantell be the convener" be struck out.* It would be perfectly useless to appoint a convener who would not convene; and such an office was not a desirable one to fill at any time. He would be unable to attend to the business of the House Committee during the recess; and he thought it would be much better to leave it to the House Committee to elect their own Chairman. He hoped the honourable the mover would withdraw that part of the motion. If the House Committee chose to elect him Chairman, well and good; but he did not like to be put into the position by order of the Council.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES thought the motion should be adopted, as it had been so heretofore. At the beginning of the present session an investigation was made into the affairs of Bellamy's, and it was found that there were a great many persons who had not paid up their accounts. It was also apparent that there was a deficiency in the revenue, and that a large amount of money had not been paid. Such a state of things should not be allowed to exist in a place of that kind. There were a great many honourable members who usually boarded at Bellamy's, and there was considerable revenue derived from this establishment. Bellamy's got coals, house-room, gas, and some of their servants for nothing; yet they could not make both ends meet. He thought the management of Bellamy's must be exceedingly defective, or such a state of things could not exist. He considered, therefore, that the House Committee should be required, at the end of every session, to send in an account of the transactions of the year, and show precisely how the different funds of that establishment stood, and who owed money, and what was due to Bellamy's. It had been found at the beginning of the session that there was a large overdraft

at the Bank of New Zealand, and a considerable sum of money was due to Messrs. Cockburn and Campbell. He was happy to say that the little he had done had assisted in putting the matter to some extent right again, and that shortly after the commencement of the session nearly, if not all, the amounts then owing were paid. There was no difficulty in keeping this matter straight. It only required a little business capacity, and he thought some one should be on the Committee who would insist on a proper management of Bellamy's.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN said that at the last meeting of the Joint House Committee an arrangement was proposed in order to put the matter on a more businesslike footing. He had no doubt that, if these proposals were carried out, it would be found that next session the expense in connection with Bellamy's would be considerably less, the profits would be larger, and the present debt would be paid off altogether.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND thought the management of Bellamy's ought to be very narrowly looked into. He remembered that in his second session he was called upon to contribute two guineas to make up a deficiency in connection with Bellamy's. A contract had been entered into that a man should cater for Bellamy's, and the House Committee wanted to get rid of him; so honourable gentlemen had to contribute two guineas all round in order that the Committee might get rid of that contractor. If this matter were not looked after very narrowly, one of these fine days honourable members would find themselves called upon to contribute five or ten guineas each in order to make up a serious deficiency, so as to prevent a claim being made on the country: and in times like the present he did not think that any House Committee would dare to propose to make the country pay it. Therefore honourable members would have to make up the deficiency, whatever it might be.

Motion agreed to.

#### WELLINGTON COLLEGE AND GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL BILL.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—Before proceeding to the orders of the day, I will give a ruling on a question which was referred to me by the Council. It was good enough to give me time till to-day to consider the matter. When, yesterday, the Hon. Mr. McLean brought under the notice of the Council that there had been an error in the division taken the day before, several honourable members expressed their opinions on the subject, and the Hon. Major Wahawaha was interrogated from the Chair, and he informed the Council that on the occasion in question he had given his vote with the "Ayes," whereas upon production of the division-list it appeared that he had been counted as having voted with the "Noes." If his vote had been recorded with the "Ayes" the Bill which was then under consideration would have passed by a majority of one, instead of being lost. I had then to consider how far that record should remain un-

challenged, or whether it was right that the minutes of the Council should be corrected. The general rule, which I had carefully to consider, is, undoubtedly, to this effect: that, upon the question being raised as to the accuracy of a division-list, it should be of essence that such objection should be taken there and then. But, upon the maturest reflection which I have been able to give to the subject, I have come to the conclusion that that principle rests upon the practice which, if not the universal, is the general method of taking divisions, and is a different method from that which exists in this Council. By the parliamentary method generally pursued there are different steps taken. There are persons who check, and there is a going-out into different lobbies; and the procedure is of that character that, if the accuracy of the division is not challenged there and then, it is taken for granted that it has gone by default, and no Speaker would open the question afterwards. But it is a very grave question whether that rule which is generally observed, and for very obviously good reasons—whether it ought to be pursued in this Council, where our method of taking divisions is different. If in reality it were adopted, then any error must remain an error, and there are no means of checking it. I considered very carefully the Standing Orders of this Council, and, although I am bound to confess, in some respects, some of our Standing Orders are perhaps not the most accurate definitions, nevertheless on this occasion I think there has been a sagacity shown that is not perhaps apparent in every case. Standing Order 79 is as follows: "In case of confusion or error concerning the numbers reported, unless the same can be otherwise corrected the Council will proceed to a second division." That is, there and then, when the error occurs, and attention is drawn to it, the Council gives its decision in another division. But then comes the other case: Standing Order No. 80 says, "If the numbers have been inaccurately reported, the Council, on being afterwards informed thereof, will order the Journals to be corrected." Now, we have before us this fact: It became obvious that an error had been made, and the division was so close that the fate of the Bill depended on how that vote was given. I have come to this conclusion on the matter: that the minutes of the Council have to be altered, and I shall give direction accordingly that the division-list shall be amended, and the name of Major Wahawaha placed with the "Ayes" instead of with the "Noes;" and I now instruct the Clerk of the Council to place on the Order Paper to-morrow this order: "That the Wellington College and Girls' High School Bill be now read the second time." That will be the question that will be brought before the Council, and it will be in precisely the same position in which it was when this error was made. I should do wrong and fail in my duty towards an officer of this Council if I did not bear my testimony on this occasion as to the accuracy with which the Clerk performs his duties in taking divisions; and I say, with the greatest respect, that the error has arisen en-

*Hon. Mr. Holmes*

tirely owing to the inaudible manner in which honourable members sometimes give their voices.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—Sir, before proceeding to the orders of the day, I would ask the permission of the Council to make an explanation of a personal character. I need scarcely remind honourable members of some facts in reference to this Bill. My attention has been drawn to a paragraph which appeared in a paper published this morning in the City of Wellington, to which I desire to call attention, especially as it affects myself in connection with the Bill which has been before the Council. The paragraph is as follows:—

“Seeing that the members of the Legislative Council are so very anxious just now to impress on the public the great value of their services, and the inadequacy of the reduced rate of payment now to be given by an ungrateful country for those services, it is a little unfortunate that they should have done such a foolish and unwarrantable thing as to throw out the Wellington Girls' High School Bill. It will not enhance the public admiration of the Legislative Council to learn that many of the Councillors spoke and voted against the Bill in manifest ignorance of the merits of the case, and that the Bill was lost not by a direct vote, but through the mistake of a new Maori Councillor, who was unacquainted with the procedure, and inadvertently voted on the wrong side. Nor will it enhance the local appreciation of the Wellington representatives in that Chamber to know that no fewer than five of them—Messrs. Buckley, Martin, Grace, Hart, and Waterhouse—voted against the Bill; although, to their credit be it said, Mr. Randall Johnson and Mr. Pharazyn supported it. Neither will it greatly raise people's opinion of Mr. Buckley's consistency to see that he helped to throw out a Bill which was approved and virtually fathered by the late Ministry, of which he was a member. Indeed, he may be said to have practically defeated his own Bill, seeing that, had he voted for it, it would have been carried in spite of Major Wahawaha's blunder. As, however, that blunder is undisputed, and the Speaker confesses to some doubt as to his course of action, we trust he will give the Bill the benefit of the doubt, and not allow it to be destroyed through a mere inadvertence on the part of a new member.”

If it had not been for the respect which I have for the proprietor of that paper, whose large-heartedness, I know, is such that he is incapable of reflecting on any member of this Council personally, I should probably have made this a question of privilege. I think I need not go far to find out the writer of that paragraph; and the wonder is, he did not finish with some eulogium on himself.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who is he?

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I would rather not mention the name. I should like to explain my action in connection with the Bill in question. The Hon. Dr. Grace was good enough to call attention to the fact that he

endeavoured to persuade the Council not to pass the measure which caused the beginning of this trouble. He referred to the fact that there had been a violation of the rights of the citizens of Wellington in depriving them of an endowment to which they were entitled. I refer to the Special Powers and Contracts Act. I was surprised to find that in the schedule to that Act there was no mention whatever of the subject-matter of this Bill—that is, the land on which the Girls' High School has been erected—but on closer examination of the Act itself I find that the 6th clause of the Special Powers and Contracts Act, giving the Governors of the Wellington College possession of the land, referred to a piece of land under the provisions of an Act passed in 1878. Now, Sir, my object in calling attention to this Special Powers and Contracts Act is this—and I shall not detain the Council very long in doing so: I find that in 1885 this land was given to the Governors of the Wellington College, and I find shortly afterwards also that a mortgage of a very elaborate character was prepared and executed at the instance of the Governors, to enable them to raise funds for the purpose of erecting a girls' high school on the land. I was handed this mortgage to examine to-day, and I may explain to the Council that I never had an opportunity of seeing it before, although the newspapers say that I was the father of this Bill. I find that the mortgage was executed in December, 1886, and was prepared by the solicitor to the Board of College Governors, who is probably one of the best conveyancers in the colony. It was specially prepared in accordance with the law which then existed, and the Act which enabled it to be done was the Public Bodies' Leaseholds Act of 1886; and special attention was given to the execution of the mortgage. Powers were given by which the parties could mortgage the land, and the amounts of the lands referred to and anything else for the purpose were indicated. The land consisted of 2,974 acres and 5 perches; it was mortgaged for the purpose of erecting a girls' high school; and these lands were given to the Board for college grounds by the Special Powers and Contracts Act. Upon reading this mortgage, I find there is in it a special provision that the Governors shall have no personal liability, as far as they are concerned, and that they shall have the same powers as were given under the Act to which I have referred. By the power given to the mortgagees they may enter on the premises and account to the College Governors for any deficiency or any profits of which they may be possessed. When they are pressed for money a Bill is introduced, and I find a statement has been made to the effect that this mortgage had received the sanction of the late Government. I say in my place that it never received the sanction of the Government as a Government; but the Minister of Education approved of the mortgage, as any one would have done; and he was only acting within the four corners of the law, as I stated at that time. The mortgage bears on its face the approval of the late Minister of Educa-

tion—the Hon. Sir Robert Stout—and nothing more; and I say he had every right to approve it, because it did not violate the provisions of the existing law. Sir, this was not a public or a Government Bill. I refused to introduce it; and the Hon. Mr. Reynolds—my colleague—undertook to take it up. I do not agree with the Bill; and I did not agree with the view of my colleagues in regard to the present system of education. I never have agreed to it, and I never will; and I am not going to alter my views in regard to this system in order to satisfy anybody. The present mortgage, as I have said, strictly came within the four corners of the law; but it was found impossible to pass the Bill, and a new one was introduced, with a certain amount of padding which I think was not at all necessary. In the action I took on this occasion I was only doing my duty in trying to prevent what was a violation of the law; and I voted against the Bill. I will not give way to any man in this Council in my desire to assist education; and, while I voted against the Bill, I trust I shall be acquitted of having any interest in taking the action which I have taken.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I think it is right to call the attention of the Council to one feature of this mortgage which my honourable friend has neglected to mention; and, in doing so, I have not the least desire to suggest that my honourable friend has wished to suppress anything whatever. I think it is right—

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The honourable member is out of order. He will have an opportunity of making any remarks he may have to make later on.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—Then I will take the opportunity of making the remarks which I have to make when the time comes.

#### NATIVE LAND ADMINISTRATION ACT REPEAL BILL.

On the motion for the third reading of this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND said,—I wish to ask the honourable member if he is really going on with the third reading of this Bill. I would point out that the petition which has been referred to this afternoon has gone to the Native Affairs Committee, and it is really necessary that we should know the report of that Committee upon the petition before the Bill is proceeded with further. I think it would be a great injustice to go on with the third reading at once.

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND.—I wish to ask my honourable friend the Attorney-General—who is in charge of the Native Land Administration Bill—to grant as much delay in the third reading as may enable me to confer with him to ascertain whether anything can be introduced into the Bill to protect persons interested.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who are they?

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND.—Mr. Owen and the Mokau Coal Company: to protect such persons against any retrospective action that may be confirmatory of the certificates referred to in the petition before this House

as having been granted by Chief Judge Macdonald, without the authority of law, in favour of one Neville Walker in respect to some land on the Mokau River. I ought to state there is no power under the Act, or anywhere else that I am aware of, for granting a rehearing in this case, and it is one which, upon the face of the document of which I have a copy, absolutely requires a rehearing in the interests of the Court itself.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I would gladly comply with the request of my honourable friend, but the time at our disposal to get this Bill to the other House is so short that I firmly believe that such a step would lose the Bill altogether. I have examined the petition of the persons mentioned. I will confer with the honourable gentleman, and, if there is anything to be protected, I shall be glad that the Government should take the necessary steps with this object in the other House.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I would ask the same in regard to Mr. Owen's petition, which was received to-day. I understand there was a distinct pledge that no legislation should take place this session which would affect any claims of this kind.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—The petitioner withdrew his claim.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I understand that he did so in consequence of the promise I refer to.

Bill read a third time.

#### LAND BILL.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—In introducing this Bill to the notice of the Council, I think I shall be best consulting the wishes of honourable members if I avoid going into minute details of the Bill, and confine myself to the larger principles and the more important clauses in the measure.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Possibly, I may be allowed to mention that it has been usual, heretofore, to take the discussion after the Bill has come from the Waste Lands Committee.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I think, Sir, it was quite the other way. The Government have thought that the time has come when every facility should be given, within reasonable limits, and without in any measure tending to an injurious system of land-acquirement, when all unnecessary restrictions should be removed as far as they can be; and that the greatest facilities should be afforded that we can offer for the settlement by people of the lands of the colony. Sir, the Government, in making proposals which they think will tend in this direction, do not propose anything of a revolutionary character as regards the land-systems in force. At the same time, I must say that the proposals they make do more or less make important changes in the direction I have spoken of. Sir, honourable members must have observed that for some considerable time past the land revenue has been gradually diminishing. This fact has become only too apparent, and it has appeared to us

*Hon. Mr. Buckley*



advisable that, so far as can be safely done, an effort should be made to restore it to something like reasonable dimensions. There is a passage in the Crown Lands Report, which was laid on the table of the House last session, which appears to me so important that I will read it:—

“The cash sales on freehold tenure have diminished very much of late years, partly, no doubt, from the available Crown lands lying farther back, but in a greater degree from the policy of offering all the best lands on settlement conditions as they become opened out by roads. With the exception of town lands, which are always sold for cash, there is very little opportunity given for acquiring Crown lands on immediate payment.”

Now, Sir, we have found that, if there is one thing which would tend to assist the settlement of the country more than anything else, it is that there should be a choice of tenure. We are aware that for a considerable time past there has been a great amount of difficulty in people acquiring land on precisely the tenure they would prefer; and these are not land-speculators, but those whom we should all desire to see occupy the lands of the country. Any one who has any experience in England becomes aware at once of the demand there is there for a plain answer to a very plain question. Wherever you go in England you meet the parents of young men who are anxious to enter into the occupation of land in this colony, and also persons in a humbler condition of life who are extremely anxious to do so; and the first question they ask is, “Can you buy land in New Zealand?” The answer to this question is, “Land can be bought in almost innumerable ways—by deferred payment, perpetual leasehold, or by the system of homestead settlers, or village settlers, or village-homestead settlers;” and, in fact, there is a list of systems which it is quite unnecessary to go through at the present time; but, when they ask you the plain question, whether they can come to the colony and buy land for cash, you are not able to say with certainty whether that is the case or not. Honourable members are as well aware as I am that every one who writes or speaks to the public now lays stress on the importance of obtaining not so much persons of the mere labouring-class, but those who have some capital. The constant cry is that we want people to come to New Zealand who have some capital to begin with. As a general rule, if you go before this class of people and explain that they could get land on any one of these more or less complicated kinds of tenure, they become so bewildered and confused, I may say, with the complication of our land-laws that they practically turn their affections from this colony and go somewhere else. And I am sure that, even in England, some of our old settlers who are there absolutely do not feel themselves in a position to give a plain answer to a very plain question, owing to the complications which attend it. The Government have, in a modest way, thought it to be their duty to establish, as far as they are able, a greater

freedom of choice; and therefore they determined, if Parliament will allow them to pass this measure, that it shall not be in the power of any Minister to proclaim blocks available only to one class of settlement, whether it be for deferred payment or perpetual lease, or for cash only, but that the blocks, when open for sale, shall be equally available to all three classes of purchasers; and we venture to think that this will have a tendency to encourage in a by no means unimportant degree the settlement of the land. In making this arrangement we have also thought it advisable to classify the land on a different system from that which now obtains. We have therefore proposed this—and it will be seen from clauses 2 and 9 that the Bill gives larger powers of classification than there are now; and there is also power to lower the upset price at which land shall be offered to the public. The classification will be in two divisions—first-class land and second-class land; and the upset price of first-class land will be £1, and of second-class land 10s. There are several provisions in the 3rd clause relating to particular provincial districts in the colony—that is to say, that, wherever land in such provincial districts is of third-class quality, the upset price would remain at 5s. In Nelson, Marlborough, and Wellington, where there is no third-class land, the same price is also adopted. In lowering the upset price, and in undertaking this new classification, we have of course taken care in the Bill that it shall be competent to raise the price of land that is really good land, so that it shall not be necessarily offered at a less price than it is worth. Wherever land is worth £2, £3, or £4 an acre it would not be offered at a lower price than its supposed or real value. In the Bill precaution has been taken to insert a limit: the limit for these different classes of land will be—for the first class, 640 acres; for the second class, 2,000 acres; and that is the limit provided by the Bill of land which can be acquired by any one person—that is to say, he can take up 640 acres of first-class land and 2,000 acres of second-class land. There is also a provision that those who already hold land will not be able to exceed these limits when the extent of their own land is added to the amount of their application. That is to say, the total holding will be limited in the same manner as it is in the present Act, the provisions of which honourable members are familiar with. We think, notwithstanding some remarks that may be made, and some opinions that may be held, that the proposals, especially the one I have mentioned, do not tend to the acquisition of land for merely speculative objects. We say we believe the limits we have proposed are not of an extravagant character, and are not too strict to be a fair encouragement, and no more than a fair encouragement, to persons desirous of settling upon the lands of the country. On the goldfields we propose to permit the purchase of the freehold of lands which are now held on perpetual lease, under precisely the same safeguards in regard to mining as now exist. It

will be remembered that when we inserted a purchasing clause in connection with perpetual leases we excluded the lands in the goldfields. It is felt that the holders of these lands should be permitted to acquire the freeholds if they think fit. It is known, of course, that the holders of agricultural leases can, under certain restrictions, obtain freeholds; and it has been considered by us, and also by the other Chamber of Parliament, that there is no reason why the same power should not be extended to these leaseholders of acquiring freeholds as is given to persons differently situated. We propose also, by the 19th clause, to give relief to the deferred-payment settlers. I would here make a remark that, if that is done, we shall have done as much as we think can at this period be done in the direction of relieving those persons who hold land under deferred payment in the way in which we were invited to do that by the motion of the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse. It will be seen that the rents that have already been credited to the tenant will help him largely to pay his arrears. The payments he has already made will go towards the payment of his arrears, by a system of antedating these payments, and by extension of his time. It thus becomes evident that he will get considerable pecuniary relief for the time being; and we consider that will be sufficient to encourage him to continue, and will, in point of fact, afford him very considerable relief. I might here say that the other class of tenants to whom the motion of my honourable friend refers will be dealt with by a separate measure, which is now before Parliament. We trust that the view of the Council will be that this relief which is now proposed to be given will be as much as can reasonably be expected at the present time. If it should turn out to be insufficient it will be, of course, in the power of Parliament to extend the relief by special Act, or by any other way they may think fit. We do not think it necessary to go further than that in the present Bill. We propose—and this is a very important portion of the Bill, to which I call the attention of honourable gentlemen—we propose that the deferred-payment settlers and the perpetual-lease holders who have complied with the conditions of their tenure as regards improvements shall be permitted to purchase without waiting any longer; and that will, in some degree, relieve these tenants, because they will be able to make arrangements, no doubt, where they are not overburdened by too high prices, by which they can acquire the freeholds, and in some instances relief will come from that source. We see no reason whatever why, when they have completed the improvements specified by law, they should be kept waiting any longer for their title. We have good reason to believe that this will not only be eminently satisfactory to *bonâ fide* settlers on the land at present, but will encourage future occupants; and that it, generally, is a reasonable thing to do, and is one which the settlers have a fair right to expect at our hands, and one which there can be no possible danger in giving.

Hon. Mr. Stevens

Then, we propose further—and this will be in some degree a measure of relief—that the perpetual-lease holder may be converted, if he pleases, into a deferred-payment settler. At present a deferred-payment settler may be converted into a perpetual-lease holder, and we see no reason why the systems should not be, as it were, interchangeable. The next proposal I have to call attention to is the increase of small grazing-runs. The limit of small grazing-runs at the present time is 5,000 acres, and that limit it is proposed in the Bill to increase to 20,000 acres; and the reason for it is this: It has been found from practical experience that 5,000 acres of this land is insufficient for a person to get a living from. Therefore it seems to us reasonable and expedient that there should be a change made in this direction. We are quite unable to see that any possible harm can arise from it; and, indeed, I may say many persons are of opinion that this system could with very great advantage be extended very much further than it is now in regard to the area of country over which it has been made to apply. Honourable gentlemen are aware that the pastoral deferred-payment settlers are no longer in our land-law, as far as the future is concerned. We can no longer give that kind of tenure; but those who took up land on that system are of course still holding it on that basis. We think that, in cases where they find that they cannot struggle along under it, it is desirable that they should be permitted to change their pastoral deferred-payment tenure—which would, of course, end in a freehold—into that of small grazing-runs. They will, of course, lose their power of purchase; but they will instead gain considerably in the annual charge on the lands; and it is considered—and, in fact, I believe there is no doubt of it—that very considerable relief will accrue to these persons if this provision is extended to their cases. It is proposed to deal with unsurveyed lands in the manner referred to in clause 17. I mention this rather specially because there has been occasionally some misunderstanding on the subject. It is not intended that the applicant to have the land surveyed which is now unsurveyed should in any way have the land surveyed by unqualified persons; but this clause means that the Surveyor-General, or whoever may be a proper officer at the time, may send some person who is qualified for the purpose, but not necessarily an officer of the department, to survey specially for the applicant who requires it to be done; and it is intended that that should apply mainly to bush land. By reference to the clause it will be seen how the process is to be carried out, and how the payment for it is to be made. Then, as to simultaneous applications, the Bill provides that priority in cases of simultaneous application shall be by lot. There is no doubt there is a wide difference of opinion upon that subject. Some people believe that auction is a better system; and others, as shown in the Bill, believe that deciding the matter by lot is the best system. I only men-

tion it in order that honourable members may be aware that the subject has been dealt with. I have now to draw attention to the proposals as to Waste Lands Boards. The view of the Government was that the Waste Lands Boards should be done away with, we believing that they have to a very large extent outlived their usefulness—that the altered conditions of the colony and the altered circumstances in connection with our lands, and one circumstance and another, have rendered it desirable that these Boards should no longer exist. I may say that is not the view of the majority of the other branch of the Legislature; and, although the existing Land Boards have not been maintained in the Bill—in point of fact, they have been extinguished—a new system has been imported into the Bill. It will be found by honourable members in clause 83. It will be seen that we have here a Board of four, in addition to the Commissioner, who is a permanent officer. Three of these four members are to be elected by the Councils of the counties comprised within the land district, and one by the Councils of boroughs in the land district. Of course, as I have said, that is not the view of the Government; and whether that view will be taken by honourable members I cannot undertake to say. But we adhere to our view that it would be better to do away with the Waste Lands Boards. I have no doubt, however, that this new provision will receive its proper share of attention at the hands of honourable gentlemen. There will be a new clause which I propose to introduce into the Bill. It is not of a very important character as far as dealing with land is concerned, but it will have a very good effect in the way of convenience. It is that certain land districts shall be made coterminous with the land-registration districts, and we have come to the conclusion that this will be a measure of great convenience, and that it cannot by any possibility lead to any harm. As I said at the outset of my remarks, I shall not deal with the minor clauses—such clauses, for instance, as that relating to a small case at Clutha, and the case of the Kermadec Islands. I will not occupy the time of the Council on the motion of the second reading in dwelling on these smaller subjects. I will merely recommend to honourable gentlemen this proposal of the Government. It is one which is not made with any idea of undoing the acts of preceding Governments. It is not brought in with any intention whatever of subverting the present systems in the existing law; but we do feel that there must be something more in our land-system than experimentalising. We think, although all these systems may be very excellent, that they should not be carried on to the exclusion of anything that is likely to effect the settlement of our lands to the best possible advantage; and I trust honourable members will have gathered from the remarks I have made that to effect settlement is the sincere desire of the Government. That, in point of fact, is their only desire. And I sincerely trust I shall have the hearty co-operation

of this Council in supporting the views of the Government.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I should certainly not like a measure of this importance to go to a division without any discussion. The Bill is one of the most important Bills which could be brought before this Council, and it requires the attention of honourable members more, I believe, than any other Bill which is likely to come before the Council. With the proposals in the Bill I may say I pretty well agree, especially with that one which will be a great temptation to people to make this country their home—that is, giving people the right to make freeholds of their perpetual leases. No matter what systems may be in force, if we once establish as a fact that a man's selection of land is to be his own he will not run away and leave it. Men will then become good settlers and good colonists. I have always felt that it is more important to get these men tied to the soil than to get a high price from them for the land. While I hold that, I think the price of the land should be a fair price. As to this question of letting land by lot or auction, there is no objection to the system of lot provided a valuation is put on the land before the result of the drawing is declared. In my opinion, whether the system of lot fails or whether it is unfair depends upon whether the quality of the land varies. We all know that when a block of land is open there are often several sections in it double or treble the value of the other sections. Therefore, when these lands are open for sale, if a valuation has been put on them, the method of lot is a fair one; but I do not think it should be allowed when one person may get a section worth three or four times the value of the land adjoining at the same price as the adjoining land. I think that people should pay in proportion to the value of the land. Then there is the question of free selection. This question of free selection, especially in a hilly country like Otago, it is very necessary to be careful about, because in free selection of certain land you may take away the whole of the summer country, and leave the winter country, which by itself may be worth nothing. That ought to be carefully guarded against, and I should like to see that matter thought out and guarded against. I hope honourable gentlemen will give their attention to this point when the Bill goes into Committee. The Bill has, I think, carefully provided for the small runs. However, when you come to large runs, like those in Otago, for instance, it often cannot be arranged that you can get sufficient winter and summer country within 5,000 acres. The great merit of this Bill, in my opinion, is that it brings in a little money, as well as the other provisions which it makes. It is all very well to say, Give the people the lands; but these theoretical principles of American writers do not come out well when you come to the practical part of the matter. You should get some money out of the lands at the same time as you keep the settlement in view. While you allow perpetual-lease holders to get houses for themselves, the colony should get

some money out of the land. It is absurd that the Colony of New Zealand should not have sufficient return from the land to pay the charges of the land-administration. Why should people have their hundred or four hundred pounds in the bank, and not be able to buy a piece of land from the Government, paying down a certain portion of the money, and devoting their own labour to improving the land? This would keep settlers in the colony. These men who have got four or five hundred pounds in the bank, and have sufficient interest coming in to maintain them without much work—it keeps them about town blocking up the labour-market, because, as long as they can get a few days' work in the month, added to their interest, they can afford to live without additional labour. If you give these men a piece of land, and take a certain amount of money for use of the colony, and let these persons bestow their labour on their property, it will be an advantage to the colony in various ways. It has been an extraordinary thing to me that we should refuse people's money for land and allow them to go elsewhere. Rather accept their money, and keep them here as settlers. This provision, to my mind, is one of the great recommendations of the Bill. It does not go too far. I think, myself, from the way the Bill is drafted, that there is no fear of large monopolies in land. In fact, just now land is not very saleable. People are not anxious to go and buy big blocks of land now. There is a necessity to get settlers on the land, and to give them every facility to settle, because these people can grow everything they eat, and they can live on very little beyond what the land can produce. With their dairy produce, their fowls, eggs, and a little grain, and so forth, they can make a sufficient amount of money to make fair wages for themselves. At present it does not pay any man to pay labourers, even at a much smaller rate than the ruling rate of wages. It will not pay farmers to pay for labour in some parts of the colony. I know settlers in Southland who have only netted a shilling a bushel from their oats, and therefore it would take one thousand six hundred bushels of oats in order to pay one man's wages. We should encourage smaller settlers to occupy land, and thus become independent.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—I should like also to congratulate the Government and this Council, and, I think, the colony too, upon having this measure brought before us, and upon common-sense prevailing once more in our counsels. We have seen, during the past few years, all the new-fangled theories of Messrs. George and Co. introduced into this colony, and we have heard declamation of a rather violent kind against the alienation of what is called "the people's patrimony." We have heard very high-sounding phrases used; and laws have been introduced for the purpose of stopping the sale of land altogether. I think we have seen it pretty well proved that all these theories have utterly broken down, that we have been endeavouring to legislate against human nature, and that the innate desire of almost

every man to have a piece of land of his own is the only true foundation upon which our land-laws must be framed. I cannot help thinking that this Bill will prove of immense benefit to the country. I believe that it will restore to us a very considerable amount of prosperity. I am certain of this: that under the existing land-laws the progress of settlement would have altogether ceased: in fact, it had, you may say, practically ceased. The extent to which settlement has been arrested may be gathered from this consideration: that hardly any land has been sold even by private persons. The only land, practically, offering for sale has been that of private individuals, and during the last two or three years scarcely any of that has been sold. There is no stronger proof that settlement has almost altogether ceased than that very fact. It is a well-known fact that in some parts of the colony land is absolutely unsaleable at any price. That is the position into which we have got at the present moment, and I have no hesitation in saying that our land-laws have been partly the cause of this state of things; and, as if low prices and the general depression and the high taxation were not sufficient to prevent people from taking up land, we have lately had before the people a Bill which, I think, would make it utterly impossible to induce persons to come to this colony. The people were told that a Land Acquisition Bill would be passed in this colony, by which land would be taken by the State from the large proprietors. Now, Sir, it appears to me that this is one of the most extraordinary propositions that ever were proposed, because, setting aside the immorality of the thing, which must be obvious to any reflecting mind, there can be no doubt whatever that the remedy would be worse than the disease in regard to these large holdings. Can it be supposed for a moment that people would be attracted to this colony if they knew that there was a law by which they might eventually be dispossessed of the land which they had purchased? However, I do not wish to enlarge upon this subject; but I think we ought to take notice of it here, because during the last election, I may say, this doctrine has been very largely made use of; and it has been almost held up as a threat ~~in~~ *terrorem* over the heads of those who take an opposite view. In this country—at any rate, in the South Island—land has been acquired in a legitimate manner. I know estates which in 1868-69 were going a-begging for months and months. There were large tracts of magnificent land which were absolutely going a-begging, and when persons came forward to purchase these lands it was thought doubtful if it would be a profitable purchase at the time. A candidate at the recent elections gravely informed the people that he thought it would be advisable that a measure should be passed by which the Government should cut up all the land where he was living into ten-acre blocks. It does seem to me to be an extraordinary thing that any Government should think it necessary to preach such a doctrine as this,

Hon. Mr. McLean

which, as I have said, must lead to disaster to the community. I am not one of those who think that it is at all desirable that land should be held in such large blocks. I think that very large estates are not for the good of the community, and it is better for the country at large that land should be held in moderate areas. What is the fact in regard to the colony now? I believe there is a great deal more money in this colony than people think. There are people who have money on deposit in the banks; but do you ever see them investing in land now? You find in the country an invincible dread of investing in land, and the money lies in the bank doing nothing whatever. And I say that this has been brought about by the land-laws, as well as by the depression from which we are now suffering. With regard to perpetual leasing, I hold that, as a rule, those persons who have had practical experience in the working of land do not advocate that system, because they are aware of the immense injury which would accrue to the State if we were exposed to having the lands exhausted by these leaseholders. People who are not acquainted with the working of land can have no idea of the enormous loss which the State would sustain if it allowed irresponsible people to occupy the soil. In years when the price of wheat is high we might have thousands of thousands of acres of land exhausted by growing several crops of wheat in succession, and if the price fell the people might leave the land; and the loss to the State would be something beyond all calculation. Anybody who has dealt with exhausted land knows that it takes years and years to bring it round again. As a matter of fact, there are scarcely any lands in New Zealand that will stand two successive years' crops of wheat-growing. With regard to the small grazing men, I am glad to see the truth has at last come out. Setting aside all the outcry against the runholders, and so on—and there, again, I do not want to say that the lands should be occupied in very large holdings—it is necessary that they should not be held in limited areas. I do not want to take up the time of the Council in going into this Bill. I really do think that, after all we have heard about these theories and “fads” regarding the acquisition of the land, we may certainly congratulate ourselves that the Government of the colony has brought forward a Bill now which is returning to simple common-sense views. My idea is that no true progress can be made unless the land is held by the owners of the soil, who will devote all their energies and time to its cultivation, and will treat the land in such a manner as not to impoverish or exhaust it.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT.—Though a prolonged discussion on the many details of such a Bill as this may be inadvisable, yet, on the other hand, I agree with the Hon. Mr. McLean that it is not well to let a Bill of this very important nature be introduced unnoticed and without a word of welcome. It is said that good wine needs no bush, and no doubt this

was the principle which actuated the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill. I regard it as an era in our land-legislation. It is evidently the work of an eminently-practical mind, a mind capable of taking a wide and varied view, and that pays no attention to “fads” and theories in connection with the occupation of the land. The question has often been discussed as to the best mode of tenure, and it appears to me that the best is that which best meets the wishes and circumstances of the persons who are to occupy the land. This, to my mind, is one of the attractive features of the Bill. Another is that it will remove a portion, at least, of the vexatious and harassing restrictions in connection with the perpetual-leasing and deferred-payment systems. Our land-laws have had a very demoralising effect on account of the ambiguity and uncertainty of the language in which these restrictions are made. All this offers constant temptation to evasion—a temptation which in many cases is not resisted. Another attractive feature of the Bill is that it provides a good system of electing Land Boards. I believe it is the wish of the country that Land Boards should remain, and that they should not be abolished, as was proposed in the Bill as it was introduced in the other House. I think that the system of election proposed is the best, as it secures responsibility to the public, and, at the same time, also secures the best men to act as members of the Boards. As to electing the members of the Boards directly by the people, that seems to me very inadvisable. The members of these Boards are called upon very often to act judicially, to decide conflicting claims; and direct election by the people would be consequently objectionable. There are many other features in the Bill which seem to me to be of a very admirable character, but I will not say any more.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I do not think it necessary, where there is such a great consensus of opinion in favour of the Bill, to say much on this occasion. There are one or two points which I should like to refer to. In common with others, I think we are acting wisely in taking the steps proposed in this measure. I feel perfectly satisfied we shall never get the same population in the colony by giving them leaseholds as we should by giving them the actual freehold of the land. There used to be only one opinion on that subject, and I think the public mind is coming back to that opinion now. I may say, Sir, that I am not altogether favourably disposed to the limitation clause in this Bill as to the extent to which these cash-purchases may be made. I should be inclined to give it a wider scope—not limit it to 640 acres of first-class land and 2,000 acres of second-class land. I do not think that that limitation should be insisted upon. I may also say that I am in favour of the provisions which enable land in mining districts to be acquired, but I should like to see those provisions made somewhat fuller than they are at present, more particularly in the interests of mining. The

16th clause of the Act provides that all land acquired under that clause shall be subject to the provisions relating to the resumption of land for mining purposes. I should like to see it go a little further, as recent events in a large mining district have led me to this conclusion: that in mining districts riparian rights should not belong to the freeholder. The persons who purchase land in mining districts are acquainted with the risks they run in respect of riparian rights, and I think they ought not to have those rights on acquiring the land. A case occurred in the Hokitika Supreme Court lately in which it was sought to stop the operations of the whole of the miners of Kumara living on the Teremakan, by preventing them from throwing their tailings into the river. And there was a similar case on the Arahura, where the freeholders and leaseholders prayed that the miners should also be stopped. In a mining district one freeholder on any of the rivers which may be discoloured by the mining operations in the district can stop the whole of the mining industry in that district; and, in dealing with the cases to which I have referred, the Chief Justice stated that the Supreme Court was not the place where justice could be done to either of the parties; and he intimated that, while he was obliged to give nominal damages, he held back his hand and refused to grant an injunction until Parliament should place the matter upon a satisfactory footing. The Crown should not, in my opinion, give certain rights to creeks for tailings-sites to enable people to mine, and then permit persons holding land on the rivers these creeks fall into to have the power to bring actions for damage and to stop mining. I should be glad to see some provision put in this clause similar to that which is contained in a Bill which is also before us—the Otago Central Railway Bill—in which it is provided that there shall be no riparian rights in the districts over which the Bill will operate; and I think this provision might very well be put here. I think it is desirable that this should appear in the Land Act, and I trust the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill will have no objection to the introduction of the amendment. In regard to Land Boards, I am sorry to say that I disagree with the honourable member who spoke last as to the desirability of retaining these Boards. I think the time has arrived that the Land Boards are no longer required, and I think it is very much to the interests of the whole population that the administration of the lands should be directly in the hands of the Chief Commissioner and the Minister, who would be directly responsible to Parliament for all their actions. At the present time the Boards simply act to some extent as buffers between the Government and the Parliament, and they are to a certain extent irresponsible bodies. Under the present system the Chief Commissioner is able to shelter himself under the Board, and if the course were adopted that I have suggested we should have the administration carried on in a much more satisfactory way than at present. For a long time I ad-

*Hon. Mr. Bonar*

vocated strongly the principle of nominated Boards, and thought that was a good thing; but experience has changed my mind on that subject, and especially when I see that these appointments to the Boards are made for political purposes. I have seen that done, and I think it is time these Boards were knocked on the head. I shall be glad to move in Committee in the direction of striking out the clause relating to the Boards altogether, so as to reinstate a clause which appeared in the original Bill, that the Boards shall be abolished. With this exception I shall give the Bill my hearty support.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I heartily sympathize with some of the objects of the Bill we are considering just now. This question has been before us for several years back, and I have expressed my views fully in former sessions in relation to the subject. The present Bill reverses a policy which has prevailed for many years back, and, in my opinion, it carries the reaction a little too far. I agree with the proposals contained in the Bill, except with regard to one or two minor details. With reference to the riparian-rights question, there never used to be any such rights laid down. But we have allowed the matter to drift on, and have given rights to different classes. My honourable friend has put the case of miners pretty strongly, and urges the honourable member in charge of the Bill to take this into his consideration when the Bill is passing through Committee. I see no harm in his suggestions, but I trust the honourable member will also take into consideration the other interests which are concerned, and which are even more important than those of the miner. The use of water for domestic and agricultural purposes is of more importance than the use of it for the purposes of mining. Cases have occurred in this colony where districts which had been settled and occupied for years before the mining industries sprang up found that the mining operations affected the course of streams, and spoiled the water, and withdrew it from their use. I remember a serious grievance of this kind, which no doubt the Hon. Mr. Holmes will also remember. It came before the Provincial Council of Otago some years ago, where there was a river on which there were several mills, and the millers complained of the effect of the mining operations. I say we should take a lesson from the legislation of other countries. In old Roman legislation it was laid down that the water was the property of the State, and its use was given by way of lease, revocable at any time that it could be shown that other interests were injured. I trust that the Hon. the Attorney-General will turn his attention to this point, and consider whether it might not be well to lay down some broad principle on which water-rights could hereafter be dealt with. I think we could hardly improve on the wisdom of the old Romans in this matter.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—With regard to the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Bonar, I think the most convenient method would be if, when

we are in Committee, he will give me a full explanation of the form he wishes his amendment to take, and then probably I can postpone the clause if I find it requires much consideration. Then, as regards the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Menzies, he has observed that he thought there might be a reaction against the new proposals. He was afraid they might be carried too far. I conceive that that to a great extent is a matter of administration, and I trust that a reasonable amount of wisdom will be found in the manner in which the Crown lands are administered both by the Government and its successors. The opinions expressed in the debate have been altogether of so favourable a character to the measure that I do not think it necessary to occupy the time of the Council longer in reply.

Bill read a second time.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 26, subsection (7).—Renewal of education-reserves leases to be subject to approval of the Minister.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES moved, That the subsection be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the subsection be retained."

#### AYES, 8.

Dignan	McLean	Stevens
Hart	Peacock	Whitaker.
Johnson	Richmond	

#### NOES, 18.

Barnicoat	Holmes	Pharazyn
Bonar	Lahmann	Reynolds
Brett	Menzies	Swanson
Buckley	Miller	Taiaroa
Chamberlin	Oliver	Waterhouse
Grace	Peter	Williams.

#### PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Shephard.	Kenny.

Majority for, 10.

Amendment carried.

Progress reported, and leave obtained to sit again.

#### WAIRARAPA NORTH COUNTY COUNCIL EMPOWERING BILL.

The Hon. Mr. HART said, as there was no honourable member present in charge of the Bill, he would move the second reading. He was Chairman of the Committee before which this Bill was brought, and he would therefore explain its provisions. Through the Township of Eketahuna a reserve was made for the railway and for the road. The railway had been carried outside the township in another direction. Therefore the land set apart for the railway was not required for that purpose, and, on account of the reserve adjoining the road, it made the road too wide. This Bill had been introduced for the purpose of enabling the County Council to convey the small pieces of land comprising the railway reserve in front of the sections to the section-holders, so as to reduce the road to a reasonable width. The

price to be paid to the County Council would be equal to that which the section-holders paid for the land when they obtained it from the Government. The Bill also provided that a receipt or discharge for the purchase-money should be sufficient title to the land. He moved, *That the Bill be read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. BONAR thought that honourable gentlemen should have full information in regard to this Bill, because the terms and conditions were of a very arbitrary character. Section 3 provided that the sale should only be made to the owners of the freehold land adjoining the road, and provided that the price to be paid for the land should not exceed the price paid per acre by the original grantees from the Crown. He did not know whether this was right or not. It seemed to him that the amount of money to be received for the land would be very small indeed. Then, there was another extraordinary provision in the Bill. Clause 6 provided that the receipt or discharge for the purchase-money should be sufficient title to the land. That appeared to him to be a perfectly novel provision. He did not think he had ever seen such a provision in a Bill before. It appeared to be creating a new species of title. The provision was of such a character that he thought the Council should not be asked to assent to it until further explanation was given.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER would suggest that the discussion on the matter should take place in Committee. There were other things in the Bill which required consideration.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY moved, *That the debate be adjourned.*

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON expressed regret that he was not present when the Bill was called on; but when he left the Council it did not appear possible that this Bill would be reached so soon. The fact was this: that, when this township was laid out, it was laid out with the intention of carrying the railway through the centre of the main street, and therefore the road was made three chains wide. Since the township had been settled the Government had determined to carry the railroad in a different direction, some distance from the township, and this portion of the road was no longer required for the railway. At the same time, it was found that the street of three chains in width was a very great inconvenience. It was impossible for the settlers to make the whole of the width into a road, and to have a portion of waste land on each side would be very inconvenient. The consequence was that it was desired to get rid of this difficulty by making the road of the ordinary width. A chain and a half had been reserved for the road, and it was proposed to sell to the holders of the land on each side of the road those portions of land between their sections and the new road. He might say that the County Council had the full power to do this. The land was vested in them, and they had the power of selling in the manner provided by the Bill. It had been objected that the provision with regard to the price was a rather strange

one. This place being a village, it was thought only fair that the persons who took the pieces of land in front of their sections should have them at the same price which they gave the Government for the land when they took it from the Crown some time ago. It would be unfair to compel these persons to buy at a price higher than what they gave for the land originally. With regard to the 6th section, he was told that this was not a very unusual method of conveyance under Act of Parliament, and it gave a perfectly good title. With regard to the 8th section, the figures that were wanting in the Bill were filled in when the Bill was before the Select Committee. The amendment that had been recommended by the Committee would, of course, come up for discussion when the Bill went into Committee. He thought that ought to meet with the satisfaction of members.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY asked if the honourable gentleman could inform the Council how many persons were affected by this measure. Was there more than one person?

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON said a great number were affected. The Bill, in fact, affected land of more than a quarter of a mile frontage.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY repeated his question as to the number of persons who were affected.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON said the number might be judged from the fact he had just stated. He could not state the exact number.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY asked if the Committee did not take evidence as to that.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON said that was not before them. The Bill affected all. The evidence that came before the Committee was, as far as he knew, perfectly clear as to what was intended to be done by the Bill. There were three cases, he thought, in which the occupiers of these sections had only a short term of lease, and they did not care to be forced to take up this land. The 8th clause provided that the Council might withhold from sale any portion of the land fronting the sections in question which might be required as metal reserves.

The Hon. Mr. HART said there was no necessity for doing that by the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON said it might not be necessary to insert such a clause as that, but he was advised that it was necessary for the purpose.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY moved the adjournment of the debate. He did so for this reason: that the more the Chairman of the Committee tried to explain the position of the Bill the less the Council understood it. The honourable gentleman had given no information except the explanation of the terms of the Bill. He was surprised that the Hon. the Attorney-General had not given them some observations upon this matter, a matter which, it seemed to him, affected land belonging to the Crown. He was assured by persons from the neighbourhood that the Bill affected one individual only. The provisions of the Bill as brought forward were the most extraordinary that had ever come before Parliament. He thought the consideration of

*Hon. Mr. Johnson*

the Bill should be postponed until the Council had the desired information. He did not think any harm would be done to the Bill by adopting that course.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER said that, as it had been stated that the local Boards were unanimously agreed upon this matter, it seemed to him a very proper thing that the land should be apportioned in the manner provided. The matter had been made thoroughly public, and the authorities in the district were, as he had said, agreed; and they ought not to hang up the Bill in that Council. He believed it was quite a proper Bill and ought to be passed.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON said the remarks that had been made by the Hon. Mr. Buckley left the impression on his mind that the honourable gentleman considered there was something suspicious about the Bill. He had not the slightest idea to what the honourable member alluded, and had no information of anything otherwise than what he had stated to the Council, and if there was anything in the Bill which was objectionable he certainly had no wish for the Bill to pass. He did not think a Bill of this description should be postponed and laid on one side simply on suspicion.

The Hon. Mr. MCLEAN suggested that they should read the Bill a second time, and put the committal down for next day, when they could discuss the thing.

The Council divided on the question, "That the debate be adjourned."

#### AYES, 7.

Bonar	Chamberlin	Menzies
Brett	Dignan	Reynolds.
Buckley		

#### NOES, 16.

Baillie	Miller	Stevens
Barnicoat	Oliver	Swanson
Hart	Peter	Waterhouse
Holmes	Pharazyn	Whitaker
Johnson	Richmond	Williams.
McLean		

Majority against, 9.

Motion negatived, and Bill read a second time.

#### OAMARU HARBOUR BOARD LOAN BILL.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES moved, *That the Council do not insist upon their amendments in the Oamaru Harbour Board Loan Bill with which the House of Representatives have disagreed, and accept the proposals made by the House of Representatives as contained in their message.*

Motion agreed to.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to eleven o'clock p.m.



## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 16th December, 1887.

First Reading—Westport Harbour—Chinese—Legislative Councillors — Financial Statement — Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

## PRAYERS.

## FIRST READING.

Native Land Administration Act Repeal Bill.

## WESTPORT HARBOUR.

Mr. WHYTE brought up the following report of the Select Committee on this subject:—

"Your Committee—having been directed to consider whether the works for the improvement of the Westport Harbour have been hitherto carried on economically and satisfactorily by the Harbour Board, and to report their opinions whether the present mode of carrying on the works should be continued, or any other plan adopted, also whether the endowments of the said Board are being satisfactorily administered—have the honour to report that, after having taken a large amount of evidence, they are of opinion (1) that these works have not hitherto been carried on satisfactorily or economically by the Harbour Board; (2) that the present mode of carrying on the works under the management of a local Board should not be continued; (3) that the Government should resume control of the works under the provisions of section 13 of 'The Westport Harbour Act, 1884;' (4) that the endowments of the Board have not been satisfactorily administered, the conditions of the mining leases having been so far relaxed as to permit the growth of an undesirable monopoly. With reference to the evidence laid before the Committee, it was unanimously resolved that, considering the time at their disposal, that the evidence affects persons who were not before them, and that some of it dealt with questions not material to the order of reference, it is inadvisable that such evidence should be laid on the table or otherwise published."

Mr. O'CONOR.—I understand that the evidence in connection with this report has not been laid on the table by the Committee; and, inasmuch as that evidence has been obtained at great expense to the country, witnesses having been brought up here all the way from Westport for the purpose of being examined, and, moreover, as most of that evidence has been already printed, I think that the House ought to demand that the evidence shall be laid on the table, especially as I think there is an attempt to keep this House in the dark as to the proceedings of the Committee. I have the strongest possible reason for asking that the light of day should be thrown upon this matter, and I do appeal to honourable members not to allow that evidence to be suppressed. It will be remembered that, previously to the commencement of the inquiry, means were

taken most unfairly to prejudice members by distributing, in the form of parliamentary papers, in the pigeon-holes, *ex parte* statements with regard to this matter. Those statements have completely broken down before the Committee. I went to a great deal of trouble myself to furnish the Committee with data in the way of extracts from the minutes of the proceedings of the Board for three years past, and also extracts from the report of the Engineer. Those extracts show that for some time past the Engineer had been guilty of gross incompetence, and that, in consequence of the manner in which he carried on his business, backed up by members of the late Ministry, grievous loss has been inflicted upon the public; and I took upon myself, as the member representing that district, to point this out. But I was fighting against great odds; I was contending with men with enormous influences in that Committee, and I believe that those influences are at work in this House. Therefore I do hope that members will insist upon seeing to the bottom of this affair. Was it worth while for the colony to pay the heavy expense of witnesses coming from a distance, to pay for evidence being reported and printed, and then for the Committee to come down and bring this report, which gives us very little information, and does not place before us the evidence on which the report was based? I want this House to have an opportunity of discussing this question. I also want to call attention to the nature of that evidence. I wish to show the House that false evidence has been taken; and I now call your attention, Sir, under Standing Order No. 219, to the fact that false evidence has been given before that Committee. I called the attention of the Chairman of the Committee to the fact, and I wrote him a letter stating explicitly that the evidence was false, and could be refuted. The honourable gentleman promised me that that letter should be attached to the evidence. I do not know whether it is intended that that letter shall not be published. I have referred to statements which have been circulated with the object of prejudicing members of this House against members of the Harbour Board. Those statements have been disproved by myself; and other statements made to the Committee by Mr. Bell have also been disproved, with the result that he was compelled to withdraw them and apologize. Is that fact to be suppressed? Do I rightly understand the honourable gentleman to say that that is not so?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Yes.

Mr. O'CONOR.—Well, let them produce the documents and show that it is not so. I do not know whether it is according to our Standing Orders that a Committee may report in this manner, without producing the evidence. I understood the other day that evidence must be produced when the report was laid on the table. The expense has been already incurred, and, for the most part, the evidence has been printed and published, for I have the greater part of it here in my hand now. It is rather too much for the Committee to expect that

they can deliberate upon an important matter of this kind, send a report up to the House at the end of the session, and then refuse to give the evidence. Why, there are many members of that Committee who cannot know what evidence was taken. I attended there daily, and I know that there was only a bare quorum present during the whole of the proceedings.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—No.

Mr. O'CONOR.—Does the honourable gentleman deny that too? Let the minutes be produced. The honourable gentleman was there, I am aware, defending himself and the late Ministry. The honourable gentleman ought not to have been a member of that Committee at all, because both he and the honourable gentleman who sits alongside him (Mr. Larnach) are a great deal to blame for what has taken place, and ought to have been in a position of having to defend themselves before the Committee. I have had to take a "lone hand" in this matter against very powerful men and very powerful influences; and, in order that the public may see what has taken place, the whole of this evidence ought to be printed. I shall therefore move that the report be referred back to the Committee, in order that they may add to it the evidence taken, and bring it down in proper shape to the House. I ask the House to discuss the whole question. It is too big a question to be "slummed over." I am willing to admit that the Committee may have had too little time for their work. It may be that they were compelled to refuse evidence. Certainly they have refused evidence. I was not called upon. It is true I was called upon to give a large amount of extract matter which they have in their possession: still, they never called me up for examination. Then, although Mr. Bell was brought up at great expense, and made several charges, there was no opportunity to answer those charges, as I was not examined. I asked to be examined, but I was not allowed to give evidence. The Committee refused to take evidence from parties who were capable of giving evidence as to the state of things that exists. They preferred to base their report upon mere opinions expressed by interested people. There has, I venture to say, never been, among the many extraordinary things that have been done in this House, anything done by a Committee which more requires the light of day to be thrown upon it than the proceedings of this Committee; and, as the Committee has not furnished to the House the evidence as far as it has gone, I move, That the report be laid upon the table of the House.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—I beg to second the motion, and in doing so I must express great surprise that the Committee should have sent down such a report as this. I am not so much interested in this matter as is the honourable member for the Buller; but a portion of the work done by this Board has been done in my district, and I think it is a ridiculous thing that a Committee should have spent so many days, I may say weeks, and should have come down to the House with such a poor and meagre

report. After hearing the report read by the Clerk, it still further convinces me that the evidence should be laid on the table. About that I have no doubt. It strikes me forcibly there is a determination on the part of the Committee to choke this inquiry. Now, I know that within the last two or three months the work on the harbour-works at Westport has been progressing most satisfactorily—in fact, much more so than heretofore; and I am convinced that had the evidence produced before the Committee been laid on the table this House would have known that the work was being far better done by the local body than it could be by the Government. The Government, I am informed, have a report of every wrong that has been committed, of every *laches* that has occurred; and I am informed, further, that since the nominated Board was done away with, and the elected Board established, the work has been done far more satisfactorily, and that the evidence would show that. Then, I cannot understand why certain gentlemen who were ready for examination were not examined. I believe I am right in saying that the gentleman who acted as engineer of the works was not examined; and I believe also that the honourable member for the Buller was not examined. I maintain that those two gentlemen should have been examined on this matter. The honourable member for the Buller, I believe, was Chairman of the Board; and it is a well-known fact that certain differences of opinion existed between the Engineer in charge of the works and that honourable gentleman. I think it is only right, in the interests of both these gentlemen, and more particularly in the interests of the gentleman holding the position of Engineer for the works, that they should be examined and the whole thing brought to light.

Mr. WHYTE.—I think that the House will probably agree with me when I say that it is not desirable to enter into a long discussion upon the merits of this report, whether it be a wise one or an unwise one, because, if it be acted upon, it will necessitate a Bill, and when that Bill comes up the reasons which actuated the Committee in coming to their conclusion will no doubt be laid very fully before the House. The principal reason why we objected—and the Committee did very strongly object—to the evidence being laid on the table of this House or otherwise published was that it reflects on certain private individuals, who have not, owing to the shortness of time at our disposal, had an adequate opportunity of defending themselves; and, moreover, it became quite evident to us that, even if we had had another month at our disposal, it would be quite impossible for us to go into these things satisfactorily, as they involve many technical and professional points, which could not have been gone into satisfactorily by a Committee sitting in Wellington. These were our main reasons; but, further than that, to a very large extent these questions were not material to the points at issue as set forth in the order of reference. The order of reference directed that we were

Mr. O'Connor

to inquire into these points: first, as to whether the past conduct of these works has been satisfactory; secondly, whether we could make any suggestions regarding the future prosecution of the harbour-works, and also with regard to the management of the endowments. These were the points before us, and we dealt with them. We did not think it necessary that we should go into an elaborate inquiry as to whether the Engineer was right in every particular, or whether the honourable member for the Buller was right in every particular. As I have said, I do not now intend to go into any lengthy defence of our report; but I should just like to read one short letter, which comes from a gentleman who is well known to every member of this House; and I think I should be reflecting upon no one if I said he was the leading man in the Buller District.

Mr. O'CONOR.—Does the honourable member propose to read from the evidence?

Mr. WHYTE.—No; not from the evidence, but from a letter which was laid on the table of the House, and has been open to inspection for the last month; it is dated the 30th April of this year, and, as I have stated, it is written by the leading man in that district.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who is the leading man?

Mr. WHYTE.—The letter is signed "Eugene O'Connor." That is the leading man to whom I refer. He says,—

"I believe the system now in operation to be almost as bad as it could be. I propose briefly to give my reasons, and I hope I may also be allowed to offer some suggestions regarding proposed changes.

"Both Westport and Greymouth are small trading centres, and the principal persons in both places are connected with local trade interests, and are engaged in very keen and constant struggles of trade competition. Appointments upon the Board are eagerly sought for, in most instances, as giving patronage and influence in the expenditure, which is expected to give a status and advantage to members of the Board over those who are not so placed. The persons in either place who have any standing or experience are very few. Consequently it would be difficult, if not impossible, for Government, even if taking the most eligible, to appoint disinterested and competent persons. The want of knowledge and the bias of trade would be sure, again, to lead to error. The loss would fall upon the colony. I could illustrate this by a great many instances which have come to my knowledge during the past two years. But it is not easy for Government to select the most eligible. The appointments are far more likely to be made from the most influential or the most pressing in urging their claim. Then, again, the money is placed in the hands of those Boards without any apparent check or incentive to economy. There is an endowment which they do not administer: they have a net balance of revenue and a guaranteed loan to expend practically without check or control, either by Government or public opinion: not by Government, because

neither the auditing of the accounts nor even the perusal of the minutes gives the necessary insight into the details of management, which would show the difference between good and bad; not by the public, because the institution is in the nature of a bureau. The public have no voice in the matter, and take no interest in anything except the expenditure *per se*.

"Not to dwell too long on this part of the subject, I will now ask you seriously to consider the large expenditure in both places in maintaining separate and heavy establishments, and to put the results against the cost, and then determine whether I am not right in saying that a change should be made. I beg to enclose a copy of the *Buller Miner* of the 22nd instant, which contains a report of my remarks upon the subject, and to assure you that I am fully in accord with my constituents in the observations and assertions expressed in regard to the Westport Harbour Board.

"I have two plans under which the harbour-works in both places could be conducted with greater economy and efficiency. The first is, by having the work continued under the direct control of Government. In both places the work consists of quarrying stone and depositing it on breakwaters. In doing this in both places a railway and machinery are used, the engineering plan of works having been laid down by Sir J. Cooke. In both places an Engineer of the Public Works Department is located, and also, in connection with the Government railway in both places, an expert in railway management and machinery. Now, I would like to know what more is required to conduct the works. The quarrying and loading should be let by contract, the carrying and unloading under the direction of the Public Works officers without additional expense."

And then he goes on to suggest an alternative, which I will read if desired. These were the reasons, or part of the reasons, which influenced the Committee in coming to the decision set forth in the report; but, as I have said, I think it is much more advisable, if this debate is to come on and be fully gone into, that it should come on when the Bill comes up, as it must come up if the recommendation in the report be carried out. As I have already said, we have not put the evidence upon the table for good and sufficient reasons; and I wish the House to remember that this Committee was absolutely unanimous in the matter; there was not a single difference of opinion during the whole time; there was not a division taken during the whole of these continued sittings; and we unanimously came to the conclusion that it would be exceedingly unfair to certain people if this evidence were made public by any means whatever.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—The simple question the Committee had to decide was, whether the business of the Board could be administered better by the Government than by the local Board. It did not require the eye of a prophet to see, at the outset, that to have a Board of local men interested in the expenditure locally meant

that they would carry on this expenditure to the day of judgment; and the interest of the Board is inimical to the interests of the public. The honourable member for the Buller has very graphically set that forth in this letter of the 13th April. Sir, it became quite obvious that the simple issue for us was, whether the affairs of the Board should be administered by the colony—by an independent body—or by the local Board. The honourable member for the Buller wished to introduce a totally different element for consideration—namely, some squabbles between himself and the Engineer and other members of the Board, extending over a very long period. These matters were purely subsidiary and almost totally irrelevant. In the first Board, I believe, the honourable member was almost by himself. There was another member with him, but the majority of the first Board was hostile to the honourable gentleman.

Mr. O'CONOR.—They appointed me Chairman for three years.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Yes—for reasons; but he almost always stood alone. He had one or two occasionally who agreed with him, but the great body of the Board was decidedly adverse to the honourable gentleman; and he was also, apparently, time after time, arrogating to himself the position of engineer. In fact, he wished to “boss the whole concern”—Engineer, Board, and inhabitants of the district. The honourable member, according to his own judgment, was the mouthpiece of all these; and any member of the Board, or any employé of the Board, would have no peace if he was at variance with the honourable member. Well, Sir, the Board degenerated into this simply; and, the Board being composed of local men—some publicans, storekeepers, and butchers—every man had to patronise these various members of the Board in their businesses, and the result was that a species of the truck system of the very worst kind was being introduced there.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I do not think the honourable gentleman ought to make a statement like that with regard to the evidence, when the evidence is not put on the table. I say distinctly that that was quite contradicted by evidence which the honourable member was not there to hear.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I have heard more than I wanted to hear, I can assure you; and I venture to say that the whole of the proceedings were thoroughly discreditable,—from almost every point of view. It was a mistake for the Bill of 1884 to place the administration of this loan in the hands of the local body interested in the expenditure of that loan—I say it was a most vicious scheme. Now, what is the result? The honourable member for the Buller and the Engineer had been at loggerheads, apparently, from almost the outset; and if we had to decide between them we should be sitting there until next April listening to all those squabbles between the honourable member and different members of the Board, and between the honourable member

and the Engineer. But the Committee came to the conclusion that these questions were purely subsidiary and irrelevant to the main question. The honourable member for Inangahua has referred to some elective Board. There is no such thing. It is a nominee Board. Certain members were recommended by the County Council, and others by the Borough Council; but all these were interested in appointing men, so to speak, of their own “kidney.” They were all interested in promoting the same object, and their names were submitted to the Government by local bodies, if possible, worse than the Board itself.

Mr. O'CONOR.—The honourable gentleman is very grossly misrepresenting men who have given their services to the country.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—The Committee found that the honourable gentleman, after writing an autobiography of himself—

Major ATKINSON.—Is the honourable gentleman not giving us a *précis* of the evidence?—which may render it necessary to have it all published; and I believe that would be very objectionable, as far as I understand.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—After apparently working day and night, the honourable gentleman gave an autobiography of himself from 1874 to the present day. In this autobiography Mr. O'Conor, of course, figured very conspicuously and very favourably; whereas a large number of persons residing on the West Coast were in some way assailed, and the Engineer was spoken disparagingly of. In fact, everybody was wrong but Mr. O'Conor. But I think the House will agree with me that any witness giving evidence of that character had an immense advantage over men who had no opportunity of defending their characters. I ask, would it have been fair to go on taking that kind of evidence? If we had done so the whole of the men on the West Coast should have been here. We felt, however interesting these questions might be to the parties themselves, that it was not material to the question to be considered by the Committee, and that to place the evidence on the table of the House and have it published would be very damaging to men who had no opportunity of defending their own character. A great deal of the evidence which was put before us, to save time, was written evidence, and the expense was incurred of printing some of it before the Committee came to the conclusion they did come to, that it would be unfair to publish it. When we came to see the nature of the evidence we saw that, if we allowed evidence of that kind to be continued, it would be an interminable inquiry, and that the result, besides the enormous expense, would be that there would be nothing done this session. We therefore determined that the scheme, as administered, was a bad one; and that the sooner the colony, which was responsible for this and further loans, took it out of the control of the local body the better. And, as a large portion of the evidence was totally irrelevant, and cast reflections on persons who had no opportunity of defending

Mr. W. D. Stewart

themselves, the Committee unanimously came to the conclusion that it was not fair to give a one-sided version of this affair, to the detriment of persons on the West Coast. And I think the House will unanimously come to the same conclusion—except the honourable member for the Buller himself—that what the Committee has done is in the interests of the public and the parties affected, and that this inquiry was not intended, and should not be used, simply to ventilate any grievance which the honourable member may have, and so give him an opportunity—I will not say, to damage, in one sense of the term, but—to injure in a very serious manner persons, I believe, of good character and professional attainments on the West Coast, and some of whom we had not an opportunity of seeing. The strong point of this report is flattering to the honourable member, because it carries out his own idea of taking this matter out of the hands of the local body. The Committee adopted that very course. Since then the ground has been altered, and a professedly-elected Board has come in; but it is simply a nominee Board, which is carrying on the administration of affairs in a way that is certainly not more satisfactory than before. I dare say this House will not go into any personal squabbles, and will come to the conclusion that the course recommended by the Committee is the best one to adopt in the interests of the colony.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I would direct attention to Standing Order 195, which is as follows:—

"The evidence taken by any Select Committee of the House, and documents presented to such Committee, and which have not been reported to this House, ought not to be published by any member of such Committee, nor by any other person."

Mr. WHYTE.—I was just going to ask your opinion on that point. The honourable member for the Buller told us he held in his hand a considerable part of the evidence. I wish to say that was given to him by me confidentially, for his own private use, and not to go any further. He was to return it to me, and has not done so.

Mr. O'CONOR.—The honourable gentleman says he handed this document to me for my personal use. I tell the honourable gentleman distinctly that the copy he gave me is now in my valise. I offered it to him next day, and I have not got this from him. As far as concerns the copy he gave me, it is at his disposal as soon as he chooses. I offered it to him once before, and he said he did not require it. This document was given to me in quite a different way.

An Hon. MEMBER.—How did you get it?

Mr. O'CONOR.—That is my business.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I think it is very much to be regretted that the honourable member for Dunedin West has made the speech which he has just made. It was referred to this Committee "to consider whether the works for the improvement of the Westport Harbour have been hitherto carried on economically and satisfactorily by the Harbour Board, and to

report their opinion whether the present mode of carrying on the works should be continued, or any other plan adopted; also, whether the endowments of the said Board have been satisfactorily administered." That was a distinct reference to the Board, and the way the Committee reported on this reference was equally distinct. They report,—

"(1) That these works have not hitherto been carried on satisfactorily or economically by the Harbour Board; (2) that the present mode of carrying on the works under the management of a local Board should not be continued; (3) that the Government should resume control of the works under the provisions of section 13 of 'The Westport Harbour Act, 1884'; (4) that the endowments of the Board have not been satisfactorily administered, the conditions of the mining leases having been so far relaxed as to permit the growth of an undesirable monopoly."

And they added to that,—

"With reference to the evidence laid before the Committee, it was unanimously resolved that, considering the time at their disposal, that the evidence affects persons who were not before them, and that some of it dealt with questions not material to the order of reference, it is inadvisable that such evidence should be laid upon the table or otherwise published."

Now, I must say, upon that report, my opinion was that such an amendment as that moved by the honourable member for the Buller should not be passed. But, coming upon that, what have we? We have what I can only characterize as a violent attack made by one member of the Committee on the honourable member for the Buller; and in that attack he makes use of facts which have come before him as a member of that Committee, and which would not have come before him had he not been a member of that Committee—facts which are not before us, which are not included in this report, and therefore on which we can form no just opinion. Now, Sir, it seems to me very much to be regretted that any member of a Committee, when speaking in support of a report brought before this House, should refer to facts of which there is no mention in that report; because the House has no means of judging whether his inferences are correct or not. For that reason, I think that many honourable members may be inclined to vote for the amendment of the honourable member for the Buller; but, on principle, I cannot do so, and for this reason: that I think, as honourable men, we should not permit accusations against private individuals to be printed and appear as records, unless those accused have some means of appearing and clearing themselves from the accusations brought against them. That I take to be one of the leading rules we should be guided by under all circumstances; and I should be very sorry to see any particular circumstances connected with this present debate lead us to depart from that rule, and I shall therefore vote against the amendment. But, as a matter

of fair-play between man and man, I think we should allow the honourable member for the Buller an opportunity of replying to the speech of the honourable member for Dunedin West. It is suggested by the Chairman of the Committee that there is a Bill to come before us; but there is no certainty that it will be debated in the House this session. If any member of the Government can assure me that such a Bill will come before the House this session, then I will not move the motion I intend to move. I think the manner in which the subject is brought before us is grossly unfair to the honourable member for the Buller, who has no opportunity of replying to the statements made by the honourable member for Dunedin West, and I therefore beg to move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I second the motion, and, in doing so, I suggest that the debate might be brought to a close very speedily by the Committee agreeing to excise those portions of the evidence which they say reflect upon other persons, and to publish the rest of it; because I maintain that it is very desirable and necessary for this House to have before it the minutes of evidence upon the points remitted to the Committee to consider, in order that we may see whether the Committee have gathered sufficient facts to warrant them in coming to the conclusion they have come to.

Mr. DODSON.—The simple issue, notwithstanding that the adjournment of the House has been moved, is, whether it is desirable to publish the minutes of evidence or not; and, as one of the Committee who sat from day to day, and therefore one not open to the charge of non-attendance, I have come to the conclusion, after mature deliberation with the other members of the Committee, that it would be very undesirable indeed, for many reasons, to publish the evidence. I am not going into the nature of the evidence—it is not proper to do so; and perhaps the honourable member for Dunedin West has gone into it further than he intended when he began; but it is necessary to say that the evidence is very voluminous, and that the honourable member for the Buller had ample opportunity of laying his case, which he did in writing, deliberately before the Committee. And that was fully gone into, minutely weighed, and carefully considered. I may say also that I, for one, approached the consideration of this subject with a strong feeling in favour of local management of local works of this kind—I have always been an advocate for local management wherever possible—but I must say that the revelations as to the actions of this Board have a great deal shaken my belief in the use of local Boards. The works do not seem to have been carried on in the manner they ought to have been; but, under all the circumstances, better work has been done by the Board and its Engineer than one could have believed to be possible. With the adverse conditions surrounding the Board, the wonder is that the work has not collapsed altogether. As to the suggestion about excising portions of the evidence, that

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is utterly impossible. You must excise the whole or none of it, because the evidence put before us in many closely-printed columns was one long string of accusations, and it is impossible to separate these accusations from the rest of the evidence. If the House knew as much about that evidence as the members of the Committee do, I am quite sure that not a single member would for one moment advocate that it should be published. I therefore hope the House will not order the evidence to be produced, but will simply take the report for what it is worth.

Mr. SEDDON.—I think the Committee is to blame for the trouble it has got itself and the House into. From what I can understand, the part of the evidence that it would be objectionable to produce is simply a series of charges formulated by the honourable member for the Buller, the late Chairman of the Board, against other members of the Board and those connected with the management, such as the officers of the Board. Seeing the wording of the order of reference, I think the Committee have taken a very peculiar course in admitting such evidence. I am told that the honourable member for the Buller was allowed the services of a shorthand-writer, to whom he dictated a statement of great length, and that it is this statement that contains—what the Committee say ought not to be laid on the table of the House—the accusations against others that have been referred to. But I think it was the plain duty of the Committee, when they got that statement, to see how much of it was relevant to the order of reference, and themselves expunge all that was not relevant. If that had been done this difficulty would not have arisen at all. The Committee should not have recognised those personal charges as evidence at all, and should have refused to accept it; and if that had been done there could have been no objection to produce the remainder. I blame the Committee for the position that the House is now in, for if they had obeyed the order of reference strictly the difficulty could not have arisen. However, as the order of reference is very definite, and the report of the Committee is very definite, the House is in a position to deal with it. I do not blame the honourable member for the Buller so much as the Committee. He took the position of being the one assailed, and acted on the defensive.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No; he applied for the Committee.

Mr. SEDDON.—He did not apply for the Committee as against others. He applied for it in self-defence—at least, so I was told when the Committee was first formed. It appears, however, that before the Committee the honourable member, instead of confining himself to his own defence, exactly reversed the position, and made a series of accusations against others—accusations which, I think, the Committee wrongly admitted in evidence. The Committee had no power to deal with such charges; they were not within the terms of the order of reference, and the Committee should have expunged all charges of that nature from the evidence. I

believe in fair-play, and I do not think, where charges have been made against persons, and where from any cause there is not an opportunity for those persons to meet the charges, that those charges should be allowed to be published, and especially where those charges are made against traders and persons in their professional or official capacity. In such circumstances it would be very unfair if the House should order that the charges which have been made in this case, and to which those charged have had no opportunity of replying, should be disseminated. No doubt the honourable member for the Buller himself will see that it would be unfair, and I hope the House will unanimously refuse to let it be done.

Mr. FISH.—I do not think there can be the least doubt that, from the constitution of the Committee, the report must be a very impartial as well as an able one. I shall certainly not vote for its being referred back. I say, further, that, under ordinary circumstances, the report might be allowed to remain just as it is; but it appears that, as a result of it, legislation is to be initiated this session the effect of which will be to take powers away from a local body. Now, I think this House should always be extremely jealous of any proposal to destroy any local body, except under very extreme circumstances. I think local bodies of all sorts should be held so precious as not to be abolished except for very serious reasons. I think it is quite possible that in this case those reasons may exist; but how are we, as members of this House, to know that we shall be justified in passing an Act to abolish the Board and vest its functions in the Government, unless we have the evidence on which that course is recommended? Except the portions which may be of a personal character, and the publication of which would be injurious to individuals, I think the House should be in possession of all the information on which the Committee came to its conclusion, so that we may know whether it was a proper conclusion or not. The Committee, as sensible men, I have no doubt came to the right conclusion; but, before passing a Bill to do what they recommend, I think every honourable member should be in possession of the same information as the Committee had.

Mr. MACARTHUR.—In moving that the evidence be produced the honourable member for the Buller can have only two motives. Does he desire to show the House that our report is not justified? That report is altogether in accordance with the sentiments expressed by himself in his letter of the 30th April. The reasons he then gave apply quite as forcibly to the new Board as to the old one—they apply equally forcibly to any local Board that could possibly be constituted. He states in that letter that it was impossible to get eligible local men not associated with local interests; and every one's experience in matters of that kind must tell him that that statement is perfectly correct. Although the new Board may be more in harmony with the honourable gentleman's views than the

last was, that fact does not justify its being continued in existence. The reasons he applied so forcibly against the other Board apply equally to the present Board, which, on his own statement, cannot carry on the work in a better manner than its predecessor. So, on the honourable gentleman's own showing, our report should be adopted. The honourable gentleman in his letter fully agrees with our finding. What other ground than to show that our report is not justified can the honourable gentleman have for wishing the evidence to be produced? The only other reason he could possibly have would be, that he wished to publish personal matters of no public interest. I do not think the honourable gentleman can wish that the numerous personal matters in the evidence should be made public. I have read the evidence very carefully, and, as has been said by other members of the Committee, it is utterly impossible to strike out the personal matters. They are so inextricably interwoven with the rest, both in the replies to questions and in the honourable gentleman's own statement, that it would be impossible to excise them without cutting out the whole of the evidence altogether. It is unfortunate that it should be so; but I maintain that there is sufficient evidence in the honourable gentleman's own letter to justify the Committee's report, and that the experience of every honourable member must be in accord with the statements made in that letter. For the reason I have stated, the production of the evidence has been rendered unnecessary; and I do not think either he or the House would wish the evidence to be produced merely to secure the publication of the personal matters.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—Sir, the House is in a most extraordinary position. On the pretext of defending a person who may be absent—whose name I do not know, and of whose existence I am not aware—it is asked that the evidence before the Committee should not be published. I distinctly say that any reference in the evidence to any person who was not and could not be heard before the Committee I should wish to be excised before that evidence was produced. I am willing that anything and everything of a personal nature should be eliminated before it is laid before this House. But I say that the House has had really a gross misrepresentation of the nature of that evidence from the speech of the honourable member for Dunedin South, who has chosen to misrepresent a statement I gave at the request of the Committee, which consists of neither more nor less than, principally, a number of extracts from the minutes in the books of the Harbour Board in the possession of the Committee, which were placed in my hands, and which were open to any one. Surely there was nothing offensive in those minutes! Then, I also made extracts from the published reports of the Engineer, and there can be nothing offensive about them. My whole statement, occupying about seventy pages, was entirely composed of extracts taken from the minutes of the transactions of the Board and

from the reports of the Engineer; and, although it has been spoken of as being an autobiography of myself, I say such a statement is utterly unfounded, and that its only object and all it does is to give this House a clear insight of what took place on the Board. I quite agree that great wrong has been done, and that a great waste of money has taken place; and the first person who found fault with that was the late Minister of Mines and a gentleman in the Upper House, who wrote the first letter complaining of the want of progress of the work. That was followed up by me in endeavouring to stop the illegal action that was being taken—and the evidence shows that—and the unwise expenditure under which a great deal of public money had been wasted at that place. It shows the part that I took in striving to prevent that waste of money, and the part which the Ministry of the day took in not at once putting a stop to, but rather encouraging, the illegal expenditure which was going on. That is the autobiography to which the honourable member for Dunedin West refers, and which he considers it right to describe in the terms which he has used to this House. But I do hope that this evidence will not be allowed to remain secret, because it will show that, although the honourable member accuses me of writing an autobiography, and making slanderous accusations against individuals, I was really only giving extracts from the minutes of a public body and from the reports of the Engineer. I want this question—which has given me a great deal of trouble, and in which I have had to fight against the Government of the day, and against persons who were personally interested in the matter, and amongst them a Minister of the Crown—to be brought to the light of day; but, I say, it is in their interest that it is to be suppressed. As I have said, I agree that things were unsatisfactory; but how are they going to cure them? By handing back these works to the Government, who have already been the cause of everything that has been wrong. They know they were doing wrong, because their attention was called to it by myself; and I will give the House one or two instances of the waste of money which was going on, and which I tried to prevent. In one instance it was proposed to make a railway to a quarry in the neighbourhood, and all the material and plant were imported from England to construct that railway; but the gentleman who reported on the quarry knew nothing about stone, and the result necessarily was loss and sacrifice of material, plant, and everything else. I afterwards discovered that the stone had not been sufficiently prospected, and I did all I could to prevent the waste of money going on; but I was opposed month after month; and at last, when I represented the matter to the Government, and urged that an inquiry should be made to ascertain whether the stone was worth anything, an inquiry was made, and it was found that all the money had been wasted, and that the quarry was not worth working. Another instance I may give is that of a contractor who took a contract to make a rail-

way for some £6,800; and, although it is forbidden by law for a local body to let any contract under £50 without calling for tenders for it, this contract was added to to the extent of over £2,000 for the benefit of the contractor, without tender. That contract was, illegally and through gross partiality, given to this contractor, and he got an additional line to construct in another direction. That was totally contrary to law, for the money appropriated to the Harbour Board was also diverted to make a road for the benefit of this contractor. I called the attention of the Government and of the Audit Department to the matter; but nothing whatever was done, and it is now too late to do anything. The Government pretended to make an inquiry, and they sent the Minister of Mines down there with a shorthand reporter; but what happened then? He went to live among the very people who were interested in keeping up that sort of thing, he made common cause with them, and they kept this wrong-doing going on in spite of everything I could do, and against all my efforts. The statement which I made about this illegal transaction is amongst these suppressed letters; and the first letter to me from the Minister is one asking me to withdraw the statement, and then he pointed out to me that, if there was anything illegal in the transaction, I was responsible, because I continued a member of the Board; and he recommended me to resign the Chairmanship. But I declined to do that, because I did not want the work to fall into his hands and into the hands of his creatures whom he had placed on the Board. That is why I remained on the Board. The thing went on in this way; and then he took himself away and returned to Wellington, and represented that everything was settled to the satisfaction of all parties, myself included; and that statement was circulated through all the papers in the colony, although at the time I was protesting against this illegality and impropriety, as I now protest against the slur which is being cast upon me on account of those proceedings. My constituents at Westport were anxious to have this wrong redressed; and let me tell the House that no Government and no set of people in the colony can be so interested in this work as are the people of Westport. Their future depends on the progress of these works, and they are ready to sacrifice anything so as to secure that progress, and if their advice had been taken none of these things would have occurred. The whole of the coalfields there are monopolized by one or two persons, and the trade of the place is being ruined, and the extension of the harbour is thrown away for the benefit of these people. So strongly did the people of the place feel on the subject that they went to the extent of appointing a vigilance committee to watch the proceedings; and they addressed themselves to the Minister of Mines, who was himself a shareholder, and all they got was an offensive answer; and the matter has been put off and put off, and the line has been blocked up for the benefit of these monopolists, while

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the people of Westport have to pay £1 5s. or £1 6s. a ton for their coal. Sir, it was my duty to see that such an enormous public estate was not handed over for the benefit of a few private individuals; and, if we are not to do that, we must allow the persons who have an interest in the progress of the work to have a voice in the matter. We have tried everything we could try to get this endowment properly administered, but we have not succeeded; and why? Because the illegal transactions are done from Wellington. I believe that the Minister has made illegal terms with regard to these coal leases. It is required that each company shall turn out a certain quantity of coal; but they arrange between themselves so that the necessary quantity is turned out by one or the other as they can. The whole thing is monopolized by one company, and they do as they like; and all our attempts to prevent this are idle. What is the use of going on with the harbour-works at Westport, if we cannot put a stop to these things? We are opposed in every possible direction. This point was made a test question at the late elections, and every attempt was made to unseat me, and if it was not that I thoroughly represent the views of the people of Westport I should not be here now. I have no personal interest in the matter, and I have no personal grudge against anybody; but, on public grounds, I demand that those documents shall be put into the hands of honourable members; and, if the Committee will not do that, they will compel me to lay them before the country through the pages of *Hansard*. I have no wish whatever that any word reflecting on an absent person shall be published. I called the attention of the Chairman of the Committee to two instances in which false evidence was given, and that gentleman told me that my letters should go with the evidence; but, if both are to go into limbo, what satisfaction is that to me? There is no doubt that false evidence has been given to the Committee, and there is to be no punishment for that. I say the whole thing requires daylight. I have no personal interest in it; but the public have a very great interest in it, for it is their interest to stop wrong-doing. And let me say that the uncalled-for abuse which I received from the honourable member for Dunedin West shows clearly that he is misstating what appears in my compilation, or else he has not read it, for seventy pages of that statement are nothing more or less than extracts from public prints, from the minutes of the Harbour Board, or from the reports of the Engineer. I want honourable members to understand that, and to see that the honourable member's assertion that it is only an autobiography of myself and a slandering of other persons is utterly unfounded. What I desire is this: that the report and all the evidence shall be before the House in such a position that they can be fairly discussed. I wish honourable members from other parts of the colony to understand this, because as the matter stands now it is a slur upon gentlemen who have taken every possible care and trouble in local administration, and it

is a slur upon local administration in all parts of the colony. The Harbour Board of Dunedin and every other local body stand in the same position. They do not pay rates to the Harbour Board in Dunedin, and I am astonished at the ignorance displayed by the honourable member for Dunedin West of matters at his own door.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—We pay dues.

Mr. O'CONOR.—So do we. The whole of our revenue is from this endowment, and the people pay heavy rents for the land, in the hope that it will contribute to the great work on which their hearts are centred. It would be unwise to say that the intelligence of the people there shall not be used to secure a fair and honest expenditure of the money. And they are not to blame for what has taken place; nor is it any reason why the matter should be handed over to the Government. Is any member of the Committee prepared to say that the Government have acted rightly with the endowments which were virtually in their hands? Certainly they have not; and the grossest maladministration has taken place when they have had charge of it. What act of maladministration has the Board been guilty of? On the contrary, they have shown where illegal expenditure has been going on, and that expenditure has been supported by the late Minister of Mines—accepted by him and supported by him. It has been carried out by an engineer who was forced on the Board, for it was not with the free approval of the Board that he was appointed. They wanted a gentleman with local experience, and at a lower salary; but this engineer was forced upon them, with a larger salary. They desired to get the work done more economically; and what has the Board done now? It has reduced the cost of the stone, and increased the output; so that the works are proceeding much better and more economically than they were. They have had to put up with an engineer who is receiving £1,000 a year, who is allowed to act in a similar capacity for the Midland Railway, and who only now and then puts in an appearance at Westport, when it suits him. I recommended the late Minister for Public Works and the Minister of Mines that the Engineer's services should be exclusively confined to the work of the harbour—that was the unanimous wish of the Harbour Board; but they authorised him to take other employment: he is sometimes away for a month at a stretch, and yet his money is paid to him all the same. And when an independent man comes forward to put a stop to that sort of thing he is refused a fair hearing. These are the things which I wish to have investigated. I have been stigmatized by papers which are in the interest of the honourable member who has just spoken as being only influenced by personal motives. Personally, I am nothing in this matter. No person can say what my motives are; but any one can say what my actions are: and what have they been? I have had no motive but the desire to discharge a public duty for the benefit of the public. When I prevailed upon the Go-

vernment and Parliament to bring forward this Westport Harbour Act, to enable that harbour to be proceeded with, I pledged myself to do my utmost to secure economical results; and I defy any one, going through the whole of the minutes, to find one single instance where my action has been otherwise directed. Since the honourable member has spoken of my "blowing my own trumpet," I will tell the House what I did. I tried on every possible occasion to stop illegal expenditure. Was that done from a personal motive? I spent days and nights working for the interests of the district and the colony in this matter during the whole of the time that I was Chairman; and I may say that I might have been Chairman at this present time were it not that my other responsibilities prevented me from again taking office. I venture to say that everything was worked to the very best advantage, so far as I was concerned; and the evidence that has been given before the Committee will show that this is true. Perhaps that is the reason that some honourable members are anxious that it should not be printed. It shows that what was done wrong by the late Board was done with the consent and connivance of the late Government; so that, so far as that is concerned, newspapers connected with certain honourable members have been barking up the wrong tree, waking the wrong man. The whole of the wrong-doing of the late Board was the wrong-doing of the late Ministry and those whom they supported. I endeavoured to show where the wrong-doing was going on and to stop it; and, forsooth, because we are not miserable cravens, serfs, because we will not bow down to and accept the wrong-doing of those gentlemen, we are to be treated as selfish, grasping people who think of nothing but seeking their own advantage at the expense of the colony. I challenge the honourable gentleman to bring forward a single instance in proof of the accusations made. On the contrary, my whole efforts have been directed to frustrating and preventing these large concessions illegally made to contractors. When my motives are spoken of, why should it not be pointed out that the conduct of persons who are mixed up with these transactions requires consideration? Can it be said that I was actuated by personal motives when, to the best of my judgment, I worked three years, gratuitously too, in the interests of my people and in the interests of the colony, while no personal motives are to be attributed to others who either have had large salaries paid to them or have exercised large influence for their own purposes? Is the honourable member for Dunedin West quite free from personal motives in all his actions in this House? When the question of opening the profession of the law to the public comes before this House does he always act purely in the public interest? If we are to banish all considerations of that kind, then I am afraid we shall get nobody to take part in public affairs. And I want to point out this, in connection with the proposal to hand this harbour trust over to the Government: that there is

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not a man in Westport whose interests are not bound up with the success of these works. It is not so here in Wellington. Patronage prevails here. No matter what Ministry may be in power, they are certain to have a desire to put into good positions persons with whom they are friendly. The present Government might not exercise that power improperly, but there would be the opportunity. The recommendation of this Committee simply means the abolition of local self-government; and we are to take this step upon a report brought up by a Committee which does not dare to give the evidence upon which it arrived at the conclusions we are asked to accept. I venture to say that that evidence, if produced, would show beyond a doubt that the Government has done the wrong, and not the Board; and yet we are asked, on account of the wrong-doing of the Government, to take this matter out of the hands of the Board and put it into the hands of the Government which has done the wrong. This is a much more important question than some honourable members are inclined to imagine. It is a question on which we are asked to come to a decision that would sap the whole foundations of local government. It simply amounts to this: that we say to a local-governing body, "If you dare to have opinions of your own, you will be abolished;" and that is a proceeding which I do not think the honourable member for Dunedin West will support. I should like to hear him attempt to justify such a proceeding. Can any one say that there has been any special wrong done by the present Board? And I must draw a distinction which the honourable gentleman has failed to draw between the past and the present Board. Now I will refer to a letter which has been read by the honourable member for Waikato. I asked him on several occasions to read the letter which followed it. I will state the circumstances under which that letter was written. By means which I will not characterize, the old Board was appointed, and persons were put upon that Board who should not have been put upon it; but they were appointed owing to influences which I need not refer to further. I saw that appointments of that nature would be fatal. I saw that wrong was being done—that illegal expenditure was going on; and the system was such that I never could know what wrong would be done next. I saw that it should be stopped at any risk, though I did not even then realise how badly the Government were acting; and I wrote that letter, pointing out that one of two things should take place—that either the Ministry of the day should undertake the administration of the works in such a way that there should be no buffer between themselves and responsibility, or that the people of Westport should be allowed to have a substantial voice in the management of the works—which at that time they had not. Why, it was a long time before the Board admitted the public even to their deliberations. They looked upon themselves as responsible only to the Minister. The new Board was constituted under my mediation

and on my representation, and the Government practically acknowledged the wrong-doing of the first Board by agreeing that the people of Westport should have a voice in nominating members of the new Board; and they did not replace the honourable gentleman's nominees, but elected men who had sufficient intelligence to speedily change the whole system of action, not only as regarded the conduct of the Engineer, but in the conduct of the works. And I appeal to the evidence brought forward to show how advantageous to the public interest has been the result of their working. The new Board has more than doubled the work done, and reduced the cost of the material by half. If it is possible for those members who are supporting this report to point out a single instance of where wrong-doing has been done by the new Board, then I say, Abolish the Board. But I defy any of these honourable members to point to an instance of the kind. If there had been any wrong-doing on their part we should have had it exposed at Westport at the meetings which have been held there. With regard to the charges against the old Board and the Government, they have been made openly on the public platform in Westport. There is not a single one of the statements made before the Committee which has not been made public, and I do not wish a single thing to be brought before this House except the extracts from the minutes of the proceedings of the Board, the reports of the Engineer, the letters which have appeared in public prints, and such other evidence as shall not affect other persons. I have no personal motive in the matter whatever. My name can be rubbed out of the whole thing. The evidence is not interwoven with anything of that character, because all that I have put before the Committee is in the shape of extracts from public documents, which I could read without the slightest fear of being contradicted. And I say plainly that, if this evidence is not produced here by the Committee, I shall reproduce it in this House, and put the documents upon record in *Hansard*, if the rules of the House will permit me to do it. I think there is nothing to prevent me, when this Bill comes on, from giving to the House a history of the proceedings of the Westport Harbour Board for the last two years, and also a *résumé* of every report that the Engineer has made. I shall be compelled to do that as a protest against and as a refutation of the false representations that have been made in this House, both with regard to the works themselves and to the manner in which they have been affected by the wrong-doing of those who now wish to screen themselves at the expense of the people of Westport. It must be plain to every one that, when a great work is being done in a district, every one in that district has a paramount interest in seeing that work progressing—an interest far higher than a mere political interest. It may be—though I do not say that such a thing would be done by the present Premier—that it would be to the interest of the friends of a Government to entirely stop these works. I have some ex-

perience of the management of public works, and when the proper occasion comes I will point out instances where a Government has grossly wasted and squandered money which would have done very valuable work if the administration had been in the hands of the people of the district. Is it to be supposed that because we make a man a Minister he thereby becomes immaculate? Is he not more liable to temptation, more liable, owing to the influences to which he is exposed, to occupy a less independent position than he formerly did in the House? Is he likely to have a greater interest in such matters than the people of the district? I deny that the people of Westport have any interest in this matter apart from the public interest. This grievance is with two members of the late Ministry. Reference has been made to a letter of mine. They might have given another letter too. It is said that I applied to the Government for a change of system of election because I had some personal grudge against the Engineer; but I say that I had no desire to interfere with him so long as he honestly did his work, and did it economically. But I did want a change when I saw that that gentleman was backed up by political influence in pursuing a course which my judgment and conscience led me to condemn. I am sorry to have taken up so much of the time of the House; but I do not know of any more important subject to the constituency I represent, and I could not say less than I have said. If this evidence is put on the table I shall be satisfied. I think I have a right to ask that there shall be laid before the House all the evidence, eliminating personal matters from it, and only including extracts from public prints or records, and public documents, and such evidence as can be easily put in without hurting anybody. That is a request which cannot well be denied, if the Government is to be asked to step in and take over the harbour upon the recommendation of the Committee. If that evidence is produced, I venture to say it will show very good reasons for not blaming the present Board. It will show that the chief wrong-doer is the late Minister of Mines, who went down to Westport on the pretext of making an inquiry; but he desired the Board to take upon themselves the whole of the wrong-doing which the Committee has now condemned, which was done entirely with his sanction, with his support, and against my protest. The honourable gentleman told me I might have resigned my position as Chairman; but he might have been told that he should have resigned his position as Minister, for, as he nominated, he was responsible for the action of his nominees. If any one is to be responsible for the conduct of nominees, surely it is the person who appointed those nominees. But what is proposed here is that the people who succeeded the honourable gentleman's nominees shall be held responsible for the conduct of his nominees, simply because they would not submit to be creatures of his. I challenge the Committee to put the evidence on the table, and, until they

do put it on the table, I ask the House not to be led away by statements circulated by Mr. Bell, the Engineer. Now, I state deliberately before this House that I informed the Chairman that false evidence had been given, and that I could substantiate that statement before the Committee; but, beyond an assurance that he would put my letter with the evidence, I got no satisfaction; and now it is proposed to send the evidence and my statement with regard to it to limbo. I say, with regard to Mr. Bell, that he has himself asked for this inquiry; he petitioned for it, and I gave a statement, from his reports and from the minutes of the Board, of the occurrences that took place. He came forward with a long statement, in which several false accusations were made against myself; and I stated, publicly and openly, that those accusations were false. The report of that statement was circulated and put, like a Government paper, in the pigeon-holes of honourable members. It was proved before the Committee that part of that statement was distinctly false, and Mr. Bell withdrew and apologized for it. I ask that that statement of his withdrawal of the personal statement against myself as unfounded should be put in. Is not my reputation of any value, is not my good name of any importance, that this should be suppressed? There is no denying that my feelings are perfectly outraged by the conduct of the Committee. I am surprised that, on any pretext whatever, any gentleman should support it. Let the evidence be sent to a Committee of the House to extract everything that it is desirable should not be published, and then let the rest of the evidence be put before the House. I say that the House should not come to a decision blindfolded. Let me make a remark now with regard to the statement referring to Westport and Grey-mouth, which has been carefully read out. My recommendation, as a member of this House, as one having an interest in both works, is that, in order to carry on the works safely, you require to have a balance of power of management as between the central Government and the local interests, so that one will check the other. Another recommendation that I made, in the Committee and elsewhere, was that the number of members of the Board should be increased, and that the elective principle should be brought in, so that a certain number of the members of the Board should be responsible to the people. My experience leads me to believe that that would be best for both those places, for it would provide a safeguard. I believe that in the multitude of councillors there is safety; and I believe that the people are in the main thoroughly honest, and that if a man conducts himself dishonestly he is sure to meet with reprobation at the hands of the public. I object to the nominee system; and when the nominee system proves to be bad it is on account of bad selection. Surely that is no reason why the public of a district should be condemned, particularly when they have no voice in the matter. I say that the great safety for this

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House and this country lies in investing the people of the district with power to help the General Government with the work. But I want the Audit Department also to do their duty, and to stop illegal expenditure on the part of the General Government and their engineers; and then everything will go on safely. Let me explain to this House that the plan for these works did not emanate from any engineer in the colony. The plans and specifications, and everything in connection with them, were prepared by Sir John Coode, and all that was required was a man competent to follow the specifications of the superior engineer. I was very suspicious when I found that a gentleman at £1,000 a year had been forced upon us to do that. But I know why he was forced upon us, I know the influence that was brought to bear to get him appointed, and I know what I have had to contend with whenever I have pointed out any wrong being done. I am prepared to point out to the House that wrong has been done; but I say that in no instance is there any reason to complain of the people of Westport, excepting for this: that they allowed themselves to be led by those gentlemen who were appointed by the Government, and whom the Government insisted upon keeping there. I say that it was wrong to the country that this gentleman should receive £1,000 a year as a subordinate to carry out the plans of another engineer. And there is another matter I would call attention to, and it is that he has been absent, and has received his pay by fraud. I say fraud, for it is so most distinctly; and he could not get paid until he got a certificate signed stating that he has been doing his work all the time. That was signed, and the Audit Office should have been there to stop it. But whose fault was it that it was not? I say it was the fault of the Government, and not of the local Board. Instead of leaving me to fight this battle, to contend against wrong-doing, the Government should have given me assistance and have had the inquiry that I asked for. If the papers were produced they would show what part I took in asking for an inquiry. They should have had an inquiry conducted on oath, and then they would have brought out much more than this Committee has done, because I do not think that one-half has come out. It is not in the interests of the colony to have an extinguisher put on this, or that it should be manipulated to the advantage of certain people. I warn the House that if they want that coalfield administered in the interests of the public they must guard against a monopoly being granted; they must allow the people of Westport, whose sole interests lie in the development of the coalfields, to interfere, and to give advice when things are going wrong—they must not scorn their pointing out things for the advantage and progress of the district. I should not care who takes charge of the works, provided the people are not debarred from having a voice in the matter, and the progress of the work is secured, so that they may reach the ultimate end for which they are being constructed. The honourable gentleman

who has sat as Chairman of that Committee knows perfectly well that I undertook a great task, and was going through the papers and documents extending over three years. He knows perfectly well that the shorthand-writer who was referred to was only employed for a short time, and only transcribed from the minute-book certain things, and took down other things necessary to save me the trouble of writing. He knows perfectly well that I have laboriously discharged the duty that I undertook, and that persons outside have been supplied with copies of everything that this House is to be denied now. Numbers of people outside the doors of this House have had an opportunity of contradicting or checking every statement that I made; and he knows they have failed to do it, and that, when I asked that the petitioning person, Mr. Bell, should be called up and examined, they refused to allow it, notwithstanding that he was here days and days in this building, at the expense of the country, looking over these very documents. Sir, the whole thing is, to my mind, a perfect fraud. They dared not go on with the inquiry, and why? Because they were beaten at all points. I had torn aside the veil from the wrong-doing that had been annoying me for a long time, and now they want to prevent that action from taking effect, and perhaps to have a Bill hurried through this House that will effectually stop any further discussion.

Mr. LARNACH.—I do not intend to take up the time of the House very long, but I think it is necessary to put the House right in reference to one or two statements made by the last speaker. He has treated the House to a history full of misstatements; and first of all he has said that I, as Minister of Marine, was responsible for the appointment of the Westport Harbour Board and of the Engineer to the Westport Harbour works. Now, I may state that at the time they were nominated I was not even a member of the Government; but I may further add that, had I been, I should have been very proud of the appointments then made. I certainly should have been glad to take that responsibility. The honourable member has also stated that I went to Westport to make an inquiry. I may tell the House plainly that the Government was being continually worried by the honourable gentleman, both personally and by letter, to send to Westport and to make such an inquiry, and that until then the Government never had interfered, but left the sole control of the matter to the Harbour Board, having every confidence in the Board as constituted. Well, at last the honourable gentleman so tired the Government by his communications, both verbal and in writing, asking that the Minister of Marine should take some steps, that the Government thought it desirable to do so, and I determined to go to Westport and to make an inquiry. I need not tell the House that, not only before I went to Westport, but after I arrived there, he continually threw himself in my way, and was fully primed with his grievances, and tried to prime me with solely his own views. I lis-

tened attentively, I may say, on all occasions to what he had to say; but I had made up my mind to take my own course with respect to the inquiry; and the course I thought best was to take the minutes of the whole of the proceedings of the Board from the very commencement, and the whole of the correspondence that bore upon those proceedings, and afterwards to examine the members of the old Board. This I did; and I may say that I did not rely upon my own judgment entirely, but also had the opinion of one of the most able officers we have in the colony—at any rate, the opinion of a gentleman whose position warrants me in saying that. I consulted the Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Blackett, who accompanied me to Westport, and he was with me during the inquiry. After going through the evidence, and hearing what each member of the Board had to say, I came to the conclusion that, instead of those charges which the honourable member for the Buller—who was then Chairman of the Board—had made against the Engineer and his own colleagues on the Board being true, they were entirely unfounded; and I tried, Sir, to show him so by conversing with him quietly. But he was not contented with the view I had taken, but “opened fire” by correspondence in the direction of challenging my view. His letters I was compelled to reply to, which I did, and I believe the correspondence has been laid before the House. I could come to no other conclusion than that the whole of that honourable gentleman's career since his first connection with the Board has been in opposition to the members of the Board, and that, as Chairman of the Board, he has been nothing less than tyrannical, not only to the Engineer, but to every member of the Board. I found that even a member of the Board who generally voted with the honourable gentleman had no fault to find with the Engineer, or with what he had done. And we were forced to the conclusion that, with the continued interference on the part of the Chairman not only with the Engineer; but with every subordinate officer, it was impossible that the officers could do their duty. In fact, I felt surprised that the Engineer was able to do his work as well as he did, considering the amount of interference he had from the Chairman, and I had the satisfaction of telling the honourable gentleman this to his face. The reply that he gave me was one of his usual kind of replies—it was not straightforward. He has spoken of a vigilance committee at Westport which had been appointed. It is a very singular thing that this vigilance committee was appointed immediately after I had given my opinion in reference to the inquiry I held, and I have not the slightest doubt the honourable gentleman was the chief mover—though in pulling the strings he kept behind the scenes—in connection with this vigilance committee. In fact, he has shown that he belongs to that class of persons known in another part of the world as “moonlighters,” and I had pictured him as amongst the very worst of that class, and felt sorry that

such a specimen of the class should be living in Westport. Well, Sir, just to give you an idea of the audacity of the honourable gentleman, I will mention a circumstance that occurred between us recently. Of course the House is aware that he was a supporter, or pretended to be a supporter, of the late Government. I believe he was,—for purposes no doubt best known to himself. He had the audacity one day to come to me, after I had given my opinion in condemnation of his proceedings—I say he had the audacity to come to me in my office in Wellington and state this: He informed me that he was, and had been, a consistent supporter of the Government, and that I was not treating him well in not falling in with his opinions or giving him some support in the matter of his quarrel with Mr. Bell; and he intimated the probable withdrawal of his support from the Government—

Mr. O'CONOR.—The honourable gentleman is making a statement to which I wish to give a flat denial.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order. The honourable member has been heard.

Mr. LARNACH.——if I persisted in disagreeing with him; and I immediately told the honourable gentleman that he might repair to—another place. I thought, as a member of the Government, that, if we had to depend on such support as the honourable member had indicated, the sooner I and my colleagues were out of office the better. The honourable gentleman never tried me again on that tack. Well, now he has stated that the members of the late Board were creatures of the Minister of Marine, meaning me. If the matter had been left in my hands I should have reappointed the whole of the members of the old Board; but, as it was dealt with by the Cabinet, other steps were taken. With regard to Mr. Suisted, one of these supposed "creatures," he has just been elected Mayor of Westport; so I presume that is a very good record in his favour from the ratepayers. Mr. Hughes, the late Mayor, has been returned unopposed to the Council; while we find on the other hand that the late Chairman of the Harbour Board, the honourable member for the Buller, has been rejected by a large majority. I think that is a fair indication of the direction in which public opinion is going. I would like to say this before concluding: that, so far as I was able to discover, the honourable gentleman was most enthusiastic in his desire to push on the Westport Harbour works. I admit that, and that he worked hard and with great energy; but his enthusiasm carried him too far: he wished to be not only Chairman but the whole Board itself. He wished also to be engineer, treasurer, clerk, ganger, blacksmith, platelayer, navy—in fact he wished to be every possible thing in connection with the Board; and any one who attempted to foil him in that direction or to stop his impetuosity made the honourable member his enemy for all time; and the honourable gentleman was never satisfied from

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the time the Engineer would not run exactly and blindfold in the path he chose to mark out for him, and, to speak vernacularly, he has had his knife in the Engineer ever since. The honourable gentleman has told the House that I am largely interested in the Westport coal-fields.

Mr. O'CONOR.—Yes; that is your whole motive.

Mr. LARNACH.—Sir, for once the honourable member has told the truth. I am interested. I can tell the House that, shortly after I came to New Zealand, nearly twenty years ago, I was one of the first of a few enterprising individuals who took up some of those Nelson coal-leases, which at that time I had never seen. I held my share of the leases up to the time I assisted to form these leases into a company with the object of opening up the coalfield, because I thought at the time that I should do good to those interested and to the colony, because I knew the colony had spent a quarter of a million on a railway there. So far as that interest of mine is concerned, I am sorry to say I hold it still. It has never brought me in anything. I hope some day it will; but heretofore it has been nothing but money out of pocket. I have purchased no further interest since. I never acquired any mining interest while I was a Minister of the Crown or any new interest but the interests I held, although I had many opportunities. How long I may be able to hold my present interest I do not know. The honourable gentleman should have said he knew there was a large interest in opposition to the Westport Coal Company, and that only a few miles off, known as the Mokihinui, and some inquisitive people choose to insinuate that the honourable gentleman, the member for the Buller, is working his "level best" and trying all he knows to injure the Westport Coal Company.

Mr. O'CONOR.—To break down the monopoly.

Mr. LARNACH.—He is using all the influence he possesses with the Government to continue the railway on to the Mokihinui field, with a view, if possible, of bettering his own interests and injuring those who have vested interests at Westport. Whilst he holds to and supports one interest he should be candid and honourable, and state both sides of the question fairly. However, he has allowed me to do that for him. As I said before, the Government never interfered in connection with the conduct of the harbour-works until forced by the honourable member. They believed, so far as it tended in the direction of local government, in leaving everything to the members of the Harbour Board; and, in my opinion, things would have gone on well had the honourable member for the Buller never had any connection with it. I think that is the sole cause of the break-down of the whole thing, and I found out, not from one alone, but from the people generally of Westport, that the honourable member was the evil one and the stumbling-block. Did I think that

the honourable member would leave Westport to-morrow, and never return to it, I would say to the Government, "Leave the Board as it is;" but, as he is likely to return and remain there for some time, I agree with the report so far as it runs in the direction of taking the work out of the control of the honourable member for the Buller, and not allowing him to put his fingers within reach of the Board's affairs again in any way.

Mr. WITHY.—I am quite conscious that this matter has occupied too much time already; but the honourable member for the Buller has delivered such a strong speech, casting accusations about in all directions, that I feel obliged to say a few words. I think it is material to the issue that I should state that when I commenced to sit on this Committee I knew none of the members of it and none of the disputants. I might also say that throughout my life I have been connected with the carrying-out of practical works; and I therefore know what is necessary in the way of discipline to insure the best results being attained. Now, I would ask the House to consider the peculiar position which the honourable member for the Buller occupies in this House. If this had been a question of some other Board, where no member of the House happened to be a member of that Board, we should have had none of this discussion, in all probability. I would ask the House to remember that the principal disputant in this case is the honourable member for the Buller, and he is the mover of the amendment which the House is asked to accept. I would ask the House further to notice that no member of the Committee supports him in this matter. The Committee was absolutely unanimous. It is quite true the Committee found it utterly impossible to go into the whole of the questions which the voluble member for the Buller would have placed before it. He has tried to represent in the House this afternoon that this evidence is of an exceedingly innocent character; but I would ask the honourable gentleman if that evidence does not purport to set forth his views on the question at issue, and I would point out to the House that the speech which he has just delivered is probably also an indication of his views on the same question; and I would ask, is it desirable that evidence which the House may suppose to be very much on the same lines as the speech—and which goes from minor accusations of favouritism up to charges of perjury and fraud—I would ask, can the House consider it desirable that that should be printed and go forth to the country? I think the speech of the honourable member for the Buller will satisfy this House that the documentary evidence is not such as should go forth. As far as the Committee is concerned, they can have no objection to this evidence being printed. No one, looking into that evidence, would come to a different conclusion from that which was unanimously arrived at by the Committee. But what the Committee had to consider, and what I hope the House will agree with the Committee should be con-

sidered, was the interest of people who have not been brought before the Committee to speak for themselves. I think the speech of the honourable member for the Buller has made it quite clear that it is mainly a personal fight, from first to last, between the Engineer and the ex-Chairman of the Board. He has made it quite clear in his speech that such is the case. The Committee saw clearly that that was not in the order of reference, and was not material to the main question at issue—whether the works had been conducted satisfactorily by the Board or not. Now, with regard to copies of the evidence having got outside, the Committee took considerable pains to avoid that coming to pass, and how it has happened I cannot say. The honourable member himself, of course, had a copy of his own evidence, and had copies of the statements which were put in by the Engineer.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—No; they were not given to me.

Mr. WITHY.—The honourable member's speech has shown that the report and recommendation of the Committee are practically in accordance with his own views. He spent a good deal of time in speaking about the coal-reserves and monopoly, and the objectionableness of such a state of things. That will be found in the report, which declares that the management of these reserves has had a tendency to raise up an undesirable monopoly: so there again the Committee is in accordance with the honourable gentleman. Another question he has introduced in order to get votes in the House in his favour is that of local bodies. I suppose we are all radical enough in this country to wish to have local bodies wherever it is possible to have them. He also stated that he wished to have an elective local body.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—Partly.

Mr. WITHY.—What constituency is to be formed as the body from which a Board is to be elected? There is not a constituency of ratepayers of this harbour. It is a question of administering funds guaranteed by the whole colony. I hope the House will entirely refuse to allow this evidence to be placed on the table.

Mr. WHYTE.—I do not wish to say a single word to prolong the debate, nor do I intend to follow the speech of the honourable member for the Buller; but I think it is necessary to explain to the House how it was that this evidence, which we refuse to publish, was allowed to be laid before us at all. It happened in this way: We had the honourable member for the Buller up before us, and during one day he gave us the commencement of what evidently would be a very long statement indeed, and we came to the conclusion that it would be better—I am happy to say that not only was that my idea, but I was supported by every member of the Committee in it—if he were to give all this to one reporter in one of the Committee-rooms, instead of keeping ten of us sitting round the table, perhaps for a fortnight, listening to him. It accordingly resulted in this: He was given the use of the Committee-room, access to all the papers, and the help of a shorthand re-

porter, and there is no doubt the honourable gentleman worked very hard indeed—morning, noon, and night; but, although I was constantly at him, and asking him to condense his statement, it took him fully a fortnight to bring it up, and the result was a mass of evidence such as has been described by previous speakers. Now, it may quite reasonably be said that the objectionable part of this evidence—that which we now object to have published—should have been eliminated; but, as has been said, that was simply impossible. It is so interwoven with the rest that it would be quite impossible to eliminate it. Moreover, although a great deal of it may not have borne directly on the order of reference, there was a drift all through it which could not be ignored, and that drift was generally in the direction of the report which we have brought up. It is fair to the Committee that I, as Chairman, should state how that happened, and to show that we have been compelled, in justice to certain people, to withhold that evidence. It will therefore be seen that the primary cause of all this hubbub is the action of the honourable member for the Buller himself, and that it is not the fault of the Committee. As this is the last opportunity I shall have of referring to the subject this afternoon, I wish again to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Committee were absolutely unanimous in everything they did, and the House has therefore got the opinion of ten impartial men, not one of whom is connected with the locality, as against the opinion of the honourable member for the Buller alone. A Bill must come down if the report of the Committee is to have any effect; and when it comes on there will be an opportunity for honourable members to speak on this subject, and therefore I trust we may proceed to some other business now.

Motion for adjournment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment negatived, and motion agreed to.

#### CHINESE.

Mr. FISHER, in laying on the table a return to the order of the House, on the motion of the honourable member for Kumara, said that it would show that the number of Chinese in the colony had decreased by 462 since 1881, the numbers being 5,004 in 1881, and 4,542 in 1887.

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS.

On the motion, That the House, at its rising, adjourn to next day at eleven a.m.,

Mr. SAMUEL said,—May I be allowed to say a word or two with regard to a question which I have put on the Order Paper? A few days ago I brought a certain matter under the attention of the Government and the House relating to certain Legislative Councillors having lost their seats. Since then I have found, on further inquiry, that two of the gentlemen whom I mentioned as having forfeited their seats in the Legislative Council—namely, the Hon. Mr. Holmes and the Hon. Mr. Menzies—have not so vacated their seats. I had looked carefully through the Journals of the Legisla-

tive Council, but was misled owing to the fact that the Journals for the two sessions of 1884 were bound up in one volume; and, on further search, I have discovered that I was mistaken in respect to those two honourable gentlemen, they having had leave for both sessions. I have, however, found out this still more important fact: that the Attorney-General, the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker, has also vacated his seat—that is to say, if my contention is right. He seems to have been absent during the two sessions of 1884—namely, one from the 5th June to the 24th June, and the other from the 7th August to the 10th November. He received leave for the session beginning on the 7th August, and for that only, so far as I can ascertain from the Journals. The matter therefore involves some inconvenience, as, no doubt, from his official position, that honourable gentleman will have to make the inquiry, if the Government institute one. As he is one of those who have apparently vacated their seats, the discovery is of considerable importance.

Major ATKINSON.—The matter is now under the consideration of the Law Officers of the Crown.

#### FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

On the motion to go into Committee of Supply,

Mr. KERR said,—I think it is a very great pity that the House decided last night to read the Loan Bill a second time, authorising the raising of £2,400,000. I feel satisfied it is against the wish of the country, and it is very wrong to do so when our credit in England is so bad as it is at the present time. I also feel satisfied that, if the Premier were really in earnest in his assertions with regard to economy, he could very well have done without borrowing at all during the current year. His own statement and that of the late Colonial Treasurer have proved satisfactorily to me that there is plenty of money for the next year's work; and, if it were not so, I think that such railways as the North Island Trunk line and the Otago Central Railway could very well be put off for another year. That would do the credit of the colony a great deal of good, and any prudent man would take that course before running the risk of further injuring the credit of the colony in England, where it is already so bad. I am certain that people in England will think we are very imprudent in going on the money-market again for such a large sum. The whole of the constituencies in this colony have protested strongly against more borrowing; but, now that the Government has a strong majority, the Premier is doing exactly what he has done before, and is going to borrow as long as he possibly can. The last time he was in office he borrowed eight millions, and spent it, and left a large deficiency when he retired; and I feel satisfied that all this talk about the retrenchment that is to be carried out will amount to nothing, and we shall have this borrowing system carried on from year to year so long as the honourable gentleman is in

Mr. Whyte



office, and so long as he can get a shilling to spend, in order to keep up the majority he has now got. I know that people in my constituency are very strongly opposed to this borrowing, and I am bound to protest against it. The people there are taxed now to as great an extent as they can bear, and they get little or nothing for it; but they have to keep on paying, until at last it will break their backs. I feel satisfied that if the honourable gentleman is in power for the next three years he will spend this £2,400,000, and then, before long, be asking for more. It cannot be doubted that the country, at the late election, said there ought to be no more borrowing. The honourable gentleman's own followers said from one end of the colony to the other that they were going to retrench—they were going to have no further taxes or borrowing; and these loan-proposals are the result! And I protest strongly, as strongly as I can, on behalf of that part of the country I come from, against this borrowing scheme in any shape or form, particularly after having heard the Treasurer and the ex-Treasurer last night agreeing that we could go through this year without borrowing any more money. Our credit in England is really bad at present, and for that reason alone we ought not to go to the London money-market for any more money just now. I will not take up the time any longer. The Premier says I have stopped business more than any other person in the House, and I suppose he will say the same thing again. I protested against the Representation Bill because I felt it my duty to do so—my constituents asked me to do so. The Premier, every time he gets into power, does something to injure that part of the country from which I come, for what reason I cannot tell; but I am bound to protest against this borrowing because of the injury it is doing to the colony, and, having done that, I will take up no more time of the House.

Mr. FULTON.—I have just a word to say to correct the statement of the honourable gentleman who has just sat down. With many of his remarks against excessive borrowing I entirely agree, but I wish to correct him on one point. He said that the Bill before the House proposed to borrow £2,400,000. But I would refer him to the 3rd clause of the Bill, which says that the Treasurer may borrow a sum not exceeding £1,000,000 sterling, as the Governor in Council may determine.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—During the late election there was a general feeling expressed on this question of borrowing, most of the electors having come to realise that what we borrow we are expected to repay, and before we repay we are called upon to pay interest in the meantime. People are beginning to realise that every million we borrow means an annual outpour from this colony of £40,000.

An Hon. MEMBER.—£50,000.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—It may be £50,000. But I was taking it at the lowest sum, though I do not think we should be able to borrow at par at the present time. Now, I cannot help

thinking that the present is a most inopportune time to borrow, remembering the position in which the colony stands in the London market. We know that some financial institutions connected with this colony have not been very successful during the past year, and the result is that we are—I do not want to say "fly-blown," but—not in a position to enable us to go on to the London money-market with any advantage. I should have been glad if the Premier had seen his way to curtail the loan to the lowest limit. I should be sorry to see any Government placed in a position which hampered them in connection with their finance; but I do feel that the proposals of the Government are extravagant, and are not required by the exigencies of the colony.

Mr. FULTON.—Cut them down.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—The honourable member's words are very smooth; but, when it comes to the vote, I will not say he always votes contrary to his expressed opinions, but I will say he is not so independent in his voting as he is in his speaking; and I should be satisfied to hear the honourable gentleman speak less independently if he would vote a little more independently. It is this sort of smooth-speaking that has done so much to place the colony in its present position. We have had many apostles of borrowing in this colony, and until we abolish the system of borrowing the country will never make that real advance which we all wish it to make. It should be the aim of every member of this House to curtail borrowing proposals within the narrowest limits. Not until then shall we have real prosperity instead of the fictitious prosperity that has had such disastrous results so far as the financial affairs of this colony are concerned. It seems, after the remarks of the honourable member for Christchurch North, which were almost corroborated by the Premier, that we have enough funds in the colony now, if we judiciously arrange matters, to prevent the necessity of going on the London money-market for eighteen months; and I think we should endeavour to make arrangements to secure that end.

Major ATKINSON.—That is on the supposition that we should raise the North Island Trunk Loan, and that we should have all our securities turned into cash.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Well, I do not see what is to prevent that from being done. What I rose to say was this: that the electors, from the North Cape to Stewart Island, are extremely anxious that we should adopt a policy radically different from that which has been carried on for the last six or seven years—that we should really adopt a cautious progressive policy instead of the careless and reckless policy which we have been pursuing for many years past. There has been a suggestion, of which I highly approve, that this should not be treated as a party question. I do hope that honourable members will not be led to vote against their convictions from any question of

party in this House. I do appeal to honourable members, in the interests of the colony, to see that we do not go on drifting year by year into a worse position than we are even now in. When I was in this House in 1879 practically the very same outcry was raised against borrowing; and what was the result? During the last eight years we have increased our debt considerably; and I believe that, unless we take very decided action, those of us who live to see another eight years will see that the debt has increased just as much as it has done during the last eight years. I do not desire to hamper the Government in their finance, because I recognise that they are in a difficult position; but I do appeal to honourable members to see that we do not borrow more than is sufficient. The taxation of this country is gradually becoming so great that persons who are investing their capital here will have to look out for another field, and we know that any withdrawal of capital will be exceedingly detrimental to the colony. We hear a good deal about the working-classes, but, unless we have men of capital and enterprise introduced into the colony, the position of the working-classes will become very much worse, for capital is as essential to this colony as blood is to the human system. Unless we have men of enterprise, confidence, and capital we shall not see the country progress. I hope that we shall see honourable members who pledged themselves to their constituents to go against borrowing acting up to their professions, instead of putting their consciences into their pockets, when the time for voting comes.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I am in full sympathy with the greater part of what has fallen from the honourable member who has just sat down; but I cannot help saying that I think it scarcely became him, in view of some of his actions and some of his votes in this House recently, to say what he said with regard to the honourable member for the Taieri. I think that honourable member can show a record which compares very favourably in these respects with that of the honourable member for Dunedin West. As to the other part of his speech, I thoroughly agree with the honourable member for Dunedin West that there are amounts on these estimates in connection with railways and other works which ought to be cut down, and I hope that we shall have his valuable assistance in that matter. I regret that the Government have found themselves compelled to put various amounts on the estimates in connection with railways to be extended within the next three years, when these amounts, most of them small ones, cannot but give unsatisfactory results. I do hope that, when the estimates are discussed item by item, a great many of these sums may be struck out. With regard to the North Island Main Trunk line, I was one of the very few who, when the Million Loan was authorised in 1885, protested strongly against this work being undertaken, and I think that the House and the country are now coming round to the same opinion. I hope that all further progress in

connection with that work, with the exception of satisfying liabilities, will be stopped.

Mr. MILLS.—Very little has fallen from the honourable member for Dunedin West with which we cannot all agree. There is but one opinion, I think, and that is that we should curtail the borrowing as much as we can, so that at the earliest possible moment we may do away with borrowing altogether. But it is peculiar for the honourable gentleman to stand up and declare against borrowing, seeing that he was until recently a supporter of the borrowing policy of the last Administration. It is easy to say that borrowing should be stopped at once, but it is more difficult when one comes to study it with a feeling of responsibility, in order to decide how it is to be done. I was as averse from borrowing as any one; but I have studied the Statement of the Minister for Public Works, and also the Statement of the Treasurer, and I feel convinced that we cannot possibly carry on without a loan to some extent. We find, Sir, that the colony is committed to a number of works which cannot be altogether stopped in their present condition. We find also that not only is the colony committed to unexpended balances, as shown in the accounts, but also for liabilities in excess of the funds at present at the disposal of the Treasurer; and therefore it will be necessary to borrow for the purpose of balancing the accounts, besides what may be required for the purpose of perfecting works during the next year or two. I and several of my friends have gone very carefully through the estimates, and I am in hope that we shall be able to persuade the Government to reduce the estimates to some extent. I think that, without doing any great harm, without arresting works at a point which would be disastrous to them, we can curtail these estimates by at least £250,000. I merely state this to indicate what course we shall take after the Bill gets into Committee. In Committee it is our intention to challenge several of the items, and to try to reduce the total amount of the votes by £250,000. If that is the case, it will reduce the Loan Bill to £750,000. I think also, Sir, that an effort should be made to stop the progress of the North Island Trunk Railway on the termination of the contracts now in hand. I certainly think—after the statement of the Minister for Public Works that this railway, instead of costing £1,000,000, as originally estimated, is to cost something near £2,500,000—we may take it for granted, from our experience of previous estimates, that it is more likely to be £3,500,000. That being so, we surely ought to pause before going on with the railway. It seems to be very important also that, before any progress is made with the line, all the land through which it will pass should be acquired from the Natives, and also that there should be some further investigation made as to the route of the line, and as to whether the central route or the one by way of Taranaki would be best. Then, before we go any further with it, there should be a thoroughly reliable survey and estimate of its

Mr. W. D. Stewart

cost. I hope some honourable member will, during the debate, or at the proper time, move in the direction of emphasizing the opinion of this House that the North Island Trunk Railway should not proceed any further till these steps have been taken; and, in the event of that being carried, we shall not need more than one-half of the North Island Trunk Railway Loan; and, with the other reductions I have suggested, that will make our borrowing £1,250,000 instead of £2,000,000, and so a very appreciable saving will be effected.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—I think that the speech of the honourable member who has just sat down is the best that has been made on this subject; and it is, to my mind, the only speech that has honestly dealt with the question outside party feeling. We have had a great many honourable gentlemen addressing the House on the second reading of the Bill who told us in very plain language that they were opposed to any further borrowing; but each of those honourable gentlemen concluded with an "if" or a "but," and that "if" or that "but" completely destroyed all that they had expressed in their speech. I was very much pleased to hear that the honourable gentleman who has just sat down was prepared to back up his convictions. I shall be found acting with him, and I say this outside of party motives altogether. Any vote that I give in Committee will be only for giving the Government such funds as are necessary for carrying on the business of the country; and to refuse such funds as are not necessary is, I think, our bounden duty. I would remind this House that it seems a very absurd and unwise thing to hand over the control of our affairs for the next three years; and that is virtually what we are asked to do. If we hand over to the Colonial Treasurer this sum of money to expend we put it to a certain extent beyond our control. The business of the House is to vote supplies for a year, and not to vote supplies for three years, which we are virtually asked to do. I do not wish to occupy the time of the House, but I hope these few words of what I call real common-sense will have some influence.

Mr. WARD.—I am somewhat perplexed at the remarks that have fallen from the honourable member for Port Chalmers, and I should like to know who are the honourable gentlemen he refers to who have gone with him into the estimates in the way he states. I think, too, that it is only right the House should have some idea as to what the savings are that are referred to and which amount to the sum of £250,000. I cannot help thinking that when we get into Committee on this matter some of the items which the honourable gentleman and his friends have selected for reduction will raise very keen, vigorous, and animated debates; and I venture to predict that, if a combination of honourable members have selected certain items for reduction, there will be a further combination to block votes in which the honourable gentlemen are interested; and I hope that by doing this we shall

be able to effect a further saving than the £250,000.

Motion agreed to.

### SUPPLY.

The House went into Committee of Supply.

#### PUBLIC WORKS FUND.

PART I.—Chargeable to the Unexpended Balance of Loans raised prior to the 31st March, 1886.

#### CLASS IV.—ROADS.

Roads, bridges, and wharves, north of Auckland, £3,870, agreed to.

Main roads, £18,650.

Mr. KERR said it seemed to him very strange that so much money was put down for Auckland and so little for the part of the country he came from. They paid taxes in Nelson District the same as any one else, and were entitled to more consideration than had been shown to them. For instance, £500 was altogether too small a sum to put down for the main road through Pelorus District and Rai Valley.

Mr. MITCHELSON said that, as the financial year would end in three months, £500 was as much as could be spent on that road during this period, and the honourable member for Waima, in whose district the road is, was satisfied with that amount.

Mr. GUINNESS considered, with reference to the Christchurch-Hokitika Road, that the contract system should be substituted for that of day-labour, as the work would be more cheaply done. A great deal more than £500 a year would be saved if the contract system were adopted. If a motion were carried to reduce the item by £100, would the Minister for Public Works accept it as an indication of the opinion of the Committee that the work should be done by contract?

Mr. MITCHELSON said there was no necessity for this course. If on making inquiry he found that the work could be done more cheaply on the contract system, of course the day-labour system would be done away with, as it was his desire and intention to save every possible penny.

Mr. BRUCE moved, That the item, "Hokitika to Christchurch, £6,000," be reduced by £1,000; as, from what the honourable member for Greymouth said, it might be fairly assumed that the work could be done for £1,000 less than the sum on the estimates.

Mr. FISH would point out that, if the Ministry found that less than £6,000 was wanted, it would not be spent; but if the vote were reduced to £5,000, and if that were not found to be enough from any cause, there would be no more to be had. He understood that the Young New Zealand party had met and determined to reduce certain items, depending on the help of the Opposition. He wished to say he would be no party to that, but would support the Government straight out in the details of their policy. The House had supported, the previous evening, the policy of the Government in bulk in this matter, and they should not oppose it in detail. He warned the

members for the different districts interested in these votes not to listen to these motions, of which they would probably have a number. He thought the public-works estimates on the whole were very fair, and that the Minister had exercised a wise discretion in framing them, for he had apparently acted very fairly and equally.

Mr. BRUCE said he had consulted with no one and was acting with no party in this motion. The honourable member for Avon had said he had done this very work for £2,000 less. Those who had supported the Government policy in the main as to public works had left themselves free to object to votes in detail.

Mr. MILLS said the honourable member for Dunedin South had, as he often did, found a "mare's nest." The action that had been determined on with regard to reduction was not as to the departmental estimates, but as to the loan votes.

Mr. STUART-MENTEATH would remind the House that they were now making large reductions in the means of local bodies, and those bodies would doubly suffer if, in addition, the maintenance of arterial roads were thrown on them. This was really, in his opinion, the only class of votes for roads that the House should continue to pass. In many parts of the colony the local bodies were not strong enough to keep up the main arterial roads, and they would be still less able now that subsidies and other assistance were reduced. In these circumstances, if the maintenance of main arterial roads were thrown on local bodies it would cause enormous difficulty. The House might reduce the votes for miscellaneous roads and works, but of all the items on the estimates this was the one that the House could most legitimately pass.

Mr. BRUCE said he moved the reduction based on the local information supplied by the honourable member for Greymouth and the honourable member for Avon. The country had decided that they should exercise every possible method of economy before additional taxation was placed on the people.

Mr. GUINNESS said he was perfectly satisfied with the assurance of the Minister that he would consider the advisability of doing this work by contract. He himself thought the work could be done for considerably less than was put down for it; and in that he was borne out by the honourable member for Avon, who had been a contractor for the maintenance of the road.

Mr. BUCHANAN said there was £1,500 down for the Oxford-Rotorua Road, which, he understood, was for metalling. Now, traffic on that road had very much decreased, owing to other means of communication, and possibly a considerable sum could be saved by delaying that work. In Wairarapa they had often to delay metalling, and even to go with roads unmetalled. He thought they should save wherever they possibly could.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the honourable member was mistaken when he stated that the

*Mr. Fish*

traffic upon this road had decreased. The road itself was in a very bad state, and the amount asked for was for sending it as far as the money would go on the worst parts of the road through the bush; and he could assure honourable members that the road was a most useful one, and was used a great deal for tourist-traffic.

Mr. GRIMMOND said the peculiarities of the Hokitika-Christchurch Road should not be forgotten. It ran along the sides of valleys and through river-beds, and there were often large slips to be cleared, and a great deal of new construction required. A contract system would require much supervision and specification, which would be very expensive. A large slip had to be often cleared in a short time, so as not to block the traffic. He hoped the vote would not be reduced, for it was really a colonial work.

Mr. BRUCE said those who complained of want of information had the same information as he had. The honourable member for Avon had put all the information in a few words by saying he had maintained the road for a little over half what was now proposed. This instance showed the difficulty there always was in getting any reduction effected in the estimates.

Mr. BLAKE said it must be remembered there might be a lot of new construction.

Mr. BRUCE said, if, after the information that had been given them in this case, a reduction could not be effected, it would be hopeless to expect to make a reduction in any case.

Dr. HODGKINSON asked what was the use of talking about retrenchment if they were not prepared to make reductions. The fact was, the country simply had not the money to spend. He should like to see this item reduced by £2,000.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN was well acquainted with the whole of this road, and could assure the Committee that, if its maintenance were let to a contractor, the contractor might either make a very good thing out of it or he might be involved in heavy losses. Sometimes there were heavy landslips to be cleared. The circumstances were such, in that respect and others, that it was necessary to put down a large sum to provide for contingencies; and if the money should not be wanted it would not be spent. He thought it was quite right to ask for this amount, for it was possible every pound might be wanted, though it was also possible that much less would be enough if it was a fortunate year. Last winter there was a great landslip, when hundreds of acres of surface slid right across the road, sweeping it into the river-bed. A contractor last year, therefore, would have made a heavy loss; but such a thing might not occur again for years, and so if a contract were let on the basis of last year's expenditure the contractor might make a very good thing of it. The Committee should remember that very often on this road totally new construction was required, and it was quite impossible to say at the beginning of the year within £1,000 how much actual maintenance would cost, from the causes he had

stated. There had been £3,000 of liabilities incurred already, through the damage done last winter.

Mr. PEACOCK said that, according to the statement of the honourable member for Egmont, £3,800 would be sufficient, with the liabilities of £1,180, to keep this road in repair, and there would still be left £1,200 for the four months to the end of March, after £1,000 had been taken off. He would vote for the reduction.

Sir J. VOGEL said it was simply waste of time to talk of reducing these estimates, as they had been brought down by the Government after mature consideration. Nine months of the year had already expired, and no reduction of any consequence could be made for the next three months—none, certainly, which would not be covered by the unauthorised expenditure which the Government was entitled to incur. There were a few stupid boys in the House, if he might use the expression, who thought it was their duty to spend the whole of the session in trying to give effect to their personal feelings, irrespective of considerations of public duty. They required a lesson in public duty. When they had an opportunity of reducing the estimates by limiting the amount of the loan, instead of taking advantage of it they said they would vote for the loan and would reduce the estimates. They had, however, greatly mistaken their power, and they would find every day they were in the House that they had a great deal more to learn than to teach. He would recommend those who had voted for the reduction of the loan, and whose views were not carried, to support the Government now in carrying the estimates as they stood, which covered only the necessary expenditure required during the next three months. Any person of experience would tell the young gentlemen to whom he had referred that the way to reduce expenditure was not in the estimates, but in voting on broad principles. If that were desired there would be another opportunity when the Loan Bill came up for further consideration; and this was not the time to attempt it, because there was no opportunity in Committee of Supply to consider the expenditure for the next three years, or even for the next three months, for, of course, these estimates were based on the expenditure which had already been going on. The proposals of the Government included an expenditure for the second half of the year of £96,000 more than had been expended in the first half; but that, no doubt, was intended to meet unforeseen expenses, and would not be expended unless the Government found it absolutely necessary.

Mr. LEVESTAM did not think the fact that the work could be done more cheaply was any reason why the vote should be reduced, because the Government would not spend the money unless it was necessary. He was astonished that the supporters of the Government were not prepared to trust them when those who had opposed them were ready to do so.

Mr. MILLS did not think it worth while to

reply to the remarks of the honourable member for Christchurch North with regard to young members. The action which the younger members proposed to take was in reference to the schedule of the Loan Bill, and not with regard to the items of the estimates.

Captain RUSSELL would like to ask the Minister for Public Works why he had ignored the Palmerston-Woodville Road, which was in a similar position to that of this Christchurch-Hokitika Road. It connected two systems of railway, and was in a very dangerous state; and something ought to be done to repair and widen it, for there was a daily-increasing traffic on it.

Mr. BRUCE said, if the remarks of the honourable member for Christchurch North meant anything they meant that these estimates should be passed *en bloc*. He had the greatest confidence in the Ministry that they would use the money voted in the best way; and, as the Minister for Public Works had given an assurance that the money for the Christchurch-Hokitika Road would be expended in a more judicious manner than it had been in the past, he would withdraw his amendment.

Mr. MITCHELSON said there was no analogy between the Palmerston-Woodville Road and Christchurch-Hokitika Road. The former ran through two counties; and the latter ran for a long distance through unpopulated country, and had had to be provided for out of either consolidated revenue or loan for many years past.

Mr. SMITH said the unfortunate part of it was that the longer portion of the Palmerston-Woodville Road ran through the Wairarapa North County, which had no interest in it, and would do nothing for it; so that a heavy toll had to be put on it. It was in a very bad state, and was too narrow; and it was entitled to just as much consideration as any other road on the schedule. There were no rates to keep the road in repair, and it was much more used by travellers from one part of the colony to another than by the people in the immediate vicinity, so that the local authorities had not so much interest in it as they would otherwise have. He was not going to oppose any of the votes, for that was not the time to make reductions, seeing that the Loan Bill had been agreed to.

Mr. SEDDON had voted for the second reading of the Loan Bill because, as he had said at the beginning of the session, while there was so much depression in the colony it was inadvisable to cut down the public expenditure to the extent which many honourable members advocated. Nine months of the year had gone by, and works were in hand which must be completed to a paying point; and it would be doing wrong not to give the supply which the Government asked for. For that reason he should vote against the proposed reductions, reserving the right to vote against all reductions except in the case of new works. As to the particular road under discussion, it was a provincial liability, and it was as much the duty of the colony to keep this road in order as it was to run railways in other parts of the

colony. The people on the West Coast had no railways, and they might reasonably expect the Government to maintain a road such as this, which had been and still was used largely for the conveyance of mails from Australia received by way of the West Coast, and for the conveyance of all inland mails between the East and West Coasts. As to the suggestion of the honourable member for Greymouth, all experience showed that it was practically impossible to maintain such roads as these by contract; it was much cheaper to do it by day-labour, and much more satisfactory. The Greymouth County Council, of which the honourable gentleman was a member, had tried maintenance of roads by contract, and had last year given it up.

Sir G. GREY said that ever since he had been in the House he had supported votes for the maintenance of this road; for he believed it was one of the most important roads in the colony—that it was essentially a colonial road, and one which the local bodies would not be able to maintain. The Government ought to be placed in possession of funds sufficient to enable them to keep the road open in case of such misfortunes as landslips.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES had no objection to the vote for this road, which he thought was necessary, but thought there was reason for complaint that the Government had not made more liberal provision for the maintenance of a far more important road than this one—that from Nelson to Greymouth *via* Reefton and Lyell. It was not only a more important road, but there was more mileage on it.

Sir J. VOGEL said that, as the Government, apparently, were going to have great opposition from the honourable member for Port Chalmers and his friends, he might inform them that they could have, from his side of the House, sufficient weight of numbers to carry the estimates without sacrificing any votes that they deemed necessary to meet expenditure contracted for.

Mr. KERR said that most important roads in his district had only received enough to cover liabilities, and, taking the district as a whole, it was £28 to the bad. He did not know how the estimates had been prepared, but it seemed to him that he had been very badly treated, whether consideration had been given to "party" or not.

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that in the preparation of these estimates parties were not considered.

Mr. Bruce's amendment withdrawn.

Mr. WARD believed that the estimates had been made up quite irrespective of party; but he could not help saying that, so far as the Southland District was concerned, there had been apparently a great want of attention to the requirements of the district. For roads in the Southland District comparatively nothing had been placed on the estimates. In Seaward Bush there were a number of deferred-payment settlers who had no means of getting from the locality to the main road, and he hoped that in the supplementary estimates the Minister for

Public Works would make provision for affording these settlers the necessary means of communication.

Mr. BEETHAM hoped that in the supplementary estimates the Wellington District would receive some consideration, as there was not one sixpence down in the estimates for main roads, and it was well known that a larger amount of settlement was going on in the Wellington District than in any other district of the colony.

Mr. MARCHANT thought the Minister for Public Works should also make provision in the supplementary estimates for the District of Taranaki.

Mr. TAYLOR would ask the Minister for Public Works to place on the supplementary estimates the sum of £5,000 to assist the Sydenham Borough Council in purchasing a reserve, which was absolutely required for the people there.

Mr. R. THOMPSON said that, although the Auckland members were supporters of the Government, not a shilling was put down for roads north of Auckland. What appeared on the estimates was for liabilities.

Mr. SEDDON said there was a sum of £34,000 for village-settlement in the Auckland District.

Sir J. VOGEL hoped that the Minister for Public Works would not forget the Sumner Railway in his supplementary estimates.

Vote, £18,650, agreed to.

Miscellaneous roads and bridges, £34,500.

Mr. TANNER thought that a little explanation was due from the Minister for Public Works as to the items under this head. The remark that supporters of the Government were better served than the opponents of the Government was altogether refuted by the figures appearing under this head; and the honourable member for Motueka ought to have been the last to complain, as there was £33,000 down for the Nelson District, and only £50 for Hawke's Bay.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman was putting six provincial districts together.

Mr. TANNER would prefer to have an explanation of the items from the Minister for Public Works.

Mr. MITCHELSON said that the liabilities for works in the Nelson District amounted very nearly to the total sum asked for.

Mr. KERR said if the honourable member for Waipawa examined the items more closely he would see there was nothing whatever for Nelson proper; it was for the West Coast mostly, and other districts next to Nelson.

Mr. STUART-MENTEATH said it was generally impossible for the merits of works in particular districts to be understood by honourable members coming from other parts of the colony, and he thought, therefore, the only practical thing for the Committee to do was to intimate that it was inexpedient that the Government of the country should continue to be endowed with this power of corrupting the political feelings of the country by the votes under the heading

Mr. Seddon

of "Miscellaneous Roads and Works." With a view to testing the opinion of the Committee in this respect, and at the same time not embarrassing the Government, he would move, That this vote be reduced by £500. That seemed a small sum, but it would be noticed that the liabilities in this item nearly equalled the vote. This vote gave opportunities for a large waste of money throughout the country, and he had himself seen large wooden bridges erected by the Government in districts where it was impossible for the local bodies to maintain them: and they would be still less able now with their reduced means. Now that the colony would so soon have to entirely depend on its own resources, the Government should not be allowed to squander money all over the country under this vote in places where roads and bridges were not required, but where the money was spent merely to conciliate political support. He took it that it was one of the most vital questions that could come before them, this question of putting a stop once for all to this waste of money throughout the country: a very large portion of it was nothing but pure waste. He hoped the Committee would make the reduction he proposed, simply as an intimation to the Government that this class of vote should cease to disfigure and disgrace the estimates.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the liabilities so nearly equalled the vote that a reduction of £500 could not be made. He must again request honourable members to bear in mind that nearly nine months of the present financial year had expired.

Mr. STUART-MENTEATH said, in that case he would simply propose to reduce the vote by £1, to test the feeling of the House.

Mr. O'CONOR said there was not a single item on the estimates for the district he represented: indeed, in one case there was a liability of £500, which it was not proposed to meet. He would call attention to the utter insufficiency of the provision made for maintaining the main road between Nelson and the West Coast. The Government were sweeping away the revenue that had accrued to the local bodies under the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, and they were leaving his district—which was mostly unsettled and uninhabited—without any provision whatever for opening up new land for settlement or mining. In the present state of affairs it was not wise that the Government should spend so much of the public-works money in the neighbourhood of towns, instead of devoting it to the encouragement of gold-mining, and to settling people on the lands. In fact, he would sooner see the system of railway-construction discontinued, and the money devoted to these purposes.

Mr. KERR would like to point out that the honourable member for the Buller ought not to complain, as there was £4,208 for roads in his district.

Mr. O'CONOR said that nearly all that money was for works which were already under contract; and he might very well com-

plain that the Government had not done justice to his district.

Mr. Stuart-Menteath's amendment withdrawn.

Vote, £34,500, agreed to.

Grants in aid, £72,600, agreed to.

Roads to open up land before sale, £60,000, agreed to.

Village special settlements, £23,000, agreed to.

Roads on goldfields, £31,000, agreed to.

#### CLASS V.

Waterworks on goldfields, £1,200, agreed to.

#### CLASS III.—RAILWAYS.

New Plymouth-Foxton, £1,200, agreed to.

Wellington-Foxton, £500, agreed to.

Hurunui northwards, £100, agreed to.

Springfield Branch, £900, agreed to.

Lincoln-Little River, £300, agreed to.

#### CLASS VI.

Purchase of Native lands, £1,000, agreed to.

#### CLASS VII.

Telegraph extension, £20,100, agreed to.

#### CLASS VIII.—PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Parliament Buildings, £100.

Dr. NEWMAN wanted to know what this £100 was for.

Mr. MITCHELSON said it was to pay expenses in connection with the proposed erection of a new library, which, however, had not been proceeded with, and it was not intended to proceed with it this year.

Dr. NEWMAN said this was a striking instance of the miserable waste of money which sometimes went on in the colony. The House by a unanimous vote had decided to have a brick library erected. The plans were approved; large holes were dug to find bottom for the foundations; tenders were advertised for and received; and then the vote was allowed to lapse in spite of the will of Parliament. He wished to protest against votes being solemnly passed by the House, and the expenditure being left to the whim of the Minister for the time being. He thought something should be added to the Appropriation Act making it necessary for the Ministry to expend votes, instead of leaving it to them to determine whether they would or would not carry out the will of the House.

Mr. WALKER thought it was rather comical to find the honourable member for Thorndon taking the Parliament Buildings under his wing. If ever a vote was passed in a hurry and without due consideration it was the particular vote to which the honourable member referred. Fortunately there were sometimes appeals from Philip drunk to Philip sober, and, though the vote was passed while the House was in a state of temporary exhilaration, after a period of reflection the House deliberately determined that the vote should not be expended. The majority of the House was exceedingly glad that it was not expended, for

it would have been an utter waste of money, and would have meant the breaking-up of all those pleasant associations that honourable members connected with the library as an adjunct to the House. He would be glad to see a proper library erected alongside the corridor fit for the reception of the splendid collection of books which Parliament possessed, but he would be sorry to see sixpence expended after the manner proposed by that Committee of which the honourable member for Thorndon was a prominent member.

Vote, £100, agreed to.

General departmental offices, £19,800.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked what would be the additional cost for completing the printing office beyond the amount set down in these estimates.

Mr. MITCHELSON said another £5,000 would be required over and above the amount appropriated last year, making, in all, £18,800 for building and machinery.

Mr. SEDDON would support this vote very heartily if part of it were to be spent in pulling down the partitions in the Government Buildings, so as to allow a better supervision over the persons employed there. No bank or insurance office put its employés into little rabbit-warrens, where each could do as he pleased. The buildings he referred to seemed expressly designed for the purpose to which they had been put. The lack of facilities for supervision enabled some men to do little or no work, while others had to work day and night. There would be a great saving if the suggestion he had thrown out were taken advantage of.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said that, although the vote was for £19,000, the estimates seemed to commit the House to an expenditure of £37,000, and he would like to know where the money was to be spent, because wherever he went the public buildings seemed to be ample for all requirements.

Mr. PERCEVAL said it seemed to him they were about to enter upon an undertaking that would cost £20,000, of which the sum of £3,000 was to be expended during the present year. They should know what the character of this work was.

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that the building was to provide office accommodation for the Customhouse, Public Works and Survey Departments, and offices for the Official Assignee. The rents now paid for these offices in Auckland amounted to a very great deal more than the interest would come to on the sum required for the construction of the proposed building, besides giving to the citizens of Auckland greater facilities by having the whole of the departmental offices near the wharf, and in the principal business part of the city.

Mr. FISH thought a great deal more information was required about this matter. The sum might have been on the estimates before, but that was no reason why this work should be undertaken in a time of depression. It appeared that this was an instalment of an expenditure of £20,000, and, as they were decreasing salaries and cutting down expenditure

in all directions, it appeared to him this work should not be gone on with; and, in saying so, he was not taking a provincial view of the matter, for had the vote for such a purpose been for Otago he would have opposed it under present circumstances. He hoped the House would unite in striking out this item.

Mr. PEACOCK said the House should bear in mind that there was a great want of proper office-accommodation in Auckland, and that tenders had actually been received last year; but, as they were slightly in excess of the amount voted, they were not accepted, and the specifications had been altered so as to come within the scope of the vote.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN thought that this vote was unnecessary and extravagant, and should be struck off. If the buildings had served for six or seven years, this was not a time to commence a large expenditure of that kind. He moved, That the amount, £3,000, be struck out.

Mr. KERR was of opinion that a time of depression was the proper time to have a building constructed, if the building was wanted. As a matter of fact, they were losing money by paying high rentals amounting to a much greater sum than the interest on the proposed expenditure would be.

Mr. T. THOMPSON hoped the vote would not be struck out. The Customs Department at Auckland carried on business in a very unsuitable building, for which a rental of £500 a year was paid. Not only had the money for this purpose been authorised the previous year, but the tender and deposit were actually held over by the Government, because the tender exceeded the amount voted.

Mr. SEDDON hoped that the vote would be passed, and that in the morning the Minister for Public Works would announce that the Government had accepted the tender. The depression was very much felt at Auckland; bricklayers were at work on the gumfields, and some were in the ranks of the "unemployed;" and this work would provide means of employment which would be of advantage to the State. He thought they should do anything they could to relieve the depression, and would remark, as a South Island member, that Auckland was worse off for public buildings than any other part of the colony.

Mr. FISH thought they should get a very substantial building for a rental of £500 per annum, and if the one now rented was not suitable for the Customs Department the Government were paying a great deal too much for it. The argument that in erecting this building they would find work for the "unemployed" was all very well, but it could not fairly be applied unless its application were made general and similar works were carried on in all parts of the colony. Then, the interest on the proposed expenditure for these buildings would amount not to £500 per annum, but to at least £1,000. He should oppose these proposals as unjustifiable in the present state of the colony; and he would vote against the item for the building of a doctor's residence at Seacliff,

Mr. Walker



on the same principle that he now opposed this one.

Mr. MOSS said that it was not a building that was rented for the Customs Department, but simply the upper storey of a bonded store. The building proposed was not merely for the Customs Department, but for other departments.

Mr. SAMUEL considered that it was a piece of gross folly to go on year after year spending large amounts on public buildings in the cities when for want of roads the settlement of the country was being retarded. The representatives of the towns should be above these merely local views, and endeavour to have the country opened up, and to bring about the prosperity of the colony. That would be of much greater benefit than the spending of thousands of pounds upon public buildings.

Sir J. VOGEL said it did seem to him an absurdity to cavil over the cost of a building which was absolutely required for public purposes in the City of Auckland, and it was false economy not to erect a building of sufficient capacity for the near future as well as present requirements.

Mr. KELLY said the present Customhouse was a disgrace to the City of Auckland, and he hoped the honourable member would withdraw his motion to strike out this item.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN did not intend to withdraw his motion, and he would take exactly the same course if the item related to Christchurch or Dunedin. During the elections honourable members declared that they would vote for retrenchment in the expenditure upon public buildings, and he hoped they would not so soon forget their promises.

Mr. MILLS said that, although he shared the disposition of the honourable member for Lincoln to curtail expenditure in this direction as much as possible, still he thought the Committee ought to support the erection of this building in Auckland. In respect of its Customhouse that city compared very unfavourably with other cities in the colony, and he would support the vote.

Mr. MARCHANT contended that money ought only to be borrowed for the purpose of promoting settlement, and it was altogether wrong to spend loan-money in the erection of expensive public buildings.

Mr. GOLDIE maintained that these buildings were really required; and there were numbers of skilled mechanics who wanted work, and if they could not get it they would go out of the colony. It would be a saving to the country to keep these mechanics here for a year or two, until Protection was introduced, when they would have no difficulty in finding employment.

Mr. WARD thought that Auckland should receive fair consideration at the hands of the Committee. Wellington, Christchurch, Oamaru, Timaru, Dunedin, and Invercargill each had had large sums expended on public buildings, and Auckland had not had its share

of expenditure in this direction. He would like to hear the views of the Premier on the subject.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE objected to the argument that all this money should be spent for the purpose of finding work for the "unemployed." If these buildings were required for the public service they should be erected, but not otherwise. He thought that £12,000 would erect a building that would answer all purposes, and therefore the vote could be reduced by £5,000.

Mr. FITZHERBERT would like to see this vote pass if the country could afford it; but he did not see how it could do so. Considering all the circumstances, he did not feel inclined to vote away this large sum of money.

Major ATKINSON said that no doubt a very large amount of public money had been wasted in public buildings throughout the country; but every one who knew the requirements of Auckland was perfectly aware that this building was very much needed. He thought they could afford to do whatever was necessary, and they would be wise to erect this building, because it was required in the interests of the public service. The Survey Office and a large number of valuable plans were now in an old tumble-down wooden house, where Parliament used to meet thirty years ago; and, when they bore in mind the large number of taxpayers in Auckland who would be interested and inconvenienced in these new buildings every day, he thought a good case was made out for their erection.

Dr. FITCHETT said as he had no personal knowledge on the subject he should support the vote simply because it had been put on the estimates by the Government. He could not presume to criticize it. It seemed to him the proper attitude for a member who had no knowledge of the subject to rely on the knowledge of the Ministry, who were the responsible persons. It had been said that this vote involved a sheer waste of money; but the Minister had shown that, as compared with the rent that now had to be paid for hired buildings, there would be an actual saving—the interest on the cost would not be so much as the rent now paid. The work would give employment, and it would effect a saving to the country; and these reasons were quite sufficient to justify the Committee in passing the vote.

The House divided on the question, "That the item, 'Departmental buildings, Auckland, £3,000,' be omitted."

#### AYES, 28.

Allen	Izard	Russell
Anderson	Macarthur	Samuel
Barron	Mackenzie, M.	Stewart, W. D.
Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	Tanner
Duncan	Marchant	Taylor
Fish	McKenzie, J.	Wilson.
Fulton	Ormond	
Guinness	Perceval	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hodgkinson	Reeves, W. P.	Fitzherbert
Hutchison	Rhodes	O'Callaghan.

NOES, 48.

Atkinson	Lawry	Seymour
Beetham	Levestam	Smith
Brown	McGregor	S.-Menteath
Bruce	Mitchelson	Taiwhanga
Cadman	Moat	Thompson, R.
Carroll	Monk	Thompson, T.
Cowan	Moss	Turnbull
Dodson	Newman	Valentine
Feldwick	O'Connor	Vogel
Fergus	O'Rorke	Walker
Fisher	Parata	Ward
Goldie	Peacock	Whyte
Grey	Richardson, E. Withy.	
Grimmond	Richardson, G.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Jackson	Ross	Fitchett
Kelly	Seddon	Mills.
Lance		

Majority against, 20.

Item retained.

Mr. J. McKENZIE moved, That the item be reduced by £1,000. He wanted the Minister to pledge himself that the building should not cost more than £12,000. They could get a building ample for all the requirements in Auckland for that sum.

Mr. FISH said it was last year proposed this building should cost £12,000, and now it was £17,000, which meant £20,000. That was shameful extravagance. The Premier said these were days of retrenchment and we must pinch and pinch; yet he was entirely inconsistent in supporting such extravagance as this. If it had not been for the extravagance of the last Government he (Mr. Fish) was certain that several works for which large sums were now asked would not have been begun. If any building at all was required in Auckland, they could surely get one that would answer all purposes for £6,000 or £7,000. They did not want a lot of waste in ornamentation, of which there had been so much in our public buildings; and, as a practical man having some experience in these matters, he knew that a commodious and substantial building could be got for £7,000 or so. He must make a final protest against this vote.

Mr. SAMUEL hoped the reduction would be carried, and he quite agreed with what the honourable member for Dunedin South had said. This proved the insincerity of the Government in claiming to be desirous of effecting retrenchment. The honourable member for Auckland West had shown plainly the object of the vote—it was to provide work for the Auckland “unemployed.” It was all very well for other honourable members to say “No,” but that had been stated freely and candidly. There had been a great talk about determined retrenchment, but here were votes put on to give members a little popularity in their districts; and by these votes members and the Government were alike showing their insincerity in their retrenchment talk. He hoped the vote would be reduced by £1,000, at any rate, to show that there was some sincerity in the demand for retrenchment, and that they were not all prepared to be slaves to carry at the bidding

of the Government votes to enable them to secure political support.

Mr. SEDDON said that if the Stout-Vogel Government had remained in office the honourable members for New Plymouth, Waihemo, and Dunedin South would have been found supporting this vote. The £12,000 had been found not to be sufficient. Tenders had been called for, and had remained for five months in the hands of the Government, as it was found that the building could not be constructed for the Architect's estimate. It was necessary, in regard to all Government buildings, to look a little ahead and erect buildings rather larger than were required for immediate purposes. That was a much better plan than to put up small buildings now, and have to patch and extend them afterwards. He would vote for the item.

Sir J. VOGEL might say that the requirements for each of the departments had been estimated in connection with these buildings. The Architect was of opinion that they could be completed for about £12,000; but on calling for tenders it was found that they would cost £17,000. That was only partly the fault of the Architect, because it turned out that mistaken information had been given as to what the nature of the foundation was. There was a very analogous case as regarded seeking for too much cheapness in the Wellington Post-office. The Government had fixed upon an arbitrary sum for that building, and, when the plans could not be carried out for the sum, the Architect was called upon to reduce the cost. The result was that, through the removal of the party-walls, which was a portion of the reduction, the building was burnt down: and, indeed, it was almost a providence that it was burnt, or a much more serious accident might have occurred, for the building might have collapsed when all the Post Office clerks were engaged in it. It had also turned out that, for cheapness' sake, the upper part of the tower was made of wood; and the result, very probably, would have been that, in a heavy wind, with the elasticity of the wood, and its enormous leverage-power, the tower would have tumbled in, and carried a great portion of the building with it. He did not believe in “tinkering” with these buildings. The design for the Auckland building was an excellent one, and if any reduction were made in the cost which would affect the strength of the building he would object. As for the accommodation, the officers of the department were called upon to say what accommodation they wanted, not for the present time, but for the near future, and the design was made accordingly. It was utterly absurd, for the sake of £4,000 or £5,000, either to throw on the future the necessity of putting up another building, or to put up an unsatisfactory building now. Therefore he could not support the amendment.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the arguments of the honourable member for Christchurch North showed that the architects employed by the colony were not competent to do their work. The honourable gentleman said that it was a

good thing that the Wellington Post-office was burned down, or a worse accident would have happened; and that showed that the architects had not done their work properly.

Sir J. VOGEL would like to explain that he was very much misinformed if it was not the Minister who went through every item of the reductions in that building.

Mr. J. McKENZIE thought, notwithstanding all this, that £12,000 ought to be sufficient to erect the Auckland building, and he would press his motion to a division.

Mr. MARCHANT dissented altogether from the principle that they ought to put up buildings much larger than were required at the present time. What would be thought of a farmer who, when he was poor and struggling, put up a residence suitable to the condition in which he would be in ten or twelve years' time? He would simply be called a madman; and yet that was what they were supposed to do in the case of these public buildings. He would vote for the reduction.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN would like the Committee to understand that, if they did not cut this vote down, there was not the smallest chance of their cutting down any vote on the estimates, as this was a most suitable one to reduce.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the item be reduced by £1,000."

AYES, 33.

Allen	Hutchison	Rhodes
Anderson	Izard	Richardson, E.
Barron	Joyce	Russell
Beetham	Macarthur	Samuel
Blake	Mackenzie, M.	Stewart, W. D.
Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	Tanner
Duncan	McGregor	Whyte
Fish	O'Callaghan	Wilson.
Fitzherbert	Ormond	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fulton	Perceval	Marchant
Guinness	Reeves, W. P.	McKenzie, J.
Hodgkinson		

NOES, 41.

Atkinson	Kelly	Ross
Bruce	Kerr	Seddon
Cadman	Lance	Seymour
Carroll	Lawry	S.-Menteath
Cowan	Levestam	Taiwhanga
Dodson	Mills	Thompson, R.
Fergus	Mitchelson	Thompson, T.
Fisher	Moat	Turnbull
Goldie	Monk	Vogel
Grey	Moss	Ward
Grimmond	Newman	Withy.
Hislop	O'Connor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Jackson	Parata	Fitchett
Jones	Richardson, G.	Peacock.

Majority against, 8.

Amendment negatived, and vote, £19,300, agreed to.

Judicial, £10,950.

Mr. O'CONOR said he had previously drawn the attention of successive Governments to the need there was for a Courthouse at Westport, the present building letting in the rain, and in every respect being dilapidated and

totally unfit for the purpose for which it was used; it was almost untenable.

Mr. GUINNESS did not know upon what principle the Government acted in these matters. He had applied for a sum for the erection of a Courthouse at Brunnerton, which he considered quite as important a place as Port Chalmers, and he was told that there was no money available, the reason being that there was a Courthouse at Greymouth, which was only eight miles distant, and was connected by rail. Exactly the same reasoning would apply to Port Chalmers, the distance to Dunedin being precisely the same; yet there was a vote for £300 on the estimates for Port Chalmers.

Sir J. VOGEL thought there was here a glorious opportunity for the arch-priest of the Young New Zealand party to show that he was prepared to carry out the principles which he preached. This vote was evidently not required this year, and there was no liability incurred. He believed that there was some engagement with the municipal body that they and the Government should share the expense of putting up a building; but the municipal body was wealthy, and the community had lately come unexpectedly into a large sum of money, and probably would not ask the Government to share the expense; so that the colony might hope to escape this expenditure. But, however that might be, he thought this was a good opportunity for the honourable member for Port Chalmers to show that he could be as great a man as the old Roman father, and show his willingness to sacrifice his district to his principles by moving that this vote be struck out.

Mr. MILLS was sorry he could not accept the invitation of the honourable member for Christchurch North. This item had appeared on the estimates before. Indeed, it was on the estimates the honourable gentleman himself prepared last year, and was the result of an engagement made by the Government with the late Mr. Macandrew. The Municipal Corporation were erecting buildings of an extensive character to provide for their requirements, and also for a Courthouse, Police Department, and sergeant's residence, as well as for a Town-hall and Municipal Chambers. As a matter of course, the arrangement which had been come to would be carried out, and the Government would get the accommodation it required on very reasonable terms.

Mr. FISH said this vote differed very materially from the last. First of all, it did not attempt to exceed the appropriation made by the last Parliament; and, secondly, there was this fact: that the business of the country, so far as the police business was concerned, in Port Chalmers was carried on in an utterly unsuitable building. And it was now proposed to give ample accommodation for several departments at the very small expenditure of £700.

Mr. FITZHERBERT considered the sum an absurd one. In his district, with seven or eight times the population of Port Chalmers,

they had a building which had cost £100 and provided ample accommodation for their requirements. He felt sure that £100 would be ample to provide the Courthouse. If the people at Port Chalmers wanted a Town-hall they should provide it at their own cost. It was because this Town-hall was wanted that this sum of £700 was asked for.

Mr. BARRON said the accommodation was required at Port Chalmers, and this arrangement was one that had been come to by the previous Government, and would provide the required accommodation at a small cost. If the item were struck out of the estimates it would be, practically, a breach of faith, as the engagement had been entered into.

Sir J. VOGEL thought the honourable member for Port Chalmers was not doing justice to his constituents. A community that could raise £100,000 without any security really, one might say, could not require the paltry sum of £300 in the way of assistance towards the erection of municipal buildings. It was by small economies of this kind that savings would be effected. He would ask the honourable gentleman in charge of the estimates if any inconvenience would follow if this vote were not passed. He felt certain it would not be required till next year; and, if that were so, why should they have the estimates loaded with unnecessary votes?

Major ATKINSON said the difficulty they were in was that the Government of the honourable member for Christchurch North had committed them to a work which he apparently considered not very necessary; and, to save their credit, the Government were obliged to carry out an arrangement the honourable gentleman had made and did not think very much of now.

Mr. PERCEVAL would come to the rescue of the Government, and, as they had admitted that the vote was unnecessary, would favour its being struck out at once. It seemed to him that, if they were going to carry out retrenchment, one of the easiest forms of retrenchment in the Department of Justice would be to dispense with some of these Resident Magistrates' Courts altogether. Port Chalmers was close to Dunedin, the places were connected by rail, and he thought the Port Chalmers' Resident Magistrate's Court might be abolished. This £300 was a new item, and might very well be struck out. If they were going to reduce at all they had better begin at once. It seemed to him the Committee was not in the humour to reduce at all; but the spirit that was now evinced was quite foreign to that of their election speeches. He did not altogether agree with the remarks that had fallen from the honourable member for Christchurch North with regard to assisting the Government to carry their estimates, and should resist the granting of any sum which he felt was not required by the country. If honourable members adopted that course he thought they would save the colony from a very great deal of extravagant expenditure.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN moved, That the item

*Mr. Fitzherbert*

"Courthouse, Port Chalmers, £300," be struck out. He should like to know whether the Government had accepted all the votes promised by the late Government; because, if they accepted this one, they should also accept a promise made by the late Government to carry out works of vast importance to a large number of settlers who had suffered from heavy floods. If the Government refused to carry out a promise in one case, they ought also to refuse in the other.

Dr. FITCHETT maintained that this building was required at Port Chalmers, and he hoped the Committee would pass the vote.

Mr. FISH considered it as a matter of absolute fairness that this vote should be passed, although he thought that the business could be done much better at Dunedin.

Mr. MILLS said this building was not only to serve as a Courthouse, but was to contain quarters for the police sergeant and his family, police office, cells, and Customhouse, and, altogether, would give a very large amount of accommodation for the amount of money involved. Port Chalmers was still a large rendezvous for shipping, and the dépôt of the English ships and steamers; and it was well known that where there was considerable shipping there was also a good deal of Court-work.

Mr. ROSS hoped that before the money was expended the Government would make inquiry into the circumstances under which the site of this Courthouse was obtained. Only one member of the late Ministry was acquainted with the facts as to how the Port Chalmers people got that property. Many years ago, when the Otago Harbour Board was constituted, the Provincial Government conveyed to the Board, among other things, a building which stands on this site at Port Chalmers, and the Board had used it as an office ever since. About eighteen months ago the officers of the Board were very much surprised one day to find workmen coming on the premises and boring for foundations—they said, the foundations of a Courthouse. On inquiry it was found that the site had been conveyed in a surreptitious manner to the Port Chalmers Corporation by a Bill called the Port Chalmers Fire-Brigade Site Bill. That Bill had been advertised in only one of the local papers, which at the time had a limited circulation, the fact that the land was to be taken from the Board not being mentioned, and the number of the section being incorrectly shown on the plan submitted to the Government for approval: "406" was the number given, whereas the correct number was "408." He thought the Government should make inquiry into the circumstances.

Mr. MACARTHUR hoped these items would be passed without more discussion. The votes had evidently been prepared with great care, and the Committee should get on with the business.

Mr. FULTON said if the Government intended to continue the Court sittings at Port Chalmers another building was most certainly wanted. The present one would hardly hold a score of people, and when a lot of sailors

crowded into it, as they sometimes did, the want of ventilation and room was very much felt. He thought, however, the Court business might be done at Dunedin.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN had no doubt whatever that, though it was said this building would only cost the colony £700, it would really be £1,500 before they had done with it, as it was stated that it was to be used for three purposes, and was, in fact, to be a sort of general public building for Port Chalmers.

Mr. FISH said the building was the joint property of the Corporation and the Government, and there was an arrangement to build in conjunction, for the purposes of both the Government and the Corporation.

Mr. FERGUS said the late Government had entered into negotiations with the Corporation on the matter, and had agreed that the colony should give £700 towards the building. The Public Works Department had objected to the first plans submitted by the Corporation, and fresh plans had now been prepared. The Government would use their portion of the building for a Courthouse, policemen's quarters, and Customhouse. It was quite true the Government had no Courthouse site of their own there—it had been given away. The Court sat there twice a week, he believed, and most of the work was done by the local Justices.

Mr. ROSS asked if, in addition to paying £700 down, the Government would have to make any further payment in the shape of rent.

Mr. FERGUS was not aware that the Government would have to do so. In Lyttelton the Government paid £100 a year rent for these purposes.

Mr. FITZHERBERT said this was really giving a local body £700 of the colony's money to put up a local public building. If it was absolutely necessary to have a new Courthouse there, one quite suitable for the place could be put up for £100, and with policemen's quarters as well for £200. It was quite evident that the money was not being given so much for the erection of a Courthouse as to help the local Corporation to get a public building.

Dr. FITCHETT thought, as a capital cost of £700 represented £35 a year, it was a most economical arrangement to get buildings for Courthouse, Customhouse, and police-station for that sum.

Mr. BUCHANAN said it was absurd to talk about getting a building for those three purposes for £200. Why, a simple shepherd's cottage in a country district cost £100.

Mr. W. P. REEVES asked if it was absolutely certain the Government would not have to pay rent as well.

Mr. MITCHELSON thought the Government certainly should not have to pay rent.

Mr. W. P. REEVES asked the honourable gentleman to give a pledge that no rent would be paid.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the item, 'Courthouse, Port Chalmers, £200,' be omitted."

# AYES, 28.

Allen	Loughrey	Ross
Anderson	Mackenzie, M.	Russell
Beetham	Mackenzie, T.	Samuel
Blake	Marchant	Tanner
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Fitzherbert	Ormond	Vogel.
Fulton	Pearson	
Hodgkinson	Perceval	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison	Reeves, W. P.	Guinness
Jones	Rhodes	O'Callaghan.

# NOES, 47.

Atkinson	Jackson	Seymour
Bruce	Kelly	Smith
Buchanan	Lance	Steward, W. J.
Cadman	Lawry	S.-Menteath
Cowan	Levestam	Taipua
Dodson	Macarthur	Thompson, R.
Feldwick	McGregor	Thompson, T.
Fergus	Mitchelson	Turnbull
Fisher	Moat	Walker
Fish	Moss	Ward
Fitchett	Newman	Whyte
Fraser	O'Connor	Wilson
Goldie	Peacock	Withy.
Grimmond	Richardson, E.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Richardson, G.	Barron
Izard	Seddon	Mills.

Majority against, 19.

Item retained.

Sir J. VOGEL called attention to the Mount Cook Prison, Wellington. It seemed to him a terrible thing that a large central prison should be erected in a city like Wellington, and especially on its present site, which was about the finest in New Zealand. Wellington was a fortified city, and, although it was not probable than an enemy's cruiser would enter the harbour, still it was possible, and if she were to bombard the town this prison would be the most conspicuous object, and it would be absolute cruelty to use the building as a prison with a number of people confined in it unless it were fortified, and that at enormous expense. Again, it was against all modern practice to put a large prison in the centre of a city, and they were now universally placed somewhere away in the country. The effect of continuing to use this building as a prison would be to collect a convict population in town, for the families of convicts would naturally come and settle down near the prison, and the result would be most undesirable. He was informed that not a single prisoner had been drafted to the new wing at Lyttelton Gaol during the five or six years it had been in existence; and, if it was desirable to draft prisoners from one prison to another, why should not that prison be used? He would say, give this site to the City of Wellington as an endowment for the University; do anything with it, but do not let it continue to be used as a prison. It might be asked why he had not put a stop to it when in office. He candidly confessed that he had been overruled in the matter, and he felt that it would be a lasting error to continue to use the building as a prison. He would recommend the Minister for

Public Works to take only such a vote as would cover existing liabilities.

Mr. LEVESTAM would like an explanation as to the item, "Buildings not specified, £150." The hovel in which the Supreme Court sat in Nelson was in a very bad state, and many applications had been made to have it repaired; and something ought to be done. Was this £150 for repairs all over the colony?

Mr. MITCHELSON said the repairs were done out of consolidated revenue. This sum was required to put up small lock-ups.

Mr. PEARSON moved, That the item, "Wellington (new prison, Mount Cook), £4,000," be reduced by £5. He moved this as an indication that the work should be stopped.

Mr. ALLEN said he would be only too glad if they could strike the whole item out. The late Government authorised the construction of this prison.—(No.)—During the time those honourable gentlemen were in office the work was going on. It had now gone so far that it was impossible to stop the work, or turn the building to any other use.

Mr. LEVESTAM said the previous Government were in exactly the same position as the present Government with reference to this work. This prison was commenced, he believed, in 1880 or 1881.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked what had been the total expenditure hitherto on this building.

Major ATKINSON.—£27,000.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—That is, including the liabilities here?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; I think so.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN said that that meant that somewhere about £50,000 would be spent on this building. He thought it would be a very wise thing if the Government could even now put a stop to any further expenditure on the work. It was a great mistake to have started the building.

Sir J. VOGEL said he had had no part in the commencement of this building. It was going on when the late Government took office. He felt so strongly the injury which would be done to the community by allowing this building to proceed that he thought it would be better to lose the money which had been expended and allow the site to be used for some other purpose, rather than that the work should be continued.

Major ATKINSON said another £2,000 or £3,000 would be required to complete the work, in addition to what was put down in the estimates. He felt as strongly as anybody that it was a great mistake for a prison to be there, and, if possible, he would like to see a stop put to the work. The Government would consider the question during the recess. However, £27,000 had already been spent, and it was questionable whether they would be justified in stopping the building.

Dr. NEWMAN asked what Government began this work.

Major ATKINSON said it was approved in 1880-81. Sir John Hall was then Premier, and he (Major Atkinson) was Treasurer. The work was started in 1882-83.

*Sir J. Vogel*

Amendment to reduce item by £5 agreed to.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked what would be the total cost of the building.

Major ATKINSON said it would be £34,000. He understood that was the cost, if it were let by contract.

Mr. GUINNESS thought the Government should explain the effect of the amendment which had been carried.

Major ATKINSON understood that they would go on with the small sum voted, and next year they would ask the House to consider the matter and say what steps ought to be taken. He did not think it would do to hastily abandon the work without due consideration.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked the Government whether they took the decision of the Committee in regard to this item as indicating their desire that the works should cease.

Major ATKINSON said the Committee could not decide that question without having further information before it, and the matter would be brought before Parliament next year.

Vote, £10,950, as reduced by £5, £10,945, agreed to.

Vote, Postal and Telegraph, £3,640.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN moved, That the item, "Marlborough, £100," be struck out.

Item retained.

Vote, Customs, £20.

Mr. MOSS said his opinion was that the real question was not whether these works were necessary or not, but whether they ought not to be on the other estimates, as they had no right to be on the estimates which disposed of borrowed money.

Vote agreed to.

Vote, Lunatic Asylums, £29,000.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON asked what was going to be done in regard to the Wellington Asylum, for which £2,000 was proposed. It would appear that it was intended to put up a building at Porirua; but, in the opinion of the department, subsequently, it was thought better to make a rearrangement of the present building in Wellington, and have a series of detached cottages.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the item was placed on the estimates as it was necessary, but he had come to the conclusion not to spend the money even if it was voted. No contract would be let or engagement entered into until the House had had an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the subject.

Mr. TURNBULL asked if it was intended to remove the asylum at Porirua.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said he had been going to ask that question himself.

Mr. LEVESTAM inquired whether any provision was to be made at Porirua or elsewhere for the detention of inebriates. At present inebriates were placed in the ordinary lunatic asylums, which was not only contrary to law, but a great hardship upon them. He had seen such persons confined in the Nelson Lunatic Asylum, and they were almost heartbroken at their position. He had brought the matter under the notice of the late Government, and they had admitted that it was illegal and quite

wrong, and had promised to consider the matter.

Mr. MITCHELSON said he was not in a position to answer the question.

Mr. ALLEN moved, That the item, "Porirua, £2,000," be reduced by £500. There was to credit of the vote now, free of liabilities, £793; and, if the vote were reduced as proposed, that would leave the Government a balance of £293. There was already one large asylum in Wellington, and also a building of considerable size at Porirua; and he could see no reason why the vote should not be reduced.

Mr. PERCEVAL understood the Minister to say that he would not spend the vote until the House had had an opportunity of reconsidering the question. If so, why should the vote be put on the estimates? or why should the House retain it?

Mr. BUCHANAN would like to know how it came about that the Government bought this site and had proceeded to erect buildings on it. The whole thing seemed new to the House. How came it that Wellington had two asylums?

Mr. FITZHERBERT took it that the reason was this: that the asylum in town was pretty full, and there was little or no land connected with it, and that the idea was to have at Porirua a farm, upon which the milder patients might work, to the advantage of themselves mentally and to the advantage of the asylum economically.

Dr. NEWMAN said that when Dr. Grabham was Inspector of Lunatic Asylums he recommended this purchase, and there was no doubt that, from the lunacy point of view, he was quite right. The land in connection with the Wellington Asylum was not sufficiently large for the purpose, and was cold and unsuitable in every respect. Hence the suggestion of Dr. Grabham. It was the more necessary to carry out the suggestion because, unfortunately, lunacy was on the increase, and all the asylums were getting more and more full. The purchase was made by the late Government, under the express sanction of the honourable member for Kaiapoi.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—No.

Dr. NEWMAN said the honourable gentleman authorised payment of the purchase-money, and year by year authorised payment of money on the building; and he did not for a moment dispute that the honourable gentleman was perfectly justified in doing so, in view of the fact that the Wellington Asylum was already chock-a-block.

Dr. FITCHETT asked that the Government should give some indication of what their views were. It seemed rather absurd that honourable members should be expected to evolve out of their own inner consciousness reasons for retaining or striking out the vote.

Mr. TURNBULL asked if it was intended to build in brick or wood at Porirua.

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that the proposal before the department was to build in brick; but, in answer to the honourable member for Dunedin Central, he must say that the

Government had not had time to consider the matter.

Mr. PEACOCK suggested that it was not necessary to go into the affair now, seeing that the Minister had assured the House that no contract should be let before the House met again.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said the honourable member for Thorndon contradicted him so positively that he began to think that he was wrong in denying the responsibility sought to be put upon him; but he had just seen the officials of the department, and their statements fortified him in the opinion that the land was bought long before the late Government took office.

Dr. NEWMAN would like to know if the honourable member would deny that his late colleague, Mr. Buckley, and Mr. Kennedy Macdonald conducted the purchase from Mr. Earp. If so, he (Dr. Newman) would be prepared to give the price, and particulars, for he had a full knowledge of the whole transaction.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON had given his recollection and that of the officials. However, it was not a matter of consequence. He believed it was a good purchase.

Mr. ALLEN said he had not moved his amendment in total ignorance of the facts. He had visited the place, had been over the asylum, and knew that they were now erecting there buildings capable of holding thirty patients. There was, besides, a very large lunatic asylum in Wellington.

Dr. FITCHETT said it was full.

Mr. ALLEN did not care whether it was full or not. At a time like this, when they were trying to save every halfpenny, they should not spend so much money on what was really a luxury. He asked honourable gentlemen to take this vote as a test. If they could reduce any vote in the estimates this was one that could be reduced, and he would invite them to go into the lobby with him as a test of their sincerity in reducing expenditure. The asylum at Porirua was not full; and he might say that, to his certain knowledge, there were persons in lunatic asylums who were not lunatics in the proper sense of the word, and who ought to be removed—people who were inebriates, and so on, who had no right to be maintained at such institutions. He was quite certain that the present was not a desirable time for the expenditure of £30,000 on these buildings.

Mr. HISLOP thought it was only wasting time to discuss this matter, after the assurance that had been given; and it was a matter of no consequence whether they knocked the vote off or not. There was a tendency on the part of the department to run into extravagance, and they ought to watch it well; but he had the greatest sympathy with the sentiment that people who were in these asylums should receive everything that was necessary. Of course it was a matter of difficulty to find out the line which divided what should be regarded as luxuries and what were absolute necessities. He did not think there would be any incon-

venience if £400 were knocked off, and he would not object to that being done.

Mr. ALLEN was willing to accept a reduction of the vote by £400.

Mr. TURNBULL was of opinion that all the money asked for would be required to put the place in order, and to erect the necessary boundary-fences.

Mr. BRUCE thought they were dealing with this matter in a very haphazard manner. The item in question was bracketed with that referring to the Wellington Asylum, and they did not know how much of the cost was dissociated from the cost of the Wellington Asylum. The question of the purchase of this land was quite irrelevant at the present time. The department, in view of the fact that the Wellington Asylum was full to overflowing, recommended the expenditure of £2,000 to enlarge the Porirua Asylum, and neither the Minister nor any member was in a position to say that they ought to reduce the vote.

Mr. FISHER was not anxious, as a Wellington member, about this vote; but would point out that the Wellington Asylum took all the lunatics from Hawke's Bay on the one coast to Wanganui on the other.

Mr. VALENTINE hoped the Minister would not agree to this reduction, as it was the amount the department estimated was required. It seemed to him that it was not extravagant to have a brick building, but that all over the colony these buildings should be constructed of the least inflammable material possible.

Mr. ALLEN said that, as the Minister assured him that £30,000 should be struck off the third column, he was perfectly prepared to let the vote go.

Dr. NEWMAN remarked that they were not yet at the third column, and that he regretted exceedingly that the Minister had accepted this reduction; for he believed it would have been a good thing to have had this little extra money.

Mr. TAYLOR thought the question was a very important one, and that the item should not be reduced. The people in these institutions were entitled to the sympathy of every one, and every care should be taken to provide for their comfort and safety.

Mr. KELLY was sorry to notice that the Minister was met with such opposition from members of his own party, who should surely have enough confidence in him to allow him to carry out his estimates, especially when honourable members on the opposite side of the House were supporting him. It seemed to him that the item ought not to be reduced.

Mr. IZARD hoped that all opposition to the vote would be withdrawn. He believed the money was required to be expended. It was necessary to fence and drain the land, and there were other small matters which should be attended to; and, so far as he could see, these would demand all the money asked for.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the item be reduced by £100."

Mr. Hislop

AYES, 15.

Anderson	McGregor	Samuel
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Tanner.
Guinness	Monk	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hodgkinson	O'Callaghan	Allen
Mackenzie, T.	Rhodes	Buchanan.
Marchant		

NOES, 36.

Atkinson	Grimmond	Moss
Beetham	Hislop	Newman
Bruce	Hutchison	Peacock
Cadman	Izard	Richardson, G.
Carroll	Jones	Ross
Dodson	Joyce	Seymour
Feldwick	Kelly	Taylor
Fisher	Lawry	Thompson, T.
Fish	Levestam	Withy.
Fitchett	Macarthur	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fitzherbert	Mitchelson	Turnbull
Fraser	Moat	Valentine.
Goldie		

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Barron	Russell
Kerr	Wilson
Mackenzie, M. J. S.	Lance
Mills	Ward
Reeves, W. P.	Ormond
Seddon	Fulton
Stewart, W. D.	Whyte.

Majority against, 21.

Item retained.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE moved, That the item, "Seacliff Asylum, £2,000," be reduced by £1,500.

Mr. FISH asked the Minister for Public Works to explain what this vote was for.

Mr. MITCHELSON explained that it was for the purpose of providing the institution with gas, and for the erection of a doctor's residence.

Mr. BRUCE understood that the site was absolutely unsafe; and he should like some information on the subject. If the ground could not be made safe, it should be a direction of the Committee not to spend a penny more upon it than was absolutely necessary.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the Minister for Public Works had a number of reports about this building, and a report had been sent in to the effect that it was unsafe for the patients to be there. There should be no gasworks or other new buildings erected until it was ascertained whether the building was sound.

Mr. FISH said the reason of the slips arose from the Government officers neglecting to carry out what was recommended by the architect, Mr. Lawson. Mr. Lawson, who was a very-much-abused man, had caused several drains to be cut down to the bed-rock in connection with the temporary buildings to take away the water running down. When these drains were constructed the buildings ceased slipping. Since 1879 the buildings had never slipped one bit. He would read a letter sent by Mr. Lawson to Mr. Blair, Engineer in Charge for the Middle Island, as follows:—



"Dunedin, 28rd October, 1879.

"W. N. Blair, Esq.,

"Engineer in Charge, Middle Island.

"SIR,—My attention having been called to the moving of foundations at the *temporary Lunatic Asylum Buildings*, Seacliff, lately erected, I have to state that it is urgently necessary, in order to prevent, if possible, further damage to the building, that drainage-trenches be sunk behind the same so as to intercept the undercurrent of ground-drainage which is causing the movement referred to.

"At the site of the permanent building I would also advise that similar but more extensive drainage-trenches be formed, so as to isolate the site, and prevent any similar movement, which would be most disastrous to the proposed new buildings. I think this of such importance that no delay should take place in the prosecution of the work.

"While on the ground I pointed out the nature of the required work, and that it would be better to keep the trenches referred to open, and to sink them as deep as possible, so as to obtain the result required.

"I hope steps will be taken to secure that this work is gone on with and completed as soon as possible.—Yours truly,

"R. A. LAWSON, Architect."

On the 16th January, 1880, he wrote again to Mr. Blair,—

"Dunedin, 16th January, 1880.

"W. N. Blair, Esq.,

"Engineer in Charge, Middle Island.

"SIR,—I have again to draw attention to the urgent necessity for more speedy action being taken as to the preliminary work at the site on the new permanent buildings.

"You are aware that, through a slip of ground which has taken place where the new *temporary building* is erected, much injury has resulted and may yet result; and, in order to prevent the possibility of such a serious matter occurring at the new permanent building, the site should be much more widely cleared of timber, and all the excavations made, as well as drains inserted to prevent undercurrents, which might cause such slips as those referred to.

"It was intended that the excavations and levelling of site, as well as the clearing of same, was to be done by patients from the Asylum, but it will now be seen by the ample trial of this system that sufficiently rapid progress cannot be made—in other words, that should it be continued it will be to the hindrance of the works, and probably much more serious results afterwards.

"I therefore now request you to be good enough to bring this matter before the Minister for Works, that it may be remedied by making arrangements with the contractor, under due restrictions, to proceed with these preliminary works with that necessary speed which their urgency calls for.—I have, &c.,

"R. A. LAWSON, Architect."

Now, the first work for the permanent building was commenced in September, 1879, by the

clearing of the ground only, and the actual work of building was not begun until May, 1880. That was the central portion of the building. The second portion, including the north and south wings, was begun in December, 1881, and it was the north wing alone that had been injured by the slipping. These letters were sent in preliminarily to any work being done on the permanent building; and yet, in the face of the strong recommendations made, these letters and others remained unanswered, and the very thing which Mr. Lawson predicted would occur had occurred through the fault of some one,—whether it was on the part of Mr. Blair—and he thought it was—or the Government of the day he did not know. But there was the fact on record: the very thing which was predicted had occurred, and the consequent serious loss; and no means were taken by the Engineer or by the Government to prevent the mischief which had been predicted. As to the effect of what Mr. Lawson proposed, there was not the smallest doubt that even now, if his recommendations were carried out, the building would cease to slip. How much it would cost to improve the building and put it in the position it was in before the slip took place he did not know; but, from the success which had attended the action taken to prevent the temporary building from slipping, there was no reason to doubt that the same remedial measures would even now be suitable for the permanent building. The wretched engineering work displayed in the building was most lamentable, and he had no hesitation in saying that either the Engineer in Charge was most culpable and blamable for neglecting the advice given in the letters he had read, or the Government were blamable; and in the meantime this unfortunate gentleman, Mr. Lawson, a well-known citizen of Dunedin, had lain under the opprobrium of absolutely receiving some emolument from the contractor in order to shirk his liability on the erection of the building. It was only right that the earliest opportunity should be taken by some one of putting that gentleman right. It was evident from these letters that the remedy was in the hands of the Government, although, of course, it would be very much more costly than if the work had been done when it was recommended. He thought that the vote should be passed, because it was absolutely necessary that the Government should render the building secure, and the longer it was left in the present condition the greater would be the damage done; and it was quite within the range of possibility that, unless immediate steps were taken in this direction, there might be an absolute falling-down of a portion of the building. It would therefore be exceedingly unwise to reduce the vote, although he was not sure as to the necessity of a doctor's residence being built. Of course, if the Government had to pay rent for a doctor's residence, possibly it would be the cheapest course to erect one; but, if not, that amount might be saved. As to erecting gasworks or an electric-lighting apparatus, that should be done; it was a large

building, and one of those modes of lighting should be immediately provided.

Mr. HISLOP thought it was a pity the honourable member for Dunedin South had raised the question as to who ought to be blamed with respect to the foundations of the building. He thought it would be very much more convenient that any inquiry with regard to it should be made at a time when all the parties blamed might have an opportunity of advancing their particular cases. There were two statements about it: one by the architect that blame was attachable to the Public Works Department because of their not carrying out the recommendations he made; while the Public Works Department thought blame was attachable to the inspection of the building, inasmuch as they say that the foundations were not put in by the contractor in the way it was indicated in the contract they should be. He did not intend to enter into that question himself, and he thought the honourable member should not ask the Committee to form any judgment until due time had been given for the inquiry which it was intended to hold into the matter. The Committee might have the assurance of the Government, with regard to the lighting, that, until the whole question as to the foundations was inquired into, and it was found what was the best course to pursue, no expense for permanent work should be incurred. The same assurance applied to the matter of the doctor's residence. There was no absolute necessity for a residence; but the asylum was very much crowded, and the part now used for a doctor's residence would be available for patients if a residence were erected. But the Government had not, so far, had time to fully inquire into the matter; and what they proposed was that, in the meantime, they should carry out the recommendations of the head of the department only to the extent of putting the money on the estimates. He thought the department was absolutely convinced that the money should be expended; but it would not be expended unless immediate remedial measures were carried out as to foundations, which, he believed, would require about £800.

Dr. FITCHETT was very glad to hear the statement of the Colonial Secretary; but, speaking with some knowledge of the building, he thought £800 would be totally inadequate to repair the building efficiently. He hoped the vote would not be reduced, though he hoped the Government would not go in for a scheme of electric lighting.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said it seemed to him, from what had been said, that the Government had already made inquiry, or they would not be able to make these recommendations. There must have been very careful inquiry and estimates made as to these foundations. Whatever money was wanted to make the foundations secure should be granted; but the House should distinctly say that no more money should be spent on fresh additions, such as gas-works or a doctor's residence, until the whole question of whether the building would stand or not was settled. If the Ministry would give

*Mr. Fish*

that assurance he would withdraw his amendment.

Mr. HISLOP said that was the understanding of the Government.

Mr. TAYLOR said there must have been had construction at the start, and probably if there had been better supervision the slips would not have happened.

Mr. FISH said the supervision had been as perfect as for any work that had ever been done in the colony, one of the best possible clerks of works being engaged. The subsidence did not result from the faulty construction of the foundations, but through the drainage being allowed to percolate on the bed-rock.

Mr. MITCHELSON said an engineer had been sent down to examine the building, and he was clearly of opinion that the foundations were not constructed in a proper manner.

Mr. ROSS had read all the letters of Mr. Lawson, and that gentleman did not blame Mr. Blair. He thought the blame lay in another quarter. He might say that it was scarcely courteous that a gentleman in Mr. Lawson's position should not have received any reply to his letters.

Mr. J. McKenzie's amendment withdrawn.

Dr. NEWMAN suggested that if the Government were to board out any of these lunatics it would be a great saving. There were many of them who might very well obtain employment among small settlers up-country. This was no new idea of his, as the plan had been tried in other places with great success.

Mr. KELLY did not think the small settlers would find these lunatics of any use to them.

Mr. TURNBULL had seen at Porirua Asylum a man who was as strong and healthy as himself, and, on asking him why he did not seek work outside, he said he did not like it. And yet they called this man a madman! There were many of these people who could very well be employed usefully outside.

Vote, £29,000, agreed to.

Hospitals and other charitable institutions, £8,000, agreed to.

Quarantine stations, £100, agreed to.

School-buildings, £40,000.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE wished to know whether any of this sum was to be spent on the Waitaki Girls' High School. The buildings at that place already were quite sufficient for years to come. The late Government made an arrangement to hand over a building which was erected for a Customhouse, and the Board exchanged that for another building which they turned into a girls' high school, so that there was no necessity for putting up any building there.

Mr. MITCHELSON was understood to say that it was not intended to devote any of this money to the purpose referred to.

Dr. FITCHETT asked whether this £40,000 involved any reduction.

Mr. MITCHELSON said it involved a considerable reduction.

Dr. FITCHETT understood that the Premier had said that he would give the House an opportunity of considering the whole question of the education expenditure; and if there was

a large reduction in this vote it might affect the whole question. He thought the Minister should allow the matter to stand over till the whole question was raised.

Major ATKINSON said the amount set down for school-buildings did not affect the general question, and had never been so treated by the House. There was no fixed amount for school-buildings: some years it was £50,000, some £60,000, and so on, as was considered necessary.

Mr. TURNBULL would strongly recommend the Premier to come down with a proposition to take another £500,000 and hand it over to Commissioners, to be invested by them for school-buildings. That would give an annual income for all time of £25,000 for that purpose. As the matter stood at present, when the money taken out of this loan was exhausted they would either have to tax the districts for any school-buildings they might require, or the buildings needed would have to be paid for out of consolidated revenue.

Dr. NEWMAN would like to ask the Minister in charge whether it was the intention to bring down any more votes under this head. He felt certain that the amount here put down would not be sufficient. In the Wellington District they were behindhand with their school accommodation. The amount which had been voted for this district for some years had been insufficient.

Mr. BUCHANAN indorsed the statement made by the honourable member for Thorndon. A large number of children in the Wellington District were not attending school, owing to the want of building-accommodation.

Major ATKINSON said that it meant that, after this loan, they were not going to borrow any more money for school-buildings. They must get the money in some other way.

Vote, School-buildings, £40,000, agreed to.

#### CLASS IX.—LIGHTHOUSES, HARBOUR-WORKS, AND HARBOUR DEFENCES.

Lighthouses, £4,300.

Mr. TURNBULL asked what was the charge for light-dues at the present time. They had spent £150,000 in building lighthouses, and there was a large annual expenditure in maintaining the lighthouses. His opinion was that the lighthouse dues were so low that the colony was losing a considerable amount of money in consequence.

Major ATKINSON said the charge was 4d. a ton for steamers, 6d. a ton for foreign sailing vessels every time they arrived in port, and 4d. for coastal vessels.

Mr. TURNBULL asked if the Union Company's steamers came under the heading of coasting vessels.

Major ATKINSON said they were treated as coasters, but on coming from the other colonies they were treated as foreign vessels.

Mr. TURNBULL said the present low rate for these steamers was unjust to the colony. The colony should raise sufficient revenue from these dues to pay the interest on the expenditure on lighthouses.

Vote, £4,800, agreed to.

Harbour-works, £500, agreed to.

The House adjourned at half-past two o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Saturday, 17th December, 1887.

Special Powers and Contracts Bill—Government Railways Bill—Land Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### SPECIAL POWERS AND CONTRACTS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—Sir, honourable members are aware that legislation of the nature of the Special Powers and Contracts Act is peculiar to New Zealand. Legislation of such a character is not tolerated in any other part of the world—certainly not in any other part of the British dominions, where, I believe, legislation of such a character would not be tolerated for a moment. The system originated with us ten years ago in the passing of a Bill to authorise Crown grants being issued under certain circumstances; and the practice since then has gradually developed from that until it has attained its present proportions. Last year the Hon. the Attorney-General took up the matter, and made a most valuable and exhaustive speech on the subject, which will amply repay honourable members for the time and trouble spent in reading it in *Hansard*; so that it is perfectly unnecessary for me to go over the same ground. I will only remark, Sir, that, although last year he and the Council generally put themselves to a great extent in opposition to the system, and excised a large number of the provisions of the Act, still it contained a number of provisions which go to exemplify the objectionable character of this kind of legislation. In looking through the Special Powers and Contracts Act of last year it is apparent that it is a local Act. It is placed among local measures, so that any person wishing to make himself acquainted with the provisions of legislation generally would be apt to overlook Acts of this description. Probably it would never occur to him that it was possible that in a Bill of this kind provisions should be introduced overriding general Acts of the Legislature. The extent to which this operates is shown by that very useful publication which is published periodically, and which we have laid on the table, called "Curnin's Index," in which are introduced all amendments in the law that have been adopted by the Legislature. But, in looking through it, I observe that one of the amendments of the law which have been passed in the Special Powers and Contracts Act, and which would have the effect of altering the legislation of the country, has been entirely overlooked by Mr. Curnin. Proficient as he is in the art of dealing with

our legislation, he himself has fallen into the inadvertency of not examining local Acts to see whether they contained provisions which affected the general legislation of the country. Last year there was introduced into the Special Powers and Contracts Act a provision relating to the Land Transfer Act—a measure that was applicable to the colony and not to a particular district. There were also in it provisions affecting the Rating Act, provisions introducing amendments in the Corporations Act, in the Public Trustee Act, and a number of other Acts; so that it is impossible for any person who is not acquainted with local legislation as well as general legislation to know the law of the land on each subject. Not only so, but these Bills often contain a variety of provisions of an exclusively local nature which, owing to their being introduced into a Bill of this sort, do not pass through the ordeal that other local Bills would pass through, and therefore are not so keenly criticized. And not only that, Sir, but, as honourable members are aware, these provisions, of the very important nature that they are, are brought in at the last moment of the session. To my knowledge, frequently these Bills have come up from the other branch of the Legislature having clauses in them that were still in manuscript and which we have had to consider in this Council while still in manuscript. This is so well known to honourable members that I need not further refer to it. Every member in this Council must arrive at the conclusion that this mode of legislation is objectionable; and the sooner we do away with it and arrive at a correct class of legislation the better. There is reason to believe, I hear, that no measure of this sort will be introduced during the present session of Parliament; but, nevertheless, I think it desirable to proceed with the present motion, because it gives ample notice to succeeding Governments of what is the intention of the Council. They cannot hereafter say that they are taken by surprise, and I trust the effect will be that this objectionable mode of legislation will be done away with altogether. Where legislation is required for a particular object, that particular object should be the subject of a particular Bill. I have introduced into the motion words taken from the Instructions to the Governor. These Instructions have not, apparently, been always carried out; they state what is the wholesome system of legislation, and what is the system adopted in other parts of the British dominions, and indicate the course which should be followed in all our Bills. It is, "That, in the passing of all laws, each different matter should be provided for by a different law, without intermixing in one and the same law such things as have no proper relation to each other." Honourable members are aware that this principle is violated, and has been violated in every Special Powers and Contracts Act that we have passed. I trust we shall insert this principle on our records, and that this objectionable mode of legislation will not be recurred to in succeeding sessions. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

*Hon. Mr. Waterhouse*

Motion made, and question proposed, "*That this Council, considering it of the highest importance that, in the passing of all laws, each different matter should be provided for by a different law, without intermixing in one and the same law such things as have no proper relation to each other, will refuse to sanction any proposed legislation of the nature of the Special Powers and Contracts Act.*"—(Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.)

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—I do not see that there is anything very dangerous or objectionable in our Special Powers and Contracts Bills. It seems to me that any Special Powers and Contracts Bill is intended to meet a large number of hard cases—there are such things—and to legalise rights which cannot very well be upheld in any Court of law or equity, or by any other means whatever. It is quite right, therefore, that there should be some means of meeting such cases, and doing justice where it is demanded; and, as for a number of cases being put together in one Bill, well, if there are fifty cases, I do not see any harm in putting them in one measure instead of having an Act for each special case.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—The Council, I am sure, is aware of the fact that nobody has opposed Bills of this character more than I have, and especially during the session of 1886, when there was a great cry about this class of Bills. No doubt there are a great many things introduced into these Bills which ought not to be in them; and I think that things affecting local matters, altering public statutes, should not be introduced in such a form. But, on the other hand, there are things which may properly be introduced into a Bill of this kind. In the Bill of 1886 there were about one hundred cases. I am speaking now from recollection, but I think the Council struck out about sixty or seventy of the items; but many were passed owing to certain promises having been made from time to time. And these Bills have been assented to by the Assembly from time to time; and it was thought by the majority of the Council that it was not desirable to strike out every one of these objectionable cases. But I do not think we need pass a motion of this kind this session. I think it would be unwise. The motion refers to the intermixing in one and the same law of such things as have no proper relation to each other. It would be very awkward, no doubt, to pass a separate Act—which would require to go through all the necessary forms before and after its introduction—for each of these cases. I may say that I am not aware that there is a Special Powers and Contracts Bill coming down this session. So far as I know, there is no intention on the part of the Government to introduce such a Bill this session; but, if such a Bill came through my hands, I would take care that it did not contain such objectionable provisions as are contained in the Act of 1886. If I had been the honourable gentleman who moved this motion I would have waited, and then, if a Bill of this character were introduced, I would raise the question on the prin-

ciple that has been alluded to—introducing several cases into the Act of a totally different character. But I think it is better to let the matter stand over as it is at present, and that we should wait until we have something to deal with, some case of the kind he complains of, and then lay down some rules for the future. I think the Council could very well prescribe a rule. The Council were unanimous on the subject when the question was previously raised, and I think the report of the Committee which was appointed for the purpose of considering the subject was generally acceded to. If my honourable friend would withdraw the motion, the Council would in future have an opportunity of dealing with any Bill which contains any principle of the objectionable nature to which he referred.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—It seems to me very strange that the Hon. the Attorney-General cannot inform the Council whether such a Bill as the Special Powers and Contracts Bill is to come down or not this session. The present notice has been on the Order Paper for some time, and surely the honourable gentleman has had an opportunity of consulting with his colleagues, and of saying whether such a Bill is to come down or not.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I have not heard of any Bill of that kind coming down.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—The honourable gentleman says he has not heard of any Bill of that kind coming down; but I think that there have been so many transactions—very shady transactions—carried through by these Bills that it is necessary, if introduced, that they should be brought down early in the session, so that the Council may have an opportunity of saying whether they shall be passed or not. It is all very well to propose that the motion should be postponed till next week, because honourable members will be going away, and Ministers will be carrying on with a handful of members. I think the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse deserves the thanks of the Council for taking up the matter as he has done, and I know that the Council will carry this resolution, because the Government have had ample opportunity of knowing whether there was such a Bill or not coming down. And, seeing that the Hon. the Attorney-General cannot say for certain that such a Bill is not coming down, the only way is to carry the resolution which has been moved.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—I have much pleasure in supporting the motion of my honourable friend Mr. Waterhouse. I think it very necessary indeed that some such resolution should be come to as that which is proposed. In times gone by the dissatisfaction and ill-feeling that have been evoked in the Council in consequence of many bad propositions contained in these Bills were such that they ought not to be permitted to recur. I cannot say whether a Bill should not be brought in to meet any special claim that may properly arise; but I think that those cases should not be massed in a conglomeration which very few honourable members would give attention to at

the end of the session. I think the sooner we put a stop to this sort of thing the better, and I shall be glad to support such a motion as this.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I hope my honourable friend will go on with his resolution. The Hon. the Attorney-General has laid great stress on the Special Powers and Contracts Act of 1886. I think we did, on that occasion, strike out one-half of the local Bills “dodges”—I think they were called “swindles”—that were proposed in that Bill. I think we struck them out at the instance of the Hon. Dr. Pollen, who is not now here, and it was at his instance that a great deal of pruning was effected in the measure. No one could have objected more to the passing of that Bill than did my honourable friend. I looked over and referred to the measure which formed the subject of discussion in the Council yesterday. If I had looked in the schedule I should have found it there, no doubt; but I had some trouble in finding it, though I found it at last in the Special Powers and Contracts Bill, which had no reference whatever to the Bill under discussion. I think that there should be some means to indicate the nature of the provisions in measures of this sort, and the statutes they affect. I think it is not right to put these Bills through at the end of the session; and, although I have endeavoured to put two or three through myself, I must say I always object to that, and I still object to it. I hope the Council will pass this resolution, and that we shall never allow any more of these Bills to be brought forward and passed.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—With reference to the request of the Hon. the Attorney-General that I should withdraw the motion, I should have pleasure in doing so if I felt that the course was desirable in itself. But I do not agree with the argument upon which the honourable gentleman has recommended me to adopt that course. He said that there is no such Bill now before the Legislature, and that it is time enough to lay down such a rule when one is before us. When a Bill of that kind is before us, it would then be said it is too late to do this—that I should have taken steps before, in order to prevent the Bill being brought in. I feel that it would be making a great mistake to delay the tabling of a resolution of this character. If the resolution is adopted, I hope the result will be that this objectionable mode of legislation will be stopped, and that every different measure will be introduced as a separate Bill.

Motion agreed to.

#### GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I think the Council will agree as to the necessity of a Bill of this character being brought forward. There is, no doubt, a great deal of dissatisfaction with the present state of the law on the subject. We find it in every direction. We find it in the House of Representatives, where petitions are being constantly presented, resolutions moved, and questions asked in reference to

railways. And pressure is being brought to bear from time to time by one party or another in reference to the subject. The newspapers express general dissatisfaction with the management of the railways, and to a certain extent they represent the public feeling on the matter. There is no doubt that a great deal of pressure of an objectionable kind is brought to bear on Ministers, and especially on the Minister for Public Works. There are a great number who desire to serve their friends or those agreeing with them in politics; and we find that it constantly is the case that pressure of that kind is brought to bear to a great and very objectionable extent. Difficulties of a similar kind have been experienced in the other colonies, and in Victoria more especially. The result has been that in Victoria an Act has been passed of a similar character to this measure. In fact, this Bill is to a certain extent founded upon that Act. They passed that Act, no doubt, for the purpose of getting rid of the difficulties which surrounded the question as it stood before. The Act in Victoria has been in operation for the last four years, and, so far as I can ascertain,—and a good deal of trouble was taken to ascertain the views of the people of Victoria before this Bill was framed,—it was found that the new system has generally worked very satisfactorily. The result of that has been that New South Wales is following the example of Victoria. Whether the Bill which has been before the New South Wales Parliament has passed at the present time I do not know. At all events, the New South Wales Bill was framed on the model of the Victorian measure, and I think it is better in some respects than the Victorian Act. We had these measures before us in framing the Bill now before the Council. I think it will be found that the changes we have made will be very much for the better. No doubt our circumstances are not precisely the same as those of New South Wales and Victoria. I do not think that in this colony the difficulties we have met with so far have been so great as those met with in Victoria and New South Wales. I may quote a few lines on this subject from a speech by Mr. Richardson, late Minister for Public Works, who has probably had more experience with regard to railways in this part of the world than any other man in the colony: at all events, I do not know any one who has had more. He says,—

“Now, I think there has been a great deal of misapprehension in this House and in the country generally as to the reason why the railways of Victoria were handed over to a Board. It was not owing to any such system of management as the honourable member referred to, but it was because of the enormous political influence that was brought to bear for securing employment on the railways for the friends of members of Parliament, supporters of the Government for the time being. Abuse in that direction had grown to such an extent in connection with the Victorian railways that it was absolutely necessary that something

should be done. It was a notorious fact that the skilled officers in the department, those who really understood their work, were actually being impeded by the enormous number of persons forced upon the department owing to that political influence of which I have spoken. That was really the reason of the Government of Victoria adopting this different system of management. And, if my information is correct—and I am sure it is, because it comes from one of the highest authorities in New South Wales—that sort of thing has also gone on in New South Wales, although not to the same extent as in Victoria; and that is regarded as a cause for alarm. It seems to them that the only way out of the difficulty is to completely alter the system of management.”

I do not need, however, to appeal to this authority, for it is perfectly obvious that the necessary result of our present system will be that which has been experienced in Victoria and New South Wales. I need not very much longer pursue this subject, because I think there is a general feeling throughout the Legislature, and amongst the public—in fact, it is the feeling of everybody who knows anything of the subject—that some alteration should take place. When the present Government came into office this was one of the subjects which very early cropped up. The only mode of dealing with it, we thought, was to follow the lead of Victoria and New South Wales, and frame an Act for ourselves. We had the Victorian Act and the New South Wales Bill before us in framing this measure; therefore, in the course we are recommending, we are not taking a leap in the dark. We know what the result has been in Victoria, and we hope that the result will be equally satisfactory here. Looking, then, at the fact that we are on a bad road which will lead us into difficulties if we continue in it, I think it will be generally acknowledged that some alteration of the present system must be made. I shall assume, therefore, that the Council, to a certain extent, agrees with the Government in this: that something evidently requires to be done. I do not know whether any honourable gentleman is so much in love with the present system that he will get up and defend it. It appears to me that a large majority of the present Assembly have testified in the other House that they are in favour of the Bill, and the feeling generally is that some alteration should take place. The question, therefore, is, What should that alteration be? The Government have given the matter a great deal of consideration, and have taken a great deal of pains with this Bill. It has been more or less thought of since the present Government came into office. Information has been collected from Victoria and other sources, and, collating all these things, the result is the Bill which is now before the Council. I think that this Bill will be found to be a very great improvement on the present system. No doubt blame, to a certain extent, is thrown upon the railway officers; but, so far as I can gather, very

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much of the blame ought not to be put upon them. It is the system that is wrong in itself. It is upon a wrong principle, and, that being so, the sooner we set about making an alteration the better. I will call attention to the provisions which the Bill now before the Council contains for starting an entirely new system so far as we are concerned. But, as I say, we have got the benefit of the experience of Victoria, where an Act of a similar kind has been in operation for the last four years. What is done, therefore, is this: The management of the railways is to be put in the hands of Commissioners. The Commissioners are to be three in number, and they are to be beyond all political influence whatever, and placed entirely upon a footing which is to give them an independent position. They are appointed for a certain number of years—five years is the number fixed—and they are to have specified salaries. They are to have the entire control of the railways. The management of the railways will thus be left free from any political influence whatever, and this management will be handed over to the control of these Commissioners, who are independent of any political influence. Then comes the question of the salary to be paid to the Chief Commissioner. This point has been considered by the Government during the last two months, and the amount of salary was not filled in when the Bill was introduced in the other branch of the Legislature. But the House, to a certain extent, I think, on the lead of the Government, filled in the salary of the Chief Commissioner at £1,500 a year. It seems, however, now to be considered that £1,500 a year would not be sufficient to procure a first-rate man from England. Therefore it has been proposed to increase the salary, and if that is to be done it will be by Governor's message to both Houses. The powers of the Commissioners are defined in the Second Part of the Bill. They are to have entire control of the constructed railways, and they will have the entire management, working, and maintenance of them. But they will have nothing to do with railways only partially constructed. That would be the position when the new system comes into operation. Provision is made subsequently to that with regard to the lines that are under construction now. The difficulty of handing these lines over to the Commissioners is this: The Public Works Office has not only charge of railways, but it has charge of roads, harbours, and various other things, which could not be very well handed over to the Commissioners. But the object is that, so far as we can, this shall be brought to a termination as soon as possible, and that the railways shall be brought to a termination within the next three years; and if not, and it should be the will of the Legislature that any further railways should be constructed, the proper persons to construct them will be these Commissioners. Provision is made in the Bill that, if it is found convenient, the construction of such works shall be handed over to the Commissioners. If at present we handed over the lines in course of

construction we should then have to keep three distinct staffs. As the Bill was originally drawn it was intended to hand everything over; but when it came to be considered carefully it was seen that harbours, roads, bridges, and a number of other works which are in hand could not very well be handed over to the Commissioners. Power is given to the Governor to hand over railways or other works to the Commissioners, as may be deemed desirable; and, if in the future it is deemed wise to make further railways, the Commissioners will be available for that purpose. At present I do not see that we shall be in a position to make any more railways for some time. I do not think it is justifiable to go on as we have been going on for the last seventeen years, and making lines in the way we have done by borrowed money. As far as the policy of the present Government is concerned, that system is to come to an end. We do not propose at once to stop everything. That is impossible, inasmuch as we should throw away all the money we have expended on incomplete works; but we propose that at the earliest possible time we shall cease to expend any more money on works of this character out of loan. If we have any money to spare out of consolidated revenue, it may be a question how that could be spent. That, however, does not seem to be a question likely to trouble us now. I would now call attention to clause 27, which is an important section. That section says,—

"Nothing in Part VII. of 'The Public Works Act, 1882,' contained shall be deemed or taken to authorise or entitle the Governor or the Minister, or any person acting on behalf of the said Governor or Minister, to inspect or examine, or to exercise in any manner supervision, superintendence, or control over, any of the railways vested in, or that may be vested in, the Commissioners under this Act; and it shall not in any case be necessary to appoint any General Manager for any such railway."

The object of that is, as I have said, to take the matter entirely out of political influence. If we hand over this power to the Commissioners I think we should hand it over unfettered. The moment we begin to fetter the Commissioners is the moment we shall get into difficulties. I have seen notices of motion in another place professing to instruct the Commissioners to consider the state of the country, and giving a variety of other instructions to them. I object to any such instructions being given whatever. We shall hand the railways over to them, and tell them that we want to make these railways pay, that we want to open the country, and we want the railways to pay interest on the money borrowed, and we desire, so far as that can be brought about, that every facility should be given to people to bring their produce to market, and open the country. If we only consider the opening-up of the country, it means taxation on the community at large, and very unfairly, to a certain extent. It appears to me that we should leave it to the Commissioners, without any instructions from the Government, to do the best they can for the

country at large, taking in view that it is desirable that the country should be opened up, and every privilege be afforded of communication between different parts of the colony; but that, at the same time, it is also necessary that the railways should at all events be able to contribute a very large amount of interest on the money which has been borrowed for the construction of the lines. I would now refer to a few words in section 31. That provides that Commissioners are to decide as to the sites for stations, *etcetera*. At present pressure is brought to bear on the Minister in regard to where stations should be placed. Although I do not say that there is any case in which the station has been placed in any other situation than that which is best for the public generally, still pressure is continually brought on Ministers to put stations in particular places to suit particular individuals. I do not know any case in which such pressure has been given way to, but honourable members are well aware that pressure of that kind is constantly being made. Therefore it is provided in this Bill that "The Commissioners shall be the authority to decide on the position, character, and suitability of all stations." The object of that is to take away from the exercise of political influence the fixing of sites for stations, and to relieve the Ministers of all these applications which have been so very troublesome, and, I have no doubt, difficult to deal with. There are a few words in clause 84 which I entirely disapprove of. When the Bill was under consideration a discussion took place on the subject of this clause between myself and the permanent officers of the railway and my colleagues, and especially the Minister for Public Works. I consider that, under any circumstances, the interference of Licensing Committees with the Government railways would be exceedingly objectionable, and should not be entertained. The Bill, as originally drawn, left out the words, "with the approval of the Licensing Committees." At present the Licensing Committees grant licenses for the sale of liquors at our railway-stations, and the consequence is, some of these places are allowed to remain open till twelve o'clock at night. The result is that probably there is no train after nine or ten o'clock, and yet the railway authorities are obliged to keep a number of people about the railway while these establishments are open. If the railway authorities had the power when the last train had gone of shutting up these liquor-houses it would save a great deal of expense and trouble; and not only that, but it would, to a certain extent, make the facilities for people getting drink less than they are at the present time. I am sure that would be considered very advisable. When we come to that in Committee I will suggest that these words be struck out. I feel strongly about it, because I am sure their retention would lead to difficulties. I say that it is out of the question that these Licensing Committees throughout the country should have the opportunity of interference with the Government railway-stations. There

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are different systems in different parts of the country, and the moment a train passes over a certain line the passengers are in a district where a different system prevails, so that the public do not know what rules they have to follow. On a long line of railway there may be half a dozen different systems met with. I feel satisfied that the Council will agree with the Bill as it originally stood, and that honourable members will agree with the observations which I now make in regard to this point. Of course the Commissioners have power to make by-laws. I proceed now to notice clause 89. As honourable members are aware, the Government have telegraph lines apart altogether from the railways, but, for the purpose of working the railways with safety and with advantage, it is necessary that there should be telegraph lines peculiarly suited to the Railway Department; that they should be free from any other interference whatever. In subsection (2) of this section it is provided that these lines may be used, "so far as is consistent with the free and efficient working of the railways, for the transmission of messages by the public." That convenience is to be afforded to the public, but the first consideration, of course, is that these lines must be used for the railway; but, so far as is practicable, facilities are to be given to the public in this respect. I do not know whether I need go further into this matter. All that I can do now is to call the attention of the Council to what appear to be the most important and prominent features of the Bill. Mere details I pass over. We know that the Government departments often do not take precisely the same view. Clause 41 provides that—

"In case any difference shall arise between the Commissioners and the Postmaster-General with regard to the terms and conditions on which any contract or agreement shall be made, or otherwise in relation thereto, the same shall be determined by the Governor in Council."

That appears to be the most easy way of reconciling any difference there may be. The Governor in Council will, of course, be above any consideration as to favouritism between one department and another, and would put matters as they ought to be put. The clause next requiring observation from me refers to the contracts. The Commissioners have power to make contracts, and to bind themselves as to a variety of matters, and it is essential that they should have these powers. Clauses are inserted indicating the mode in which contracts are to be executed. Now we come to a very important part of the Bill, and that is the expenditure and control of money. Clause 46 provides,—

"All moneys appropriated by Parliament for the maintenance, working, or management of the railways by this Act vested in the Commissioners, or for any reconstruction or partial reconstruction thereof, or duplication or other addition to or extension of such railways, or any of them, or any part thereof, or for any purpose in connection therewith, shall be expended under the control and management of



the Commissioners. The provisions of this section shall extend to any case in which the Governor in Council exercises the powers conferred by section twenty-five of this Act."

By these means the accounts are placed under the ordinary audit of the country, which is all that is necessary for performing the work. It is necessary, of course, that they should be audited. I think that in Victoria they have created a special audit, but this appears to be wholly unnecessary; and so I say the audit establishment is fully sufficient for the purpose of auditing the accounts of these Commissioners. In clause 56 provision is made that employes taking fees shall lose their office, and shall be subject to penalties. All these are necessary provisions, and require no special notice on my part. A very important part of the Bill is Part III., commencing at clause 62. This provides that the Commissioners may appoint and remove employes, and pay such salaries and wages as shall be determined by them out of money provided by Parliament. All patronage is thus taken away from the Government; the patronage, whatever it may be, is entirely in the hands of the Commissioners, and it is dealt with in a way that I shall come to presently. Then, it is also provided how persons in the employment of the Government in the railway service shall be passed over from one department to the other, and that each of those who have been in the Civil Service shall cease to be in such service, and shall be deemed to have been appointed by the Commissioners. Clause 64 provides that all appointments shall be to the lowest grade in each of the various branches of the railway service, and that they shall be on probation only; and, after a report from the Commissioners that the probationer has conducted himself to the satisfaction of the Commissioners, the appointments may be confirmed by the Commissioners. I would lay stress on the fact that no appointments are to be made except to the lowest grade; except that the Commissioners will have the power to appoint to any position, if they think fit, any person of known ability, or possessing special qualifications, not engaged in the railway service, but no such appointment is to be made unless the Commissioners certify that there is no person in the railway service fit to be promoted to such position. Proper provisions are also made as to the examination of a probationer. A regular promotion is thus provided. The object of this system is to enable a young man who may be entering the service to have a future before him, and, if qualified, to rise to higher situations in the service, so that favouritism cannot be exercised by the promotion of other persons over his head. I think this is a very useful provision, and will be found to work advantageously. It looks so fair on the face of it, that it is a wise provision to have; it destroys all favouritism on the part of the Government. The Commissioners are to obtain the sanction of the Governor for any departure from the rules here laid down. In clause 76 is provided a saving of the existing rights of Civil servants.

It provides that the rights of all persons who at the time of the coming into operation of this Act are in the Civil Service of the colony, or who are in the service of the Government, shall, as regards compensation for loss of office or superannuation allowance, be preserved up to the time when they enter into the service of the Commissioners. The compensation for loss of office or retiring-allowance to be paid to any such person is to be paid on his leaving the service of the Commissioners, but is to be calculated only on the basis of his employment in the Civil Service of the colony prior to his entering the service of the Commissioners. It is further provided that all payments of compensation or retiring-allowance shall be paid out of the Consolidated Fund, and on the same terms and conditions as if the person affected had remained in the Civil Service of the colony. This means that they would get their allowance, but they would not get any for the time they had been in the railway service; and it is competent for the officers to take compensation or retiring-allowance at once, or to continue in the railway service; so that in the railway service there would be no pensions at all. But there is an arrangement by which the different persons in the Railway Department can create a fund for those whom it may be required to aid. The only other provision to which I wish to call the attention of the Council is a provision relating to the investigation of accidents. Now, this may be a very serious matter; it is a matter which often requires sifting to the bottom. Provision is made in Victoria by which, in the first instance, the Commissioners are to investigate; when they have investigated, they report on the matter; if that is unsatisfactory, or if there is anything which appears to require further consideration, a Court is constituted consisting of a Resident Magistrate and assessors; a Coroner is also authorised to make further inquiry: and we have adopted somewhat similar provisions. Now, this last is a provision which perhaps some honourable members may not like. I believe some do not, as a rule, like Coroners' juries; and if ever we have a change as to Coroners' juries—I think a Coroner is a very useful person myself—we should have to make a change here. Thus every possible means are taken for the purpose of securing the fullest investigation. Within the last few hours, I may say, it was suggested whether or not some limitations should not be put to the amount which may be recovered, where an accident happens from the negligence of the Board of Commissioners or its officers. The law, in this respect, as it affects ships, provides that in the case of accident only a certain percentage shall be allowed, according to the value of the ship—I think it is limited to £12 or £15 per ton. Perhaps it would be as well to take into consideration whether or not, before the Bill passes, it would not be desirable to put in a limitation to the amount of compensation that could be claimed for a railway accident. I shall carefully look up the law relating to shipping in this respect, and consider whether it is desirable to embody this prin-

ciple in the present measure. I have no doubt the honourable member who suggested this was struck by the experience of the recent accidents in Australia, when actions were brought to recover thirty or forty thousand pounds. This is a very serious matter; but whether it will be necessary to make an alteration or not will be a matter for consideration. As far as the investigation goes, and ascertaining the cause of the accidents, and the possibility in the future of preventing such accidents, the provisions of the Bill are complete. And now, having made these remarks, which I am afraid are very inadequate, considering the very great importance of this measure, and though in dealing with the Bill I have not entered into details but have taken out the salient points only, I must hand it over to the consideration of the Council, and hope honourable members will give their especial attention to the clauses which I have named. With these few observations, I beg to move, *That the Bill be read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—It is with a very great deal of pleasure that I rise to echo the concluding words which fell from my honourable friend on the opposite side of the Council. I have seldom read a Bill of such length and of such importance with so much satisfaction as I have read this. I compliment the Minister in charge of the Bill, and the draftsmen who have been engaged in its construction, on the manner in which they have performed their work. I sat down to read this measure, pencil in hand, expecting that in so important a measure I should find many points with which I could not agree. However, I found that I had to make very little use of my pencil, and I believe that, if the Council will pass the Bill as it stands, no harm, but a great benefit, will accrue to the country. And I may say I am only a recent convert to the policy of non-political Railway Boards, and of intrusting our railways to these independent Boards. The measure of failure which has attended the working of our railways is, in my opinion, attributable to the interference of the Legislature with those duties which are simply executive. To the complaints which are frequently made of the management of our railways I think we attach far too much importance. I believe our railways are managed very much better than the outcry which we sometimes hear, and which we read of in the public newspapers, would seem to imply. I believe that the complaints which are made about bad management do not proceed from those who have had the most to do with the railways or the use of them, but from a few discontented small customers. In regard to the General Manager, Mr. Maxwell, I am responsible for his appointment; and I was in charge of this department for a considerable time after his appointment; and at this time I think it becomes me to say what I know and what I think of him. There is no doubt that his inflexible character, and his determination not to sacrifice the interests of his department to any unfounded demand, are answerable for the

unpopularity of his management; and I only hope that the Government will be so happy as to find men of his acquirements and strength of will for the appointments of Commissioners. In fact, I think the country could not do better than make Mr. Maxwell one of the Commissioners. Whether the post of Chief Commissioner might well be conferred upon him may possibly be doubted somewhat, because in all these matters the popular will has to some extent to be respected, and it is useless to try to make water flow up-hill; but I am quite sure that if any expert from any of the neighbouring colonies, or from England, were to make an examination of the way in which our railways have been worked under his management, their report would be a testimonial to the skill and experience of Mr. Maxwell's management. Parliament, however, can never manage a system of railways with any success while parties and organizations last, and while Ministers are therefore subject to the interference of members of Parliament they never can hope properly to administer a complicated system such as our railways; and that is why I have become a convert to the placing of our railways under other management. There is another advantage which the country will get. There is no doubt that the desire of Governments for the economical management of our railways, and the steps which have been taken in this direction, have earned for the Government frequently the enmity of persons engaged in the Railway Department; and the interference of those persons in elections has, I believe, led to the defeat of some of the most honest and capable Ministries. I believe that when this country engaged in a great system such as this railway one—a system which necessitates the employment of so many hundreds and thousands of hands—it would have been a matter of good policy if all these employes had been deprived of their votes. However, the placing of the system in the hands of non-political Commissioners will take away the necessity for that course, because the persons employed on the railways will know perfectly well that, as the Commissioners have absolute rule over them, whatever Parliament may do or honourable members advocate will not make much difference in their position. I quite agree with the Hon. the Attorney-General in what he said as to the inadequacy of the salaries which were proposed to be given to the Commissioners. I am perfectly convinced myself that the stamp of man the country demands in the gentleman who is to be appointed as Chief Commissioner will not be obtained for £1,500, especially as the appointment is only for five years. If the appointment had been one for life, or while his conduct was good, and if he had been removable only by a vote of both Houses, then £1,500 might perhaps suffice. But such a salary as this will not be likely to tempt the kind of men to whom the railways might be intrusted. I agree with the remarks which fell from the Attorney-General on the licensing of railway-stations; and, gene-

*Hon. Sir F. Whitaker*

rally, it seems to me that the Bill is wonderfully perfect as it comes to us. I do not think, therefore, that it will be necessary now to discuss the clauses or the provisions of the Bill in detail. If anything needs amendment in the opinion of honourable members, their opinions on these supposed defective clauses can be given when in Committee. I would only finish by complimenting the Government on the excellence of the measure we have before us.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I cannot say that I take the same line as the honourable member who has just spoken. I look upon it that there is a necessity for a change in the present system, and I think that a Bill such as this will pretty well answer all purposes; but I think it has been rushed through Parliament in a way which is most unjustifiable. In another branch of the Legislature there was no opportunity given to move any amendment whatever. The eighty-six clauses of the Bill were rushed through when there were only between thirty and thirty-six members present. The Hon. the Attorney-General said the change was called for by the general public. I believe that in that he is perfectly correct. I believe the general public look to Parliament making some change in this direction. He also said it was advocated by the newspapers.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—The honourable member must be mistaken. I said the papers had demanded this.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Sometimes the honourable gentleman speaks so low—and I am not very good at hearing—that I must have made a mistake as to what he said. However, I was going to say that, as far as I can ascertain the public pulse, I believe that the general public are in favour of a change, but they do not think there is time enough being given for the consideration of such an important measure as this, and they think the matter could well stand over for three months. I think that is a pretty general view of the subject. Then, there is another point which may be referred to—that one Board will not answer for this colony. In Australia, where they have one Board, the colonies are differently situated. I say it is advocated by all classes that there should be two Boards—one for the North Island and the other for the South Island. My own impression is that this measure will give very great dissatisfaction if it is passed with the provision that there shall be only one Board for the two Islands.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—We have tried the system of two Commissioners already.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—It never was tried properly. The Minister in charge of the railways at the time the Commissioners were appointed did not understand what he was about. But those Commissioners had not the power that the present Commissioners will have. I know perfectly well that the Hon. Mr. Peacock, who has had charge of the railways in Canterbury, if he should speak would express my own opinion—that one Board will not do for the two Islands. I have not spoken to him on

the subject, but I think I am correct in guessing his views. I think there has been a good deal of delay in bringing this Bill forward, but I do not blame the Government for that, because there has been a great deal of obstruction to getting on with the work of the session. But had this Bill had about a fortnight's consideration it would have been far more satisfactory than it is at present. I like the principle of the Bill; but I think there has not been sufficient consideration given to it, and the subject is one of very great importance. I am not going to move that the Bill be read this day three months; but, at the same time, I think it is a question whether the Attorney-General should not withdraw the Bill this session, and in three months he will be able to take it up with a full knowledge of what the public views are upon the question. There will be some time required to ascertain whether there should be two Boards or one.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—Sir, this Bill is quite uncalled-for—that is to say, uncalled-for by every sensible person in the colony. It is called for, certainly. It is the outcome of a public clamour and the blathering of an ignorant population, as represented by a miserable lot of rags of penny papers. The Hon. Mr. Reynolds says there is an outcry for this Bill. Yes, just as there is an outcry for reform of the Legislative Council. When the newspaper writer has got nothing else to do, and no other subject to write on, he takes a pull at his whiskey-bottle to begin with, and then he sits down to write an article against the Council or against railway-mismanagement, of which he knows nothing whatever. The general public the Hon. Mr. Reynolds talks about—what is the general public? What did Carlyle say of the general public? "Mostly fools!" Every two-legged jackass in this colony, who has just got brains enough to spell out an article in a trashy rag of a newspaper, thinks he is qualified to talk about railway reform, the government of the colony, or anything else. The Hon. the Attorney-General painted such a rosy picture of the future management of our railways that I am sorry the Bill does not go further and propose to put the whole government of the colony into Commission. What wonderful reform there would be if that were done, even to the doing-away with the Hon. the Attorney-General himself! If this putting of the railways in the hands of Commissioners should succeed, I think that, before long, we should have a Bill brought down to put the whole government of the country in the hands of Commissioners.

An Hon. MEMBER.—And appoint you Chief Commissioner?

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—No, not myself; but send for some third-rate genius from England at £2,000 a year. I thought we had enough of these geniuses from England. It was said that every one we brought out here at a thousand a year was a first-rate man, and all our imported geese were nothing less than swans. I thought that in connection with our defence-works we had had enough of that kind

of thing. The colony has been put to an enormous expense, and all sorts of wild schemes have been proposed; and we have been ready to adopt the schemes, and have imported men from the Old Country to carry them out. Railways have been reduced to their present miserable state in New Zealand through the clamours of the people. They are continually calling out for reductions in the fares, and are continually meddling and muddling with what they do not understand; and the consequence is that the railways will not pay. Not long ago I took up a paper, and I saw some correspondence relating to a demand made by some people of Taranaki that white-pine should be carried on the railways at lower rates. It was shown that already the lines carry white-pine on the footing of firewood, but it was demanded that it should be carried for almost nothing to please these particular people. It was not a question of whether it paid to carry it or not—that was a matter of no importance. Supposing these three geniuses are imported, and they find that the old system is the right one, and perhaps raise the fares and traffic charges: they will then become the three most hated men in the colony. What will the Press say to them then? The Press will say, "What else could we have expected from this irresponsible body?"—just as they talk of us, and ask, "What could be expected from this irresponsible body—a nominee Council?" I do not know whether Mr. Vaile is to be one of the three Commissioners. There was an instance of popular ignorance! I venture to say that Mr. Vaile knows no more about the management of railways than I do. But he is a man who can make a long speech, and put the matter in a plausible light. If there were a population here of three or four millions his scheme might be a reasonable one, but it is totally unsuited to a colony with a small population like ours. He is able to put his scheme in a plausible light, and people cry out, "Oh, Vaile is the man; hand our railways over to him;" and the Press re-echoes the ignorant outcry of the people. I really do not see the use of going to England for these third-rate geniuses. If they were men of such mark as is thought by some I do not suppose that England could spare them. If changes are required there are plenty of men—plain, sensible men—already in New Zealand who would do for the position. I contend that no case has been made out against the present management. If you only let the present men who manage the Government railways alone—

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—The people will not let them alone.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—The Hon. Mr. Miller is right—the people will not let them alone. And, whatever persons you put in charge of the railways, you may depend upon it they will be subjected to the same interference, and with the same result. Therefore, I say, let things remain as they are. I do not fancy that by bringing out these third-rate gentlemen from England you are going to make matters a bit better.

*Hon. Mr. Scotland*

The Hon. Mr. SHEPARD.—If I had any doubt as to the necessity of making a change in the present system of railway management that doubt would have been put an end to by the graphic description given by the Hon. Mr. Scotland of the present miseries endured, the loss to the colony, and the disorganized state into which the railways have got on account of public pressure. His speech would have convinced me certainly, if I had any doubt, that the present system should not continue. I would not say that in my opinion the system of management by Commissioners is the best that can be adopted. I am rather disposed to think that it would be a great deal better to go further, and endeavour to get out of the railways, as we ought to get out of all other business which can be conducted better by private enterprise and by private judgment than they can be by judgment subjected to the popular pressure described by the Attorney-General. It should not be inferred from that that I think we ought to sell our railways. Certainly not. As population increases, unquestionably our railways will become a property of very great value, and we have no right to part with what, we may say, is, in this case, the unearned increment. We should keep that for ourselves; and the future of the colony will, no doubt, be very largely benefited by the increased value of the railways as population increases. But I have often thought, long before this Bill was brought in, that it might be well to consider whether we should not lease our railways for a term of years—say, five or ten years—and so entirely get rid of any political influence whatever. But perhaps we are not ripe for that. It is quite clear that this plan cannot, at present, be carried out; and therefore we are compelled to fall back on some other improvement. As we cannot reach what I conceive would be the best position for us to attain to, we must endeavour to make the next best thing out of this proposal of the Government to hand over the management of the railways to Commissioners. We are not bound to go to England for these Commissioners. I do not know that the Government have pledged themselves to go to England for them. I think probably two of them—those at a thousand a year—could be selected in this colony, and that they would perform their duties satisfactorily to all concerned, except to those who are continually seeking to diminish the income derived from the railways, and who seek to cut down the charges for particular classes of produce in which they happen to be interested. The Commissioners would be free; they would not be subject to the pressure to which Ministers undoubtedly are at present subjected when deputations of members of the House wait upon them. I think we may go through every article produced in the colony and show that one time or another a deputation of members of the House have gone to the Minister and endeavoured, indirectly, to coerce him into reducing the charges on particular articles in which their constituents were specially interested. It is

clear that the surplus income has been gradually going down, down, down, for the last eight or ten years, and unless we alter matters it will vanish altogether. We have got down to something like 2½ per cent. now. Not a long time ago we were told, on the very best authority, that a concession had been made in one part of the country to the extent of £75,000 a year; and the effect is that the taxpayers over the whole of the colony have to pay £75,000 a year more than they ought to do, and did previous to this concession being made. There are large districts in New Zealand which really have no very direct benefit from the railways at all, and are so situated that their produce, whatever it may be, never goes by railway; and if we were to carry the matter out to an extremity I think we could find some districts which are actually injured by the railway bringing produce from other districts into competition with the produce of the districts I refer to, thus lowering the prices. I do not say that we should stay our progress in opening up the country for that, but I do say that we ought not to carry on our operations at a loss to the community at large for the sake of benefiting some particular districts; and that is what we have been doing from the day the first piece of Government railway was opened. Although I cannot go fully with the Hon. the Attorney-General in his approval of this Bill, yet I say it goes as far, perhaps, as we can advance at the present time in the direction of getting rid of political pressure. Our railways and public works, I believe, have cost us as large a sum as fifteen millions, and continual pressure has been brought upon the Government, with the result that the income from these lines has been gradually reduced. People talk nonsense about not making our railways taxing-machines. Why, they are that now. It is these taxing-machines which have brought us into our present state of difficulty, and reduced us to cutting down other establishments of every kind, inflicting a large amount of hardship, and, to a large extent, damaging the credit of the colony. I say, let these lines bear their own weight. Whether it be by leasing the lines, or reducing the pressure by the appointment of these Commissioners, I say it is our duty to go as far as we reasonably can in the direction of making our railway system bear its own weight of interest. After that I do not say that we should make them mere taxing-machines. I do not say that it would be wise to make large profits out of them in abatement of taxation; but, certainly, those who get the direct benefit of the railways, either as passengers or as senders of produce and merchandise, ought to be content to pay a reasonable amount, and not use their influence with members of this House to force Ministers to bring down the charges to a point which will not yield a fair return for the services rendered. Taking the Bill into consideration on broad, general principles, it appears to me that we cannot do better than pass it as soon as we can.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I think the Bill

the Hon. the Attorney-General has presented to us is a Bill which, if honourable members approve the principle of, they may safely pass without altering. The Hon. Mr. Reynolds says this Bill was hurried through the other House without consideration. Probably that accounts for the perfectness of the measure, because the tinkering which a Bill goes through in passing through Committees, and the want of proper supervision after, to put it into order, is the cause of so many stupid measures appearing on our Statute Book—measures which give work for members of the legal fraternity. With regard to this Bill, I may say that I have not seen a measure so clear and so distinct all through presented to the Council this session. It is evidence of care such as very rarely appears on the face of Bills which come into this House, and whoever is the author of it is to be highly complimented on the result of his work. With regard to the management of our railways in the past, so far as the officers are concerned, I venture to say that there has been as able and good administration in the Railway Department as you will find pretty well anywhere. There are able men among those officers, but probably they do not always get a chance of showing what is in them; they do not get a chance of coming to the surface. The Government may have great difficulty in selecting the Commissioners, because a great deal will depend on judicious management to begin with, as to how far this departure will be a success. In selecting the men the Government will have to face this difficulty: They will have to put themselves into the hands of certain people, men, no doubt, well able and willing to do the best they can, but who have themselves to depend on the recommendation of others; and, though that recommendation may come from men of high standing, the result is not always satisfactory. These men sometimes allow their feelings to come into play, so that their recommendations are not always made with that sense of responsibility which ought to be felt by men in their position. No matter how good the gentlemen may be who have to select these officers, the result is sometimes a disappointment. In Victoria they have hit upon a gentleman who is not only a good administrator, but apparently a man of great ability. We have seen him come into contact with difficulties in connection with the railways there, and we see what a judicious man he is in getting over those difficulties. Many men can carry reforms into operation, and they do so in such a manner that nobody takes much notice of the change—in fact, the people quite agree with the reforms. Another man, however, may try to effect the same reforms, but he goes the wrong way about it, and sets everybody by the ears. It is purely a matter of the judiciousness of the man you have to administer the thing whether it will be a success or not. The Government have to face that difficulty, and no doubt they will take the greatest care in selecting the men, knowing that the success of the departure entirely depends on the men who may be selected. It is

said that the proposed salary of the Chief Commissioner, £1,500, is not sufficient. Probably it would have been better to have put a rather larger sum in the Bill; but the effect is patent that, whatever amount is put into the Bill, it will have to be paid. It is not always a large salary which commands the best men; and, besides, the best men do not always look upon money as the great end at which they aim. A man has got a liking for his profession, and he is more interested in the success of his management than he is in seeking for a large salary, although, no doubt, it is always advisable to give a man a good salary, in order to keep up his position. Sometimes a man saves more when he is receiving only £150 a year than he does when he is in a position where he gets £1,000 a year. I have had experience of that myself. When I was a young fellow I saved more money than I did when my income was £1,000 a year; so I speak from personal experience. You may not be extravagant, but you have to increase your expenditure in consequence of your higher position. It is sought to contrast our railways with the success of the Victorian and New South Wales lines. I would wish to put on record, for the sake of those who may come after, that I do not believe the same success can be got as to our New Zealand railways as has been got with the Victorian railways; and when the Commissioners come here they may be blamed for not making that amount of interest out of the railways which has been made in Victoria. The railways here have to compete against water-carriage, which is a very severe competition. The railways in Victoria run into the interior, and have no competition of this sort; so it is impossible, no matter how well our railways may be managed, to get the same results from our lines as they get from the Victorian lines. There are too many centres of population in this colony, and there is too much local jealousy. An instance of this may be seen in the fact of one honourable member wanting two Railway Boards. This local jealousy is the curse of the whole government of New Zealand, and it is that which makes it so difficult to conduct our affairs satisfactorily. If Christchurch gets a thing, Dunedin, Wellington, and Auckland must have the same thing, whether they require it or not. We ought to look to the prosperity of New Zealand as a whole, and recognise that the prosperity of one place means, before long, the prosperity of other places. The Hon. Mr. Shephard hit a very good point. The people in this colony think that they should get the use of the railways for nothing; especially so do my friends in Canterbury. They have always held that without any disguise, and they ask for differential rates on account of the easy work of their railways and the even country over which their lines run. There are parts of the country too which derive no benefit from the railways, as has been pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Shephard; and those people who never get any use of the railways at all are being taxed to give cheap railway-carriage to those who do enjoy the railways. That is the

*Hon. Mr. McLean*

more reason, I think, why the Commissioners should be appointed to see that the railways stand on their own bottom. We have seen instances of political pressure brought to bear on the Government, such, for instance, as allowing school-children to travel free. Perhaps the Minister acquiesces in the representations made to him, and this notwithstanding the advice of the railway officers; and probably the result may be a loss of £5,000 or £6,000 or £7,000 to the revenue. There have been cases where railway-rates have been reduced, resulting in large amounts being knocked off the railway revenue, and this has been owing to political pressure. I believe that this falling-off of revenue has been consequent on political pressure brought to bear on Ministers in connection with the management of the railways. Then, Sir, there is the question of liability for accident, brought forward by the Hon. the Attorney-General. This is, no doubt, the result of these demands for large compensation which have recently been made in another colony against the Railway Boards. But I think some limit should be placed on the amount of compensation, as in the case of ships, which the honourable gentleman referred to, where the compensation is limited to £15 per ton. I think some way should be thought out in which a limit should be put to these claims for damages sustained by accident on the railways. And some attention should be given to this before the Bill is summarily put through Committee. I admit it is difficult to propound any scheme in connection with it, because, if you take the law as it applies to ships and apply it to the railway-carriages, these would not afford a great deal of profit for compensation. I think the principle of the Bill will be accepted now, because the country has been brought round to the idea that it is a right thing to do. I believe the parties to be appointed will have many difficulties before them, and they will require to be judicious men, and capable of working up the scheme prudently. If we intend to adopt the principle of the Bill, the Bill itself, so far as I can see, is about as perfect as, in my humble opinion, it could be made.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK.—I wish to say that I approve of the principle of this Bill. I could have wished that the Government had brought it forward in the earlier part of the session, so that it might have been more fully considered. My opinion is that, if we do not pass the Bill now, there will be much difficulty in passing it afterwards, and we should not be able then to have a proper arrangement of the railways. I think the sooner we get it passed the better. The Government has done well to pass so many important Bills at the beginning of Parliament. In reference to what the Hon. Mr. Reynolds has said about my opinion with regard to the appointment of two Boards, I say that his belief that I should vote in favour of establishing two Boards is a mistaken one. I should not agree with two Boards. I think the same conditions should exist in the management of the whole of the railways in the colony,

and two systems obtaining in the two Islands should not be permitted. I am in favour of passing the Bill as a whole without any alteration. There is one portion, though, with which I do not agree, and that is clause 70. I do not agree with the principle that the employes should have power to appeal provided by law, as I believe it would cause a great deal of trouble. I have had something to do with the management of railways—perhaps have had more power than any Minister—and I believe this appeal should not be established by law; but it should be left open to the Commissioners to hear an appeal if they like, which they certainly would do, as an ordinary employer of labour would. If the appeal is established by law we shall be no better off than we are now.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—Sir, the necessity for this Bill may be seen in the difference which exists between the wages ordinarily paid to railway employes and to ordinary labourers. I say you can easily get in the colony a class of labour such as you are now employing at a reduction of 1s. a day; and that, all over the colony, would amount to a saving which I should not like to name.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—£25,000.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—I think it would be vastly more than £25,000. Most of these labourers are housed. It is well known that no Government has dared to reduce the rate of wages of the railway labourers. At the present time the colony is ruled by schoolmasters and railway labourers; and, if anything, the latter are the more meritorious class, because they contribute to production, which helps to pay our debt. We are labouring from morning till night to pay schoolmasters and railway labourers. We hear of the difficulty of getting a competent man to take the position of Chief Commissioner at £1,500 a year. But that is the sum we pay for a Judge of the Supreme Court, in whose hands lies the judgment of important questions—questions of property, of life and death. One thousand five hundred is a magnificent sum, and I trust the Government will take care not to demoralise the Railway Department by neglecting to pick from it, in the colony, a man to perform the work. There would be no difficulty in obtaining such a man. The only wonder is that under the old system the Government were able to get a man fit for anything at all. I say the position of men like Mr. Maxwell is intolerable; and had it not been for his integrity—and that is the basis of the whole thing, for no man except he is honest will act wilfully to his own disadvantage by provoking the wrath of the Press in the interest of the colony—he would not have become a mark for censure. Mr. Maxwell's integrity of character brought him into prominence. There is no doubt about it, he has immense backbone; and I say this: that I am quite certain Mr. Maxwell could manage the railway business of this colony most efficiently if allowed. And he is not the only one—there are several; and I do sincerely hope that the Government will

not neglect these and send to Great Britain to pick out a well-dressed engineer, and bring him, a mere stranger, to a new country, and expect him to deal with difficulties the character of which he has no conception of. He may be an excellent man in Great Britain, where all business works smoothly. No man in the colony exhibits greater capacity for detail, greater staying-power, than this Mr. Maxwell. I do hope the Government will not fail to recognise the merit of those we have among us. I should like to know what a Commission of this kind would have said to the purchase of the district railways. The Commission would have insisted that the companies should have put down decent sleepers and renewed the rails before foisting such wrecks upon us. I hold that railways, whilst encouraging the production of the country, should not necessarily be called upon to pay the whole interest on their construction. There ought to be differential rates, but they ought to exist in the direction of fostering production for the ultimate benefit of the country, and not of fostering districts whose prosperity needs no culture. There are many districts in this colony which, assisted by differential rates, might do a great deal towards production; but nothing is more patent than the fact that we have grossly mismanaged our railways in the interest of political faction, and nothing can be plainer than the fact that we cannot go on in the way we are going on now. I am thoroughly in favour of this measure. I think it is the most useful measure ever introduced into the Legislature during the last seventeen years.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—I wish to express my views with reference to this Bill which has been brought forward by the Government. I believe that the change of management will add to the profits of the department at least 50 per cent. It has done a great deal more than that in Victoria. When the railways there were managed in a similar manner to those in New Zealand, the dividend was £2 5s. per cent.: now it is £4 5s. per cent., which is nearly double; and I believe a similar result would be the outcome of this change. I was standing at a station some time ago, and a merchant came up and said, "Just look at that! there are double the number of men at work who should be there." One of our politicians was present, and he shook his head at him, as much as to say, "Keep it dark." I say there are a great many men employed in the department more than are necessary. I am convinced that that is the case; and, if fewer were employed, the railways would pay better. I believe it would be well if the Hon. the Attorney-General would take this matter into his consideration. With regard to compensation for accidents, I think no person should be allowed to claim more than according to his salary. If a man had £300 a year he ought not to be allowed to claim more than five years' salary. I think I saw one claim in another colony for £29,000. It was the case of a bank manager. We should limit these claims to a reasonable extent. The idea of withdrawing from the hands of the

Licensing Committees the licensing of refreshment-rooms at the stations is a good one. I think the licensing ought all to be in the hands of the Commissioners. However, as this is a late period of the session, I will offer no further observations on the measure, except to express my thanks to the Hon. the Attorney-General for having brought in this measure, and for the manner in which it has been brought in.

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON.—This is a Bill which I would like to say a few words about. I have been a Railway Commissioner myself once, in the Auckland District, and the abuses we discovered in the management, if they had not been very serious, would have been very comical. However, we managed to put that right. The line was run by means of one of these imported men, who was then got rid of. And, in regard to this point, I agree with what has been said—that we should be able to find in the country a man for this appointment. If we imported a man he would know nothing of the railway servants of this colony, being a stranger. We have heard something of the disfranchising of railway employés; but I think we should take care how we act in regard to this proposal, and see that these Commissioners do not interfere in politics. With regard to the appointment of Commissioners, I think that a fair salary should be offered to them; that some inducement should be given to them to make the railways pay—the salary should be increased more and more in proportion as they make profits. There are one or two clauses in the Bill which I do not agree with. Allusion has been made to the licensing of refreshment-rooms at stations. I think the railway authorities ought to have nothing to do with grog-selling at all; their hands should be clean, and that money should not go into the Treasury, but into the hands of the local Committees. Power is given in the Bill to the Commissioners to pay the employés for overtime; but the singular part of this is that it is proposed to pay overtime only to those who are constantly in the service. I hope this will be altered. In conclusion, I may say, on the whole, I like the Bill, and shall vote for it; but in respect to the matters which I have mentioned, I should like to see it altered.

Bill read a second time.

#### LAND BILL. IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 33.—Constitution of Boards.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR moved, That the clause be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 5.

Barnicoat	McLean	Swanson.
Dignan	Menzies	

NOES, 20.

Bonar	Johnson	Peter
Buckley	Lahmann	Reynolds
Fraser	Miller	Richmond
Hart	Oliver	Shephard
Holmes	Peacock	Stevens

Hon. Mr. Holmes

Taiaroa	Waterhouse	Williams.
Wahawaha	Whitaker	

Majority against, 15.

Clause struck out.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR moved the addition of a new clause abolishing Land Boards.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be added to the Bill."

AYES, 17.

Bonar	Miller	Richmond
Fraser	Oliver	Stevens
Grace	Peacock	Swanson
Hart	Peter	Waterhouse
Holmes	Pharazyn	Whitaker.
Johnson	Reynolds	

NOES, 7.

Barnicoat	McLean	Shephard
Buckley	Menzies	Taiaroa.
Lahmann		

Majority for, 10.

Clause added to the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT moved a new clause providing that the provisions of section 28 of "The Crown Lands (Nelson) Leasing Act, 1867," and section 71 of "The Nelson Waste Lands Act, 1874," shall not be enforced, after the coming into operation of the Bill, in respect to leases granted by those Acts; and that it should be provided, with respect to any such lease still subsisting, that, if the lessee failed to pay the annual rent before a certain period, the lease shall be forfeited.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be added to the Bill."

AYES, 13.

Barnicoat	Menzies	Richmond
Bonar	Miller	Stevens
Hart	Peacock	Swanson
Johnson	Pharazyn	Whitaker.
McLean		

NOES, 6.

Buckley	Holmes	Shephard
Dignan	Reynolds	Waterhouse.

Majority for, 7.

Clause added to the Bill.

Bill reported, with amendments, and read a third time.

The Council adjourned at fifteen minutes to eleven o'clock p.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Saturday, 17th December, 1887.

Parliamentary Papers—Tawhiao—Colonial Conference—Seacliff Asylum—Sealing—North Auckland Railway—Wakapuaka Larrikinism—J. Voakes—State Forests Department—Chatham Islands Representation—Probates—W. Harper—Legislative Councilors—Kaikora Mail Service—Maori Deeds of Land-purchase—Wellington-Pitone Line—Otago Education Board—Victorian Exhibition—Compensation for Military Service—Education—Hastings Railway-station—Education Reserves—Free Passes to Children attend—



ing School—Education—Post and Telegraph Office at Hunterville—Midland Railway—Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at eleven o'clock a.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS.

Major STEWARD asked the Government, Whether they will give directions that the recommendations contained in the report of the Printing Committee presented on the 13th instant be carried into effect?

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that the Government had taken the recommendations in this report, together with the recommendations in reports received in the past, into consideration.

#### TAWHIAO.

Mr. TAIPUA asked the Government, What is the position of the lands formerly proposed to be given by the Crown to Tawhiao and other Natives who had taken part in the late war; and is the land still available for the above purpose? He wished to know what was the position of certain lands set apart by previous Governments in the Waikato. He had heard that it was proposed to set apart certain Crown lands for Tawhiao and other Natives in the Waikato. He should be very glad if the Government would explain the position in which these lands were, so that all doubt might be removed. It should be remembered that Tawhiao was not now in opposition to the Government, but was living under the law like all other Natives; and that the late war was not created by Tawhiao himself: he was not responsible for it; it was the action of the people. If this war had been his own individual act, then the Government should be suspicious of him, but as it was the act of the people generally there was no reason for apprehension; and, if the Government could see their way to treat his people with consideration, so much the better. Now, Te Kooti did a great deal more harm and caused much more suffering throughout the land; yet the Government had shown him some consideration, and had given him some land. Seeing that he caused and brought great evils upon the country, and that the Government in spite of that had given him some land, he thought Tawhiao was much more entitled to consideration. This House had passed an Act called an Amnesty Act, pardoning all political offences that had been committed by the rebel Natives, and he hoped the Government would show some kindness to Tawhiao.

Mr. MITCHELSON said some area of land had been set apart for the Natives who had taken part in the rebellion in the Waikato war; but the Waikato Confiscated Lands Act, under which these lands were granted to the Natives, had long since expired, and the lands were now being otherwise dealt with. If Tawhiao and the Natives who were connected with him would make special application to the Government their claims would be favourably considered.

Sir G. GREY wished to say it was with satisfaction he heard this statement made, and he trusted that no delay would be allowed to take place in carrying it out. The matter had been so long delayed that if the honourable gentleman could at once do it he would confer a very great boon upon the Natives and upon the whole country.

#### COLONIAL CONFERENCE.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Government, If they have received a report from Sir William Fitzherbert, K.C.M.G., of his attendance, as a representative of this colony, at the Colonial Conference held in London in May last, or any recommendations from him, as the result of such visit to Europe, in the direction of postal reforms and reciprocal-tariff treaties with foreign nations?

Mr. FISHER replied that the Government had not received any such report.

Mr. JOYCE thought that this question was of such importance to the colonists that he would move the adjournment of the House, in order to place on record some reliable information relating to the efforts of the representatives of New Zealand at the Colonial Conference to further the best interests of this colony. A noticeable instance of an English statesman's opinion of and esteem for Sir William Fitzherbert might be found in a letter in the *London Times* of the 28th July last. Three extracts therefrom, which he would read, indicated that great benefits would flow sooner or later to this and the sister colonies as the outcome of the Colonial Conference:—

“But some things were said which I hope the public will take note of. Sir William Fitzherbert, the representative of New Zealand, whose name will never be mentioned without drawing forth a tribute of respect, supported the contention that, at all events, an ocean penny post, entirely by sea, is practically applicable to the British Empire. Here is a passage from what he said:—

“The sixpenny per half-ounce charge at the present time amounts to about £1,800 per ton, about 40 cubic feet. Compare that with the ordinary rate of freight—say, £2 to £3 per ton measurement freight. Now, according to my calculations the demand upon a ship's cargo space to carry five or six times the present number of colonial letters would be scarcely appreciable; and, if so, even an extra freight per ton of letters would give an ample margin for a reasonable return in respect of ship's freight. If this be correct, the question of subsidies falls to the ground—that is, as a charge upon postal revenue and postal service.”

“Sir William Fitzherbert went on to point out that, so far as regularity and speed are concerned, the steamers which would carry these all-sea mails leave nothing to be desired. Even after this, an attempt to burke the discussion was made by certain enemies of reform. One of them, the Agent-General for New South Wales, fell, however, into a very remarkable misreading of a fact bearing greatly upon the question. He said that the total number of

letters posted in New South Wales for delivery within the colony in 1885 was 84,000,000, and for the Australian Colonies and New Zealand 1,750,000, making altogether about 86,000,000; while the foreign despatch of letters, including those to England, was only 793,000. Yet half the white population of Australia were born in England. That showed, he said, that the correspondence with England was very small indeed—leaving the impression that the connection is growing weaker, and that therefore the cheapening of postal communication between the Mother-country and the colonies is of no importance whatever. The topsy-turvy character of the Agent-General's argument was at once exposed by Sir William Fitzherbert. 'I was very much struck,' he said, 'with the observation that there were thirty millions of local letters and colonial letters as against something under a million letters to and from the Mother-country per annum. Instead of looking at that with satisfaction, added to the remark that there was growing up a population that did not know the Mother-country, I am influenced by that as one of the weightiest arguments that could be adduced in favour of quick and speedy and cheap communication between the Mother-country and the colonies, so that they may not be forgotten; and, in addition to that great advantage, I am quite sure that there would also be a very considerable stimulus given to the development of trade.'"

In one of about forty despatches sent by the Agent-General, Sir F. Dillon Bell, with the assent or approval of his colleague, Sir William Fitzherbert, to the Premier of New Zealand upon questions arising out of or that had been discussed at the Colonial Conference, would be found the following:—

"The discussions at the Conference relating to trade have been very animated, and the tendency of them all has been in the direction of a Protectionist policy.

"As regards the condition of the West Indies, Mauritius, Queensland, and the sugar-producing colonies generally, the bounty-system now in existence in France and Germany was naturally condemned in strong terms, opinions being freely expressed in favour of meeting foreign bounties by countervailing duties. Even Mr. Service, though speaking as a Free-trader, gave a general approval of this method, and, no other delegate having openly opposed it, the Secretary of State assumed, as he had a right to do, that the Conference was nearly unanimous in recommending Her Majesty's Government to adopt it. In point of fact, however, this unanimity did not actually exist, more than one delegate thinking that no scheme fundamentally opposed to the existing fiscal system of the United Kingdom could be discussed without bringing in the whole subject of Imperial Federation, which subject had been excluded from the deliberations of the Conference. Mr. Hofmeyer's proposal to create a general fund for Imperial defence by means of a 2-per-cent. duty levied upon the whole foreign trade of the Empire was certainly brought forward by him

in a remarkably able speech, which elicited so much assent that the New Zealand delegates almost stood alone in deprecating interference by the Conference with the fiscal system of this country. We urged that the delegates had no instructions from their Governments to take such a course, that it must bring in the whole question of Imperial federation, and that, just as no colony would for a moment allow the Imperial Government to dictate its fiscal policy, so the House of Commons would equally resent any attempt at dictation on the part of the colonies for the reversal of a commercial system which has been so long in operation in the United Kingdom.

"We all advocated, instead, the expediency of extending to all colonies alike the privilege, enjoyed by Canada, of negotiating with foreign Powers in matters of trade."

He would ask the Government to endeavour to lay the despatches on the table as soon as possible.

Motion for adjournment of the House negatived.

#### SEACLIFF ASYLUM.

Mr. FISH asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether his attention has been drawn to a pamphlet issued by Mr. R. A. Lawson, architect, of Dunedin, containing copies of letters written by him to Mr. Blair, Engineer in Charge, Middle Island, under dates 23rd October, 1879, 18th January, 1880, 29th June, 1880, and 2nd February, 1886, relative to the foundations of the asylum at Seacliff; and, if so, will he explain why those letters were not answered, and why the advice given therein was not given effect to? He had placed this question on the Order Paper because it was well known down south, at any rate, that very serious complaints had recently been made with regard to the defective character of the building at Seacliff. It had been freely believed down there that, to a large extent, the slips had been caused through faulty architecture. The other day he was surprised to see published by the architect a series of letters which he addressed to the Engineer in Charge for the Middle Island, Mr. Blair, as far back as 1879, and before the building was commenced at all, pointing out that unless certain drainage-work was performed serious damage would be caused to the edifice. The architect based his statement on the fact that, in the case of the temporary building previously erected, slips had occurred, and that certain drainage-works had saved that temporary building from further injury. Yet, in the face of these letters, which were never answered, the building was allowed to go up, and now they found that the slips which the architect predicted had taken place. He might say that the object of this question was to show the public at large that, so far as the architect was concerned, no blame was to be attached to him, and it would remove the opprobrium cast upon an innocent person. He thought that the Minister for Public Works should explain why those letters were not answered, and why the suggestion made by the architect had not been carried out. He (Mr.

*Mr. Joyce*

Fish) understood it was the intention of the Minister to institute inquiry into this matter; and, although the result might prove that the foundations were defective and not in accordance with the specifications—and, if so, he hoped the contractor would be punished—still it would be shown that the slips were caused through the drainage-works which the architect recommended not having been carried out.

Mr. MITCHELSON said his attention had been called to the pamphlet issued by the architect. He could not explain why the letters contained in that pamphlet had not been answered; but he understood from the department that all letters written by the architect to the department that required answering were replied to, and the whole of the drainage-work suggested by the architect was carried out: in fact, a good deal more work was done than Mr. Lawson recommended. The erection of the building was altogether under his supervision, and the drawings of the engineer sent down to report on the building showed very clearly that the specifications had not been carried out. He had the plans in front of him, and any honourable member might see that there was a very large discrepancy throughout the whole of the foundations. It was his intention to cause an inquiry to be made, and, if it was found that the contractor was legally liable to make the work good, the Government would take action. The stability of the building was endangered by the foundations having been laid so badly. An inquiry would be made at once, in order to see who was to blame for what had happened to the building.

Mr. FISH said, if the department had answered the letters referred to from Mr. Lawson, there must be a record in the books of the department to show it.

#### SEALING.

Mr. PARATA asked the Minister of Marine, Whether the Government will alter the sealing regulations, and allow next season to be opened? Telegrams had been received from Invercargill stating that two vessels had started away seal-fishing. Now, that was clearly illegal, and he thought it was wrong that it should be allowed. The sealing industry was one in which the Natives were deeply interested, but owing to the present law they were not allowed to pursue that industry. He had always objected to the Natives being precluded from sealing, because that was their hereditary right. In former times the Natives never sealed out of season; they always waited a fixed time. Since the Europeans passed laws regulating the sealing, they had seen that the people who made these laws were the first to break them. It was evident that something further should be done in the matter, and he asked the Government to take it into consideration, and bring in the necessary legislation on the subject. He hoped the Government would take the necessary steps before the season opened.

Mr. FISHER said the Government were aware, as the honourable member stated, that

two vessels had started, presumably, for poaching purposes, and the Government would take whatever steps might be necessary to prevent poaching. They regarded the sealing industry as of the highest value to New Zealand, and whatever steps were necessary to prevent poaching would be adopted. The "Stella" was leaving that day, and instructions would be given to keep a look-out for the vessels in question. The honourable gentleman might rely upon it that every precaution would be taken by the Government in the matter.

#### NORTH AUCKLAND RAILWAY.

Mr. R. THOMPSON asked the Minister for Public Works, If the Government will have any objection to bring down a Bill next session authorising the construction of the North Auckland Railway on the land-grant principle? His reason for putting this question was owing to the very small amount which was placed on the public-works estimates for the extension of this railway. The amount was altogether out of proportion to the necessity for pushing on this work, and it was a matter of the utmost importance to that part of the colony that the line should be pushed on as quickly as possible. He hoped, therefore, that the Government would bring down a Bill authorising the construction of the line on the land-grant principle.

Major ATKINSON said he could not give the honourable gentleman any distinct pledge on the subject, because the matter had not yet been considered by the Government. It would be very carefully considered during the recess.

#### WAKAPUAKA LARRIKINISM.

Mr. SEYMOUR asked the Minister of Justice, If he will cause a further investigation to be made into a case of larrikinism which occurred about June last in the Wakapuaka District, when it is alleged that wires were stretched across a public road and a bridge damaged, and that the case, when brought before the Resident Magistrate, Nelson, was dismissed without inquiry? Upon a complaint being lodged, the police took up the case. When the case came on for hearing in the Resident Magistrate's Court the Chairman of the Road Board declined to press it if the damage done to the bridge were paid for. That was done, and the police withdrew the information, and the Resident Magistrate dismissed the case. Thereupon twenty-seven inhabitants of the district petitioned the Minister of Justice to have an inquiry made into it. That petition was forwarded to the Police Department, and the following answer was received by the petitioners:—

"Police Department, Wellington,  
"1st September, 1887.

"GENTLEMEN,—In reply to your petition of the 24th June last, addressed to the Hon. the Minister of Justice, and praying that an inquiry should be held on a gross case of lawlessness, I am directed by the Hon. the Minister of Defence to reply on behalf of the Police Department.

"Inquiries have been made in the case reported by you, and a copy of the information forwarded to me. I can find no fault with it. It is laid generally for injury done to a bridge, but does not specify any particular Act or section as having been contravened. This, however, is not necessary, and so far the police have done their duty. The question then remains, Ought they to have allowed the prosecution to be withdrawn? On this point Inspector Atcheson reports that, after proceedings were instituted by him, and before summonses were served, Mr. Pitt, solicitor for the accused, waited on Mr. Curtis, R.M., and produced a letter from the Chairman of the Suburban North Road Board, which stated that the Board had no desire to prosecute provided the damages were paid for. Hereupon the Resident Magistrate allowed the information to be withdrawn, and indorsed his decision on the back. The question whether it was right or advisable on the part of the Resident Magistrate to do this has nothing to do with me, for he belongs to another department; but the police, after the action of the Resident Magistrate, and letter from the Road Board, had obviously no grounds for further proceedings in the matter, and are not responsible for any failure of justice which may or may not have occurred.—I have, &c.,

"W. C. GUDGEON,  
"Commissioner of Police."

The petitioners were dissatisfied with the answer, because it did not take up the question of why the Magistrate dismissed the case; so they wrote a letter to the honourable member for Motueka, stating all the particulars of the case. That honourable gentleman passed it on to him as member for the district, and he, on application, was permitted to go to the office and examine the papers. He had arranged with the Under-Secretary that the case should be looked into, and a letter sent to the petitioners, which was to this effect:—

"Department of Justice,  
Wellington, 21st November, 1887.

"SIR,—Referring to previous correspondence on the subject of the damage done to a bridge on the Wakapuaka Road, I am directed by the Minister of Justice to inform you that, as the result of inquiries made, he has ascertained that the Resident Magistrate acted in accordance with his usual practice, which is to allow an information to be withdrawn at the request of the aggrieved parties when the charge is not of a serious nature, and that, under these circumstances, the Government does not propose to interfere in the matter.—I have, &c.,

"C. J. A. HASelden,  
"Under-Secretary."

"C. H. Martin, Esq.,  
"Wakapuaka, Nelson."

He need hardly say that that answer was quite as unsatisfactory to the petitioners as the answer from the Police Department had been, especially in the statement that the charge was not of a serious nature, because the petitioners thought it was an exceedingly serious offence to stretch wires across a road, and also to

damage a bridge. He hoped the Minister would have the matter further investigated, so that the petitioners might learn what were the real causes of the case being, as they considered, hushed up.

Mr. FERGUS said the department had made inquiries into the matter, and there seemed to be a good deal of conflicting evidence. It seemed that both the police and the Resident Magistrate were quite justified in the action they took, as the Chairman of the Road Board declined to press the charge against the boys, on condition that the damage should be repaired by their parents. But he would cause further inquiries to be made into the matter, and would inform the honourable gentleman of the result later on.

J. VOAKES.

Mr. MOAT asked the Minister of Lands, Whether it is his intention to take any action on the recommendation of the Public Petitions Committee on the petition of John Voakes, in the direction of compensating him for the loss of his land, improperly sold by the Crown?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said there was no recommendation from the Committee, the petition being merely referred to the Government for consideration. The correspondence showed that Mr. Voakes had neglected to take the ordinary precaution of having his section defined on the plan. The selection was made in October, 1867, and he was then informed that the land would have to be surveyed at his cost. On the 8th April, 1884, he was again similarly informed, and again on the 7th May in the same year; but all these intimations were ignored by Mr. Voakes. As a matter of fact Mr. Voakes had been informed that he would be allowed to make another selection from the Crown lands in the locality; but he said he did not want land, as he was too old to make any use of it. The Commissioner of Crown Lands reported that there was a large quantity of Crown lands there from which Mr. Voakes could make a selection equally good with the first.

#### STATE FORESTS DEPARTMENT.

Mr. MOAT asked the Government, Whether, as commonly reported, it is their intention to abolish the State Forests Department; and, if so, do they intend to take the same precautionary measures to preserve kauri forests from fire as were so successfully adopted by that department last summer; also whether they intend to take steps to preserve the young forest plantations, or to extend them? There had been a report in circulation that it was the intention of the Government to abolish the Forest Department, and he noticed there was no provision on the estimates for its continuance. He thought the report of the department, and the returns laid on the table a few days ago, showed that its operations during the past year had been very satisfactory. He thought it would be a great pity if the same course were adopted now as was adopted when the Act about Native forests was in force—it would be most regrettable if this department were

Mr. Seymour

abolished without anything to provide for forest conservation being put in its place. He hoped the Government would not entirely abolish the department; or, if they did, that they would substitute something else.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON regretted to inform the honourable gentleman that it was the intention of the Government to abolish the State Forests Department altogether. With regard to the conservation of forests, the best possible precautionary measures to prevent danger from fire would be taken; and, as to the young forest-trees planted, the Government would retain one nurseryman to take charge of them. But no further planting would be undertaken at present.

#### CHATHAM ISLANDS REPRESENTATION.

Mr. MCGREGOR asked the Government, If they will bring under the notice of the Representation Commissioners the fact that the Chatham Islands are at present practically unrepresented, and if steps will be taken to join them to some electorate?

Mr. HISLOP said this matter was under the consideration of the Government, and he would inform the honourable gentleman, at a later period, of any decision come to.

Major ATKINSON suggested that possibly the honourable gentleman might like the district to be added to his own electorate.

#### PROBATES.

Mr. VALENTINE asked the Colonial Secretary, Whether he will consider the advisability of adapting to the law in New Zealand the provisions of section 33 of 44 Vict., c. 12, relative to probates, so as to lessen the cost to the public? By the Imperial law it was only necessary for any one applying for probate of a will where the personal estate did not exceed £300 to go to an officer of the Court, or to an officer of the Inland Revenue, and deposit 15s., which covered the whole of the Court fees, and £1 10s. for stamp-duty, making, altogether, £2 5s.; whereas in this country it cost about £20, including solicitor's fees. It was necessary here to go to the Supreme Court; and he had heard on very good authority that the cost was seldom under £20. Now, this was a very great hardship on poor people—particularly widows and orphans, whose all was some small sum they had been left; and he hoped the Colonial Secretary would give some assurance that next session he would bring down a Bill to make the law more like what it was in England.

Mr. HISLOP thought the honourable gentleman had rather exaggerated the cost of administration in this country; but he would be very glad to consider whether provision could be made in the Administration Act which it was intended to introduce next year to make the procedure cheaper.

Mr. VALENTINE feared that, instead of exaggerating, he had really greatly understated the usual cost, because he had it on the best authority in the House only the previous day that in one case, very recently, as much as £40

was charged by a solicitor where the estate was under £100. That was an absolute fact. He only wished this amendment to apply to personal estate, and not to real estate.

#### W. HARPER.

Mr. ORMOND asked the Government, Whether they will consider the case of William Harper, a lineman, who was injured and incapacitated while on Government duty, and continues unable to earn a livelihood for his family? He had fallen from a pole while on duty, and had injured his spine. He had been incapacitated ever since, but for three years he received some small sum from the Government—about £25 a year, he (Mr. Ormond) believed—and then received a letter saying that he had no further claim on the Government. He thought the man had some claim, and he hoped the Government would consider the case, as Harper was in very poor circumstances, and had a family to provide for.

Major ATKINSON said this was one of those unfortunate cases that the Government really hardly knew how to deal with. He understood the man had been only temporarily in the Government employment—not permanently. On meeting with this accident, owing to its being so severe a case the Government had exceeded its authority, and had made some allowance to him. He would consider the case, and see if anything further could be done; but the honourable gentleman knew there was great difficulty in dealing with cases of this sort if the Government once went outside the ordinary regulations. It was one of those unfortunate cases which no one could help feeling compassion for, and he would see if something could be done.

#### LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS.

Mr. SAMUEL asked the Premier, — (1.) Whether the Government intend to continue to do nothing to ascertain whether there are gentlemen sitting as members of the Legislative Council and taking part in legislation in that Chamber whose seats have become vacant through being absent for two successive sessions without permission? (2.) Whether, in accordance with its present retrenchment policy, the Government intend to abstain from nominating the same or other gentlemen to seats in the Council to fill the seats that may have become vacant through the absence of Councillors for two successive sessions of the General Assembly without permission? (3.) Whether the Government will consider the expediency of making some better provision than now exists for the trial of the question whether seats in the Legislative Council have or have not become vacant? It was necessary to make some explanation of the circumstances which led to his putting this question. Nearly every lawyer, to keep himself well up in his business, subscribed to some one or more of the English law-reports, and noted up cases in his text-books. In doing this he (Mr. Samuel) came across the case of *The Attorney-General of Queensland versus Gibbon*, in which it had been decided by the Privy

Council that, under the Queensland Constitution Act, if a Councillor was absent for two successive sessions, although he had permission to be absent for one, his seat was vacated. It had seemed to him that, the New Zealand Constitution Act being similar to that of Queensland, possibly some of the Legislative Councillors in New Zealand might have made the same mistake as had been made in Queensland; and therefore when he came to Wellington this session he began to search the Journals of the Legislative Council to see if it had been so. He quickly found that one honourable gentleman had made that mistake, and he was thinking of speaking to that gentleman personally on the subject, when it occurred to him that by going further back in the records he might find other cases, because, if the seat of the honourable gentleman to whom he had referred had been vacated in this manner, unless a reappointment had been made no subsequent sitting would avert the penalty. He did so, and found that several others were in the same position. Under these circumstances he felt some doubt as to how to act. If there had been only one or two cases and he had been sure as to the number, he would probably have spoken to the gentlemen affected; but, finding that there were several—and possibly there might be some more whose names he had not discovered—he thought it might be putting those gentlemen to whom he would have spoken in a false position if he were to do so. He had therefore spoken to the chief legal member of the Government, the Hon. the Attorney-General, confidentially, mentioning the case and asking his view on it. After consideration of the case, the Hon. the Attorney-General differed from him as to the reading of the decision of the Privy Council; and, under these circumstances, the honourable gentleman thought it would be unnecessary to enter into any examination of the facts which he (Mr. Samuel) laid before him, and respecting which he had some doubt—the doubt being as to the absence of the gentlemen—because, not being able personally to obtain information from the officers of the Council, he thought it possible he might have overlooked entries in the Journals which would prove his information to be incorrect. Under these circumstances, however, seeing that the Hon. the Attorney-General did not agree with him, and did not think it necessary to make any search, he thought, before silencing his own opinion, that it was his duty to make a statement to the House, which was the proper medium of communication of every honourable member, and he therefore made this statement of the facts as far as he could ascertain them. It seemed to him that the question was of very great importance indeed. If these gentlemen, who had been members of the Legislative Council, had ceased to be members, and still, after their attention had been called to the fact, continued to sit in the other branch of the Legislature and to take part in the business as if they were Councillors, then the principle which went to the foundation of our

*Mr. Samuel*

form of legislation, that Acts were to be passed by the majority, did not apply, because it was quite possible that a minority, an actual minority, of the Legislative Councillors who had a right to sit in that Chamber might pass legislation as against the majority. Therefore it appeared to him to be a question which the House as well as the other branch of the Legislature should entertain and consider. Then, subsequently, he found that he had made a mistake as to the Councillors named; but, in discovering that mistake, he found that another gentleman had, as he believed, vacated his seat—namely, the Hon. the Attorney-General himself; and that fact added greatly to the importance of what he had brought under the notice of the Government, and showed that the matter still more urgently required consideration. As to the first part of the question he had put to the Government, the Premier had already given him an answer, to the effect that the matter was under the consideration of the Law Officers of the Crown. No doubt this question required very careful consideration, and ought to be referred to the Law Officers of the Crown, who would no doubt have all the information placed before them, and give advice upon the facts. So far, he was satisfied with the intimation the Premier had given him, and he had no doubt that the House would likewise be satisfied. As to the second part of his question, that was not put on the Order Paper with any wish to insinuate that it was necessary that none of those gentlemen should be reappointed; but an Act had been passed for the purpose of reducing the number of members of the House of Representatives upon the cry for retrenchment, and that cry was equally strong for retrenchment in another place. Therefore it seemed to him that the Government should carefully consider, if an opportunity occurred, whether it would be consistent with their duty to reappoint the whole of those gentlemen if it turned out that they had vacated their seats. With regard to the last question, the mode of dealing with this question prescribed by the Constitution Act was, to his mind, a very ineffective one. It was this: that a Committee should be appointed by the Legislative Council, to whom should be referred the question in dispute, and who should report to the Legislative Council, and by their report the Legislative Council, whether they adopted it or negatived it, were to be guided to a great extent. If it were the case that the Legislative Council contained a number of experienced lawyers, say, five, who might be supposed to be capable of dealing efficiently with such a point as this, it might be very convenient to follow such a course as that prescribed by the Constitution Act; but it was not the practice here to allow two or more of the Judges of the Supreme Court to hold seats in the Legislative Council; and, ordinarily, that Chamber did not contain a sufficient number of gentlemen possessing a legal training to enable it to satisfactorily deal with the question. If there were provision for such questions being sent to the Court of Appeal it

would greatly simplify matters. He might say that so certain did he feel of the soundness of the opinion he had ventured to express of the law in this case that he should be quite willing to be a party to instituting a suit in the Court of Appeal on the terms that, if he proved to be mistaken, he should be called upon to pay the entire costs. He was confident enough of the soundness of his opinion to say that; and he should like to add—

Mr. SPEAKER thought the honourable gentleman was exceeding the limit of speech permitted in the case of asking a question.

Mr. SAMUEL said he only wished to add that he had been actuated, in bringing this matter forward, only by a desire to promote the public interest; and, if he had been ill-advised as to the method of bringing it forward, he could say that he had no desire to give pain to any of the honourable gentlemen who had been referred to. He had acted with the best intentions, and if he had adopted an improper method he could only express regret; for he had no desire to annoy any of the gentlemen he had referred to, nor did he think that he had done so, for he had been in conversation with most of them, and had no reason to believe that their feelings were hurt by anything that he had said.

Major ATKINSON must say that he was surprised, that so accurate a man, so good a lawyer, as the honourable member for New Plymouth, should have propounded such extraordinary questions; and he was still more surprised that the honourable gentleman should have made the statements he had made. The honourable gentleman would not expect him to do more than shortly answer his question. To the first he would answer No; to the second he would reply that he would consider the case if it arose; and, as to the third, that it was under the consideration of the Government.

#### KAIKORA MAIL SERVICE.

Mr. TANNER asked the Postmaster-General, If, when the present contracts expire, the Postal Department will institute a mail service three times a week between Kaikora and Taumumu and Kaikora and Patangata, instead of twice a week as at present?

Major ATKINSON replied that when the present contract expired the Government would call for alternative tenders, and, if the cost of the change asked for were reasonable, it would be made.

#### MAORI DEEDS OF LAND-PURCHASE.

Sir G. GREY asked the Government, Whether the two volumes of Maori Deeds of Land-purchases in the North Island of New Zealand, published by authority in 1877-78, consist of copies of the deeds by which the Crown holds lands conveyed to Her Majesty by her subjects of the Maori race? What number of copies of this publication have been distributed, and how many remain in store? Will the Government cause copies to be distributed to public institutions and members of the General Assembly?

Major ATKINSON said these books had been printed. Of the first volume thirty-four had been issued, and of the second thirty. There were in store 966 copies of the first volume, and 970 of the second. The Government did not propose to issue them to the public, as it was thought that no good would follow from their distribution.

Sir G. GREY asked whether the Government would allow members of the House to obtain copies on application.

Major ATKINSON said he would consider that question, and reply in the course of a day or two.

#### WELLINGTON-PITONE LINE.

Mr. FITZHERBERT asked the Government, If they will introduce a Bill next session authorising the straightening of the railway-line between Wellington and Pitone by a syndicate or by private enterprise; all the area between the present road and the straightened railway-line to be reclaimed by and Crown-granted to the promoter or promoters of such works, in payment for the same, free of cost? In answering a question which he had put on the Order Paper the other day the Minister for Public Works had admitted the necessity of this particular work, but he regretted that, as the work would cost £25,000, he did not see his way to propose it. He (Mr. Fitzherbert) might say that there were along this line a number of small bays, which could be easily reclaimed, and would make very good business-sites; and he knew a gentleman who, in all probability, would straighten the line for the privilege of reclaiming and making use of these bays. Probably it would be a good thing for both parties. The gentleman referred to would make something out of his speculation, no doubt, and the Government would get their line straightened. He hoped that, as the Minister for Public Works could not see his way to spending £25,000, he would agree to have the work done in the manner he (Mr. Fitzherbert) had now suggested.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the Government had no intention of introducing a Bill on this subject next session. At some future time it might be a matter for consideration.

#### OTAGO EDUCATION BOARD.

Mr. ROSS asked the Premier, Whether it is the intention of the Government to give effect to the recommendation of the Education Committee contained in the report on the petitions of A. C. Begg and Francis Wilkinson, praying for inquiry into alleged arbitrary proceedings on the part of the Otago Education Board in reference to the removal by the Board of the headmaster of the Kaikorai District School? The report of the Committee was as follows:—

“That the Committee is of opinion that the subject-matter of the petition is one which concerns only the administration of the Education Act under the powers conferred upon Education Boards and School Committees; and that, if the Education Board did not first consult

the School Committees before dismissing the teacher as alleged, the provisions of clause 45 of the Act have not been strictly complied with. The Committee recommends—(1) That the Government should take the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown upon the point raised, and transmit such opinion to the petitioners; (2) and, if the Act is not sufficiently clear as to the relative positions of the Boards and Committees, the Government should amend the Act; (3) that, as there seems to be considerable feeling in the locality on the subject of the petitions, special inquiry by the Resident Magistrate of Dunedin should be made into it."

Mr. FISHER said the Government, of its own motion, would not have interfered with any Education Board in regard to such a matter as this; but, acting upon the recommendation of an important Select Committee of the House, they had decided to instruct the Resident Magistrate of Dunedin to make an inquiry into the circumstances of this case.

#### VICTORIAN EXHIBITION.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Premier,—(1.) Does the Government intend to avail itself of the maximum space allotted New Zealand in the Victorian Exhibition building? (2.) Does the Government intend to ask Parliament to authorise any expenditure of public money in connection with the above Exhibition? (3.) Generally, what steps does the Government intend to take in reference to the said Exhibition; and, seeing the time for securing space expires on the 31st December, 1887, will the Government take the House into its confidence at an early date? As the time was getting limited, he thought the Government should at an early date make up their minds as to what steps they would take with regard to this matter, because would-be exhibitors would be glad to know what the intentions of the Government were. The House had been led generally to understand that the Government intended the colony to be represented; but it would like more detailed information as to what the Government intended to do—whether they intended that the colony should be represented by Commissioners, and so forth. He might say that he thought we should work with our neighbouring colony in this matter.

Mr. HISLOP said the amount of space to be applied for depended upon the results of inquiries which the Government were now making in various parts of the colony as to the accommodation that would be required by exhibitors. As had been intimated by the Premier, it was the intention of the Government to ask for a vote to secure the proper representation of the colony, and they would be prepared to state the amount when the supplementary estimates came down; but they had not yet determined whether the colony should be represented by Commissioners or not. The matter was still under the consideration of the Government, who would take the House into their confidence at as early a date as possible.

Mr. SEDDON asked that the statement

*Mr. Ross*

should be made on the following Monday or Tuesday, at the latest.

#### COMPENSATION FOR MILITARY SERVICE.

Mr. GOLDIE asked the Minister of Lands, What action the Government propose to take to satisfy the claims of Thomas Thwaite, W. G. Garrard, J. D. Bentley, P. Hodge, and others for compensation for military service, whose petitions have been reported upon by the various Committees to whom they were committed?

Mr. FERGUS said, from the investigation of these claims, he was convinced that the demands made therein ought not to be complied with. These persons had no claim whatever. There were hundreds of better claims than these. Hodge was discharged as medically unfit, receiving a pension for two years. He was therefore not entitled to land, having served less than two years. Bentley's claim was still worse: he came to New Zealand not as a discharged soldier, but as one of the Waikato military settlers, and received eighty-one acres as such. He now applied for a grant as an old soldier.

#### EDUCATION.

Mr. BARRON asked the Minister of Education, Whether he will act on the recommendation contained in the report from the Select Committee on Education, so that no material change shall be effected in the present system of education, pending the result of further inquiry next session? He asked this question because the Minister would acknowledge that the subject was one of very great importance, and one in which the people of the colony took a great deal of interest. It was understood that circulars had been issued from the department in reference to the school-age, and he wished to know what changes were in contemplation. The report of the Select Committee, as the Minister would have seen, suggested that, owing to its vast importance, the inquiry could not be exhausted during the present session, and therefore the Committee recommended that no action should be taken till next session. He hoped the Minister would not act hastily in the matter. He thought it would be agreed that, although some persons might think that the education expenditure was somewhat excessive, still if there was any return which the people got for their taxation it was in regard to education.

Mr. FISHER said the question was, without doubt, an exceedingly important one. As his colleague the Premier and he himself had already stated on several occasions, the whole subject would be submitted to the decision of the House, and no changes of any kind would be made until a vote of the House had been taken. He might again explain that it was absolutely necessary to indicate the changes in the manner in which they had been indicated, in order to satisfy the universal demand for information in regard to the points regarding which changes were proposed. It was the desire of the Government to make clear to the



numerous body of persons interested what were the intentions of the Government in regard to the subject, and that was why the circulars had been issued. The Government would take no step until the decision of the House had been taken.

#### HASTINGS RAILWAY-STATION.

Captain RUSSELL asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he is aware that land has at last been taken for increasing the station-yard accommodation at Hastings, and the price settled by the Compensation Court; and whether he will cause such alterations being at once made as will prevent shunting across the main road?

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that the cases in respect to the land required for the proposed extension of the Hastings Station had only been decided by the Court on the previous day. Plans had been drawn out for the work, which would cost some thousands of pounds to carry out completely; but now that the land had been acquired the matter could be gone into with a view to seeing if any immediate alteration was practicable.

#### EDUCATION RESERVES.

Mr. SMITH asked, without notice, what steps the Minister of Education intended to take in reference to an advertisement which appeared in that day's *New Zealand Times*, announcing for sale by auction a number of sections of the Alfredtown and Rangitumanu education reserves.

Mr. FISHER had to thank the honourable gentleman for calling his attention to the subject, as he had noticed the advertisement himself, and had intended to take action in the matter, but, owing to the press of business, it had escaped his attention for the time. He had communicated with the department to ascertain the circumstances of the case, and he would give the honourable member the desired information as soon as it was obtained.

#### FREE PASSES TO CHILDREN ATTENDING SCHOOL.

Mr. PEARSON asked the Minister for Public Works, Why the concession of free passes granted to children attending some schools should not be extended to all?

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that the gazetted regulations provided that free school season-tickets should be issued only from stations where there was no primary school to the station in the vicinity of the nearest primary school. The question then arose that the regulation only affected children attending Government schools, and it was desired to make arrangements to meet the case of children who attended the Roman Catholic schools. The case under consideration was that of a girl who wished to have a ticket to travel a further distance, but was refused it, because the regulations did not provide for such a case. Whenever complaints were made of this character the Government always took them into their consideration.

#### EDUCATION.

Mr. IZARD asked if the Government would lay on the table the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown as to the validity of the Order in Council lately made as to the school-age of children.

Mr. FISHER said the honourable gentleman must be aware that, if there was such an opinion, it would only be laid on the table by the order of Parliament.

#### POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICE AT HUNTERVILLE.

Mr. BRUCE asked whether, in view of the very rapid increase in the population in the district surrounding Hunterville, the Government would take into consideration the advisability of erecting a post and telegraph office there.

Major ATKINSON requested the honourable member to write him a letter on the subject, and he would see into it at once. He did not intend to make any promise till then.

#### MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES asked the Premier when he would bring down the Midland Railway Bill and the agreement attached to the contract.

Major ATKINSON said the Government were negotiating with the company with regard to certain portions of the draft agreement passed by the House, and as soon as that was complete—which, he hoped, would be in a day or so—he would bring the Bill down. He would have brought the Bill down before if it had been possible.

#### SUPPLY.

##### IN COMMITTEE.

#### PUBLIC WORKS FUND.—PART I.

#### CLASS IX.—LIGHTHOUSES, HARBOUR-WORKS, AND HARBOUR DEFENCES.

##### Harbour defences, £80,000.

Mr. TURNBULL thought this vote should be postponed until after the Naval Defence Bill had been dealt with. If the colony was going to pay the English Government £22,000 a year, they should not spend any more money on harbour defences.

Mr. BRUCE asked if the vote, £80,000, was required for the completion of the works.

Mr. MITCHELSON said that was for this year only.

Mr. FISH said, if in passing this vote they committed the House to an expenditure of £50,000 next year, he would object to the vote.

Major ATKINSON said these works were only estimated to cost £900,000 when they were commenced, but already something like £450,000 had been spent. The Government regretted having to propose this vote, but it did not seem wise to stop these works, leaving them practically unfinished.

Mr. MITCHELSON said there was very little money now available. The reason why the liabilities amounted to so enormous a sum was that the late Government had entered into a

large amount of expenditure which had not been authorised by Parliament.

Mr. FITZHERBERT understood from Major Boddam's report, laid on the table last session, that all that was required to complete these works was £25,000. He was surprised to see now that another £50,000 would be required in addition to this £30,000. Some of the guns which had been obtained were almost obsolete already; and even the guns of the newest pattern—he was informed on good authority—would become practically useless after firing a certain number of shots. The expenditure of money in that way was a matter which required grave consideration.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the total amount available for expenditure was £25,500, and that amount was necessary in order to complete works in hand. The present Government were not at all responsible for this expenditure.

Mr. TURNBULL said this expenditure was the result of the late war-scare. The late Government were not responsible. The people had hounded the Government on to the expenditure.

Mr. MOSS said it seemed to be generally argued that the defence-works had been a great blunder; but he did not hold that view. He was not an expert, and could not pretend to judge whether all the money had been wisely spent; but to blame the Government was, he thought, unfair. The Government were to be commended for the action they had taken. The colony was in an utterly helpless position before these works were undertaken. What could have been more humiliating than if a small cruiser had taken away as ransom perhaps more money than the whole cost of the defence-works? Except in case of deliberate invasion, which was very unlikely, the rifles and small cannon of our Volunteers would have been of little value. We were helpless against the attack of even the lightest cruiser. This was no longer the case. We could with our present cannon and torpedoes hope to make a fair show for the defence of our ports, and that was well worth all the cost of which so much was now being made.

Mr. MITCHELSON had no intention whatever of blaming the late Government for this expenditure, for he fully realised the fact that, whatever Government was in power at the time, it must have faced this difficulty. His only object was to show that the present Government were not responsible for the amount on the estimates, seeing that the whole amount was required to meet liabilities incurred by the late Government.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON would remind the House that the guns which were now alluded to as being obsolete were ordered in 1875, and, seeing how much artillery had been improved of late, it was not to be wondered at that they were obsolete. Still, they were very useful.

Dr. HODGKINSON asked whether it was the intention of the Government to spend the whole of the £130,000.

Mr. MITCHELSON said that the liabilities to the 30th November amounted to £104,000,

*Mr. Mitchelson*

and every penny of the £130,000 would be absolutely required.

Mr. VALENTINE did not agree with the honourable member for Parnell as to the advisability of undertaking all these works; but it was hardly the time now to cavil at the expenditure of a few thousand pounds for the completion of these works, particularly if the colony was going to join in the Australasian defence system. The fortifications would then be all the more necessary to assist the ships of Her Majesty's navy. He was only sorry that, instead of going on with these expensive works, the Government had not made an arrangement with the British Government for a more effectual naval defence. There was no doubt that many of the guns were becoming obsolete, and if an arrangement had been made with the British Government it would have insured a renewal of the guns from year to year.

Mr. MONK thought the amount was far larger than ought to be expended on defence purposes. The opinion outside the House was that the money had been wastefully expended, and that all except that which had been devoted to the torpedo service was absolutely thrown away. The impression left from reading the reports of modern military schools was that the defence of harbours would in the future depend much on the torpedo service. Years ago it might have been thought wise to place guns in such forts as we now had in the colony, where the first explosive sent amongst them would sweep everything away. Nothing was so efficient as earthworks, and it would have been much better to have had them, instead of these cement works, on which so much money had been wasted. If it should happen that the country was driven into actual warfare, he was sure that if an enemy's cruiser managed to get past the torpedoes the forts inside the harbours would be quite inefficient to repel attack. The appliances of warfare were every day improving, and there were now pneumatic guns invented, with missiles so destructive that if one were sent into one of these forts it would destroy everything within a large area. We had been wasting money in putting up guns that day by day were proved to be quite inefficient. Take, for example, rifles. The rifles of to-day were superseded by a new weapon to-morrow, and the Government should be very particular not to introduce weapons that in a few months might be superseded; and yet on such weapons a large unauthorised expenditure had been incurred. Then, again, with regard to cartridges, a great deal had been said about protecting local industries, and was it desirable that the Government should order cartridges from Home when they could get them quite as good manufactured in the colony? He did not altogether blame the late Government for the expenditure, but he thought the gentlemen at the head of affairs ought to have known sufficient of military matters not to have recommended such a waste of money in this system of defence; and the Government should, as quickly as possible, suspend every shilling of expen-

diture on guns and forts, and concentrate their whole attention on the port torpedo force. New systems of torpedoes and missiles were being introduced daily, and the Government should see whether experiment proved these to be efficient or not. As for the guns placed in these forts, they ought to have been spread about the hills surrounding the town, instead of being concentrated in one position, where one single charge might blow them all to pieces. He might give America as an instance of what ought to be done. In that country, rich as she is, whilst others were spending their money in experimenting on defensive weapons, they waited quietly and let others make experiments, of which they would afterwards take advantage. We, on the other hand, took up all sorts of obsolete methods, and, while the people were groaning under taxation, employed a lot of gentlemen to walk about, drawing large salaries and wearing spotless swords and gaudy uniforms. This expenditure was doing no good, and he would ask the Government not to spend another penny beyond the liabilities in regard to fortresses, but to devote their attention to the torpedo service. He was not casting any reflection upon the late Government; but there were gentlemen in high positions who, from the military experience of the age, should have supplied the colony with inducements to more caution. The late Government were led away simply by the attraction of military display.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON hoped no one would reply to the paltry remarks of the last speaker.

Mr. FERGUS could not allow the remarks of the honourable member for Waitemata to pass without saying he entirely disagreed with the honourable gentleman, and also with those who said that the guns the colony now had were obsolete. He had the highest authority for saying that we were ahead even of Great Britain herself in the matter of our guns. He might quote General Schaw as saying that when he left England, some six or eight months ago, they had no such guns mounted there as we had now. The honourable gentleman said that the money spent on defence had been thrown away. That also was not the case, if they were to take the high authority he had quoted. Some of the money, no doubt, had been badly spent. It had been remarked by the honourable member for Timaru that it was upon the naval defence they must rely for the future. That was true; but then the British Government would not allow its ships to come here unless we had defended ports in which they could refit and repair. Forts were an auxiliary to the naval defence of the colony, and torpedoes were auxiliary to the forts. In the first place forts were necessary to insure naval defence, and in the second place torpedoes were necessary to render effective the defence of the four main ports of the colony.

Mr. LEVESTAM did not consider the honourable member for Waitemata an authority on the question of defence, for if that honourable gentleman had known anything

about the subject he would have known that torpedoes and mines were of no use unless they were protected by artillery. But he quite agreed with the honourable gentleman that not another shilling should be spent on harbour defence, because all that was necessary had been done, and perhaps a great deal more. He did not think it was necessary to have more than two fortified ports in the colony, in which ports vessels could refit; and the rest of the colony must rely upon a naval defence. He would be glad to have the assurance of the Minister that no more money should be expended on harbour defences.

Mr. FITZHERBERT had not said that the guns were obsolete, but only that some of them were. He agreed with the Minister of Defence that we had batteries here which were not equalled in England, and guns mounted in the most perfect manner. That was the case in the Ngauranga battery; but he could not say so much for the Kaiwara battery, where the guns, he believed, were of an obsolete character. Then, he considered that the batteries were too elaborate, and that they might be as effective, and the guns might be fought with as much success, if the batteries had not been so elaborate.

Mr. TANNER thought that the money had been unwisely spent—not altogether, but to a large extent—and that they should not throw good money after bad. If the additional amount was granted would the defences be complete?

Mr. FERGUS.—Yes.

Mr. TANNER asked if the Minister for Public Works would guarantee that no cruiser would be able to run the gauntlet of these forts, and then do as much mischief as if this money had not been expended.

Mr. FERGUS.—No; but in all probability it could not.

Mr. TANNER said that was not sufficient. If there was a doubt about it it was of no use completing this defence; and he thought that, to put the ports in a proper state of defence, three or four times the amount asked for would be needed. He would move, as an amendment, That no additional amount be authorised.

Mr. MARCHANT had always objected to this extravagant expenditure. He could see no reason why a young country like this should be required to spend large sums of money in putting up defences against people with whom we had nothing to do. We had no neighbours with whom to quarrel, and no foreign possessions to defend. The only thing which would lead this country into trouble at all was the action of England, which the colony had no possible means of controlling. Such being the case, why should we have to bear the brunt of it? Seeing that we were an English colony, and England had such relations with foreign Powers as involved a danger of invasion to us, he said unhesitatingly that it was the duty of England to protect us, and that we should not be required, overburdened as the people were with taxation, to borrow and to incur further taxation to provide for such a

contingency. He would not object to allow a small sum, to taper off, but he intended to move that there be struck off a sum of £24,000. If we had a voice in the administration of Imperial affairs, things, he granted, would be different; but he would never consent to that. He contended that we had enough to do to manage our own affairs, without intermeddling with matters that we could not understand, and that we had no knowledge of.

Mr. IZARD said that, as they had the assurance of the Minister of Defence that, of the £130,000, liabilities were undertaken to the extent of £104,000, it seemed to him to be merely a waste of time to discuss this question.

Sir J. VOGEL thought that the worst and, perhaps, the only mistake made by the late Government was in this matter of defence expenditure, though he did not think they could be much blamed for it, for they had only followed the wishes of the country under the impulse of a craze—of a panic, he might say. This enormous expenditure was not of the slightest use to New Zealand, but, on the contrary, was a danger to the colony, and was simply a convenience to the Imperial Government for a policy which had certainly not been for the good of the Australasian colonies. He was speaking plainly in this matter. If the English Government had followed the recommendation made long years ago to them, and at the time had taken possession of the Pacific islands, there would have been no need for anything of this kind; but they had allowed foreign Powers to get possession of the Pacific islands, and now there might be times when critical situations would arise. He did not mean to say that in the case of a European war these islands would be of much consequence one way or the other; but what he meant was that, with a number of foreign vessels scattered about the islands, not connected by cable with England, each captain doing as he thought best, and almost having the power in his hands of making war between the countries concerned, the danger was a very large one. Now, the Australasian Colonies were asked to take a responsibility which really was caused by the Government of Great Britain in allowing the Pacific islands to pass beyond their reach. That danger was one which the British Government would have to face. Take the case of the New Hebrides. He observed that satisfaction was expressed that an arrangement had been made with France regarding those islands. Well, he, for one, did not share in that satisfaction. What did that arrangement mean? That the islands were to be controlled by the men-of-war of the two nations. Was it likely that England would keep war-vessels at the New Hebrides? Virtually the islands were ceded to France without that condition which France was willing to make a year or two ago—that deportation to New Caledonia should entirely cease. They had got out of that condition. Then, take the case of Samoa. We virtually offered this group to Germany when we proposed that that empire should act as the mandatory of other

*Mr. Marchant*

Powers. The Germans could take possession and do anything they liked under such an arrangement; their agency would be merely nominal. What was the meaning of taking power for a man-of-war to act at the New Hebrides, when there was no chance of our permanently stationing one there? He had pointed out eighteen months ago that the landing of French troops at the New Hebrides meant that they would never give up their virtual possession of the islands. His contention was that the defence expenditure was the result of panic fostered by officers in the Imperial service, and the colony had been led into an expenditure which, he believed, had been wholly useless, unless they were prepared to go into an enormous expenditure in the future, and into responsibilities the extent of which it was impossible to gauge. He was quite prepared to admit the responsibility that attached to himself as a member of the Government, nor did he wish to evade it in any respect. He might recall to the recollection of honourable members the way in which a deputation treated him in Dunedin because he was not prepared to place in a state of defence the Ocean Beach. That was a sample of—should he call it the warlike spirit, or fear of war, that prevailed at the time from one end of the colony to the other? He was prepared to accept whatever blame might be considered to attach to the Government, although to some extent it was impossible for the Government to resist the panic which necessitated that enormous expenditure. Seventeen years ago, when he visited England, he was asked by the then Defence Minister, the late Sir Donald McLean, to communicate with the authorities with a view of ascertaining what would be the cost of placing the four principal harbours in a state of defence. The gentleman who was now the present Governor of New Zealand, then Colonel Jervois, and then considered to be a very high authority on questions of defence, drew out a plan for the colony the cost of which would have amounted to £20,000 only for the defence of the four harbours of Auckland, Wellington, Lyttelton, and Port Chalmers. It gave an idea of the way in which the expenditure and people's views increased on this subject when it was considered that lately this £20,000 had developed into half a million and over. It was not considered desirable even when the colony had ample means, between 1870 and 1880, to go into a larger defence expenditure than £20,000. In plain terms, the expenditure which had been incurred, instead of conducting to the colony's protection, placed it in a position of inviting attack from outside enemies. Nothing could be more dangerous to a colony such as ours than to place it in an imperfect condition of defence. It was impossible to suppose that any nation would wantonly destroy our towns, unless those towns were placed in a position of resistance. Belligerent vessels might ask for coal, vegetables, and so on, and might enforce their demands; but to suppose that they would wantonly destroy property was opposed to the whole conditions upon which modern wars were

fought out. The custom now was to send a bill in at the end of the war, and the defeated nation had to pay. What object could there be in wantonly destroying property? Property was never safer in France than when the German army was in occupation. He contended that the idea that it was necessary to fortify these towns in order to protect them from being burnt down was an utter mistake. The contrary would be the case, unless these towns offered a defence or refused supplies. It was only in such a case as that that the towns would stand a chance of being destroyed. His opinion was that there was very little chance of England entering upon a war in which she would be defeated. He thought most Englishmen agreed with the Earl of Beaconsfield that England could not be beaten—that if she were beaten in one campaign she would be ready to fight another, that if she were beaten in the second she would be ready to fight a third, and, in fact, there was no end to her resources; and no other nation could say the same. Therefore it was quite certain that any attempt at wanton destruction would not be made, because of the punishment that would be certain to follow. But he thought any attempt at wanton destruction was out of the question. Any vessel sailing under letters of marque would carry too little ammunition to waste it in bombarding New Zealand towns. Such a vessel would seek higher game. It appeared to him that, unless there was some hidden motive behind of which they were not conscious, the naval policy of the Empire, as represented by the desire of getting these small towns fortified, had revolutionised the system that would have been pursued by those great admirals who had made the English name formidable, and was enough to make them turn in their graves. What would Nelson have said as to the fear of meeting ships of war outside fortified ports? "Let them come," he would have said, "inside or outside an unfortified port: they shall never get away." Go back to Queen Elizabeth's time. Did she send vessels out when England was threatened with invasion by the Spanish Armada, or wait until the Armada came? What was wanted was a navy powerful enough to take to the sea and protect our merchant-vessels afloat. He was favourable to the proposal to make Auckland a naval station, because he believed it was the most convenient place for the whole of the islands, especially so when the Panama Canal was finished. And if the Imperial Government insisted that Auckland, being the naval station, should be fortified, the colony would have to fortify it; but it was utterly absurd for us to continue to treat Dunedin, Christchurch, or Wellington, or their several ports, as fortified stations. What they should do was to take steps to protect New Zealand from occupation against the whole world; and it could be protected against occupation by any nation or conjunction of nations. They should spend their money in developing to the highest possible extent the Volunteer force. The Volunteer force was put on one side. There was a

sort of naval and military oligarchy that looked with contempt on the Volunteers; and, in his opinion, it was sometimes doubtful whether they would not hear of a large number of the Volunteers being disbanded. What he should like to see was the establishment of a reserve force of five or six thousand men, and more if necessary, made up year after year by selecting Volunteers who had shown themselves most apt in acquiring discipline and organization, and who should be rewarded by being placed in the reserve force, with a small pension, and be liable to be called out once or twice a year. There could also be an inner reserve force to fill up the vacancies occurring in the first reserve. By these means a force could be established which would prevent the occupation of the colony by any nation. In the prevention of privateers or solitary cruisers coming to New Zealand recourse could be had, if necessary, to the assistance of the Empire; but he was convinced they would not develop, at a reasonable cost, a force to defend the colony against invasion if they continued to allow a naval and military oligarchy to grow up in connection with their defences. The liabilities which had been incurred were the result of the naval and military *entourage* which was growing up here, and which considered that New Zealand was bound to support a sort of branch military establishment of the Imperial country. He had noticed what had been going on around him, and had come to this opinion with reluctance, but not without good grounds. If they had allowed other nations to get a footing in the Pacific, it was a misfortune, and they must bear it. A good deal remained to be said on the whole question when the Naval Defences Bill came on for discussion. As to that measure, he was entirely favourable to making New Zealand a naval station, and to paying for the presence of two ships of war upon our coast. An increase of vessels of this kind would be a step in the right direction, instead of these fortifications, which would answer no purpose whatever except to put the colony in danger. He should not vote against this amount, because he did not know what was the position of the Government with respect to liabilities; but he hoped the Government would show a strong front, and bring this expenditure to an end as soon as possible. Even if it was justifiable from any cause, we had to look at our means. We might look at Sydney, where Sir William Denison had spent an enormous sum on defences—on what people now called his "follies." All that had been done during the last three years would, in the course of so short a period as another five years, become antiquated and more or less useless, and would have to be undone or added to at a large cost; besides that, there would have to be an enormous annual cost to keep the works up with the march of improvement in offensive and defensive operations. He hoped the Government would bring this expenditure to an end at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. MACARTHUR said the honourable member for Christchurch North had made an ex-

cellent speech on the indefensible nature of the Government expenditure on defences; but his speech was entirely inconsistent with the actions of the Ministry of which he was a member. He did not think it was wise to go into the question now of whether this expenditure had been advisable or not, or who had been the first to raise the scare in the country. No doubt, at one time there was a scare, and the then Ministry, as the honourable member for Christchurch North had said, were afraid to ignore that scare, and yielded to it. Of course the Ministry were not obliged to yield to the popular cry if they thought it was wrong; but they did as they always did—they bent to the blast—they went in for this enormous expenditure, and now they could not disclaim the responsibility. However, he was not going into that question; what he wished more particularly to confine his attention to was a much greater question than the question of whether the money had been spent wisely or not. It was of no use to cry over spilt milk: the money was gone, and could not be recovered. He wanted to direct attention again to the unauthorised defence expenditure, in order that in future similar occurrences might be prevented. They sat there night after night, squabbling over votes for a few hundreds, and they went away thinking they had left the finances of the country in a sound condition. But what was the result? The Ministry simply overrode the decision come to by the House, by incurring liabilities and committing the country to future expenditure without at all troubling themselves to obtain the consent of Parliament. This was referred to in the last Public Works Statement of the late Minister for Public Works, in 1886, and the then Ministry provided what they thought would prevent the incurring of liabilities without authority. They tried to provide a remedy; and with what result? On almost all the votes under the control of one of the late Ministers liabilities were incurred to a very much greater extent without the least authority of Parliament. A very large amount of time had been wasted this session over twopenny-halfpenny parish matters; and therefore he wanted no excuse for going over the figures of this business again, for this was a matter involving thousands and thousands, and yet apparently it was not taken the slightest notice of by the House. He hoped the Government would try to devise some provision for preventing such occurrences in the future. In 1886 the House voted £120,000 for direct expenditure on harbour defences, and they gave the Minister permission to incur liabilities to the extent of £10,000 more. What was the result? Why, on the 31st March last the late Government had spent on defences directly £140,000, or £20,000 in excess of the £120,000 voted for the year. This extra £20,000 was no doubt covered by the authority given to spend £100,000 as unauthorised expenditure under "The Public Revenues Act, 1878;" but there was no law to justify the contracts entered into to the extent of £87,000 over the £130,000 authorised. The late Government

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got an imprest of £53,000 last session, which extended their authority to £183,000, while against this authority they had spent and incurred liabilities on the 30th September last up to £229,000—that was £46,000 over and above the amount allowed them by Parliament. Add to this their liabilities on Native-land purchases and village settlements, and a very serious state of affairs was disclosed. What was the good of their wasting time over these votes, and deliberating to a few pounds how much should be spent, when a Minister could take no notice of what the House has prescribed, but go and spend scores of thousands of pounds utterly without authority? If a member of a local body acted in this way, even to the extent of £10, he would be liable to be punished or charged with it; but a Minister, because he was in the highest position in the country, could afford to wholly disregard the law. Such a state of things should be remedied at once, and it would be advisable even this session to do it. A clause should be put at the end of the Appropriation Act providing that, if any Minister spent more under any of the headings of that Act than was authorised, he should be fined £500, or punished in some other way. That would prevent any repetition in the future of such conduct. But the Ministry could advise the best way to do this, and he hoped they would even yet do it before the end of the session, so that in the future these proceedings should be stopped altogether, and there should be no liabilities incurred by any Minister beyond the amounts actually authorised. He had referred to this matter earlier in the session, and had hoped his remarks would elicit some explanation, or defence, or apology from the late Minister to whom he particularly referred, the honourable member for Wanganui. That honourable gentleman was not now present to hear him, but he would have another opportunity of replying to the charges now being made against him, and he (Mr. Macarthur) hoped that the honourable gentleman would do so. That honourable gentleman was directly responsible for what he had alluded to, but the whole of the Ministry had to share the responsibility. The honourable gentleman would have an opportunity, when speaking to the schedule of the Loan Bill, of replying to the charge he had made. As to what the honourable member for Christchurch North had said about this vote, it was rather peculiar, after that honourable gentleman's Ministry had spent half a million on defences, for him to quibble at an expenditure of £24,000—which was the whole vote in excess of the liabilities—to finish the works begun by the honourable gentleman's late colleague: and it must be remembered that the liabilities this vote was principally to meet were incurred nearly wholly by the honourable gentleman and his late colleagues. Unless this £24,000 was granted to complete the works, what had already been spent would be to a great extent useless. All that was asked was £8,000 a year for the next three years. Now, whether this expenditure

was defensible or not, those who had swallowed the camel of half a million should not strain at the gnat of £24,000 as the honourable member for Christchurch North was doing. The whole action of that gentleman in expostulating about this expenditure, in view of what he had himself done, was most absurd and inconsistent. The whole House, he believed, would be in accord with the Government in taking action to prevent this unauthorised spending of money and committing the country to liabilities in the future. To do so would not take much time, and in doing it the Ministers would have the satisfaction of knowing that, however unwilling they might be to be guilty of such actions as he had referred to, they would prevent any of their successors from having the power to do so. He earnestly hoped this would be done during the present session.

Sir J. VOGEL said it was not a question of what the late Government had or had not done, but whether a large expenditure in the future should be incurred or not. If the late Government had expended any money without being authorised, it was because the law allowed them to do it. Besides the amounts actually and specifically authorised, the Government was allowed by law to expend a certain maximum sum without specific authority; but the law recognised the one as as much authorised as the other. He agreed that there was too much unauthorised expenditure allowed, and he challenged the honourable member for Manawatu to move that the power as to unauthorised expenditure be reduced by a half. As long as the Government had power to make unauthorised expenditure they would exercise it to the best of their judgment. If it was unwisely exercised it was the fault of the House in giving such a power; and, if the Ministers displayed bad judgment, it was in the power of the House to punish them in the constitutional manner. The less the limit of unauthorised expenditure allowed the more exact, necessarily, would be the calculations of the Treasurer for the year. As an ex-Colonial Treasurer himself, he would not object to the power as to unauthorised expenditure being reduced. A great deal depended on the time the appropriations were passed. This year, for instance, when there would be only three months of the financial year left after the passing of the appropriations, there could not be much unauthorised expenditure; but, if the appropriations had been passed four or five months ago, the unauthorised expenditure must necessarily have been larger. As it was, all liabilities up to the passing of the appropriations would be provided for, and the unauthorised expenditure this year should be to that of ordinary years only in proportion to the part of the year left unexpired as compared with the period ordinarily to run after the passing of the appropriation. There was little difficulty in estimating pretty exactly what would be required when there was only a fourth of the financial year left, instead of two-thirds as there usually was. If the honourable gentleman thought the amount which the Govern-

ment had power to spend without specific authority was too large, he (Sir J. Vogel) would support its reduction by half. He put this case to the honourable gentleman: Supposing a man was given the management of a business some thousands of miles from the residence of the owners of that business, and was authorised by his employers or directors to spend a certain amount on specific objects. Suppose that he was also told he might use his own discretion as to spending a further specified sum, if he unwisely exercised that discretion would his employers have any right to blame him for expending money without authority? They would have given him as full authority to spend that discretionary amount as the amount for which the objects were specifically stated. They might blame his judgment, but could not complain of his acting without authority. If the House thought Governments were prone to spend too much money under the shadow of unauthorised expenditure, the proper course was to limit the amount of the unauthorised expenditure; and he should be very glad to assist the honourable gentleman to do that.

Mr. MACARTHUR said the honourable member for Christchurch North was cleverly endeavouring to draw a red-herring across the scent. He was presuming on the inattention which was too general with members on this subject, and was talking about unauthorised expenditure when this was a matter which had nothing to do with unauthorised expenditure. The honourable gentleman knew well enough that what he (Mr. Macarthur) had just now been complaining of was not the administration of the unauthorised expenditure so much as the action of the Government in entering into contracts without any authority. The use of the unauthorised-expenditure vote was to meet payments coming in unexpectedly, or to meet payments coming due, and necessary to be made, where the votes proved to be insufficient. The administration of the unauthorised expenditure had nothing to do with, and formed no justification for, the incurring of liabilities which Parliament had not authorised. He had no desire to curtail the power very wisely first given to Ministers some years ago in the matter of unauthorised expenditure; but what he did wish to curtail was the power which Ministers illegally exercised of entering into contracts altogether in excess of the authority and intention of Parliament, and then walking off into opposition "scot-free," with not a word being said about it—without any notice being taken of their conduct by the Press or the country. That was the system that ought to be stopped. And he was not referring so much to the expenditure of the late Government as to the system; and he did hope that, late in the session as it was, the Government would make some provision in this matter, so that, though they might be above such things, it would not be possible for their successors to do as their predecessors had certainly done to an enormous extent. The honourable member for Christchurch North knew well enough what he was complaining of,

and should not attempt to draw a red-herring across the scent, with the view of diverting the attention of Parliament from a matter which needed very strict and careful attention.

Sir J. VOGEL said he only wished to say that the honourable gentleman was entirely misinformed as to the powers possessed by the Government with regard to incurring unauthorised expenditure, and it would take too long to instruct him, and therefore he (Sir J. Vogel) should not attempt it.

Mr. TAYLOR said the speech which they had heard from the late Colonial Treasurer was one which he should not like to have delivered. What was the use of apologizing after the money had been wastefully spent? He hoped to see the day when there would be a Radical Government on those benches, a Government with some backbone,—a Government which would not be led by the nose by public opinion into squandering the people's money, and then come down and apologize for having been so led away. Why should the great bulk of the people—the working-classes—have this tinsel defence business forced upon them? One habit created another; and one gentleman with a little bit of lace round his coat created the necessity for another, and so the thing went on: and he desired to protest against the continuance of this sort of thing. It was creating a class distinction in this colony, to the injury of the masses of the people, not to speak of the expense. He was speaking in the interest of the bulk of the people. The expenditure was exceedingly wasteful, to say the best of it. To-day we obtained a gun with what were called all the latest improvements; but to-morrow the latest improvement would vanish, and we had to buy another gun; and so the thing went on. He should certainly vote for the motion of the honourable member for Taranaki, so as to strike off all expenditure except such as was required to meet liabilities incurred.

Mr. HUTCHISON said this was not merely a politico-domestic matter; it was a national matter: and, speaking from such knowledge as he had acquired on the subject, and from investigations he had made into the preparations which had been made in connection with defence, he felt constrained to say that it seemed to him that the colony was utterly helpless in this matter of constructing defences. The colony had already spent, or was liable for, upwards of half a million of money; besides which which there had been spent during the last three years about £50,000 upon what were called the permanent forces; and the results attained inevitably led to the conclusion that we had better at once cease the endeavour to keep step with the older nations of the world in the march of warlike preparations. War was a game we could not afford to play at. The counters in the game were thousands, and the stakes were millions. Parliament had to consider, too, as had been suggested by the honourable member for Sydenham, that war was a progressive science, which every day was changing, and becoming, if possible, more intricate and expensive than it was before. In one year

fortifications and heavy guns were the fashion, in the next year torpedoes were preferred, in the next year submarine electro-contact mines, and next year it would be something else. In connection with these matters he noticed a measure on the Order Paper—the Australasian Naval Defence Bill—which he would not refer to beyond expressing the hope that the Government would not seek to pass it this session. It involved a subject which deserved the consideration of a whole Parliament, and should not be disposed of at the fag-end of an improvised session. It was a question far-reaching in its extent, and he hoped that the Government would be content to relegate it to next session, when it might be considered with some degree of deliberation commensurate with its importance. But, returning to the point raised in connection with this vote, he would say that these defences had been begun in panic, continued with ill-disciplined vigour, and would, if still carried on, end in ruin. He hoped that the House would put down its foot upon any further expenditure, and rule off the account as soon as possible. The first loss would be the least loss.

Major ATKINSON must confess that he was astonished at the speech of the honourable member for Christchurch North, for, if such a speech should have been made at all, it certainly should have been delivered two or three years ago, when the honourable gentleman was sitting on the Government benches, and before the honourable gentleman had committed the colony to an expenditure of half a million of money. However, he did not want to go into that. The honourable gentleman must be the best judge of his own conduct in such matters.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I said I accepted all responsibility.

Major ATKINSON said it was of no use for the honourable gentleman to accept responsibility. The honourable gentleman had been instrumental, on his own showing, in wastefully expending half a million of money, and no doubt he took the proper constitutional position in accepting full responsibility; but the position now taken by the honourable gentleman ought to have been taken two or three years ago, before the colony had been committed to this enormous expenditure. It was useless saying that now. If the honourable gentleman merely sat on the stool of repentance, and the colony could recover the money, there could be no objection to the position he had taken up; but that was not the position at all. It was a most extraordinary departure for the ex-Treasurer to tell the House that he had deliberately sat on the Government benches and seen half a million of money thrown away, and then calmly say that he accepted all responsibility. There should be some responsibility in such instances as that worthy of the name of responsibility. He did not want to rake these matters up, for, unfortunately, the money was gone, and there could be no good purpose served by doing so. But he wanted to point out that he

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agreed with the policy that was then pursued. What he objected to was that the House was never properly taken into the confidence of the Government, and that the Government proceeded in a most reckless way to give effect to what was undoubtedly the popular wish. The popular wish undoubtedly was that the harbours should be properly defended—scientifically defended—and he did not blame the late Government in any way. He thought their policy was right, and he approved of their action so far as he understood it. But the more the details of their action were looked into—the more the House looked into the way in which that policy was carried out—the more evident did it become that it had been done in an utterly reckless manner. Guns were ordered, and forts were put up and named after Ministers, and the whole of the procedure of the Government seemed to be based on the belief that there was great glory in doing this work; but there was no calculation, no care, no forethought, no consideration as to what might be the cost. He was sorry that the discussion had arisen, because he thought it was a discussion which should have come on the Naval Defences Bill, a Bill which he hoped the House would see fit to carry. If we were to have any advantage at all from the Naval Defence Bill, these fortifications were absolutely necessary, though not for the purpose which the honourable gentleman said. They knew that the fortifications were practically useless for defence against an armed cruiser, but they would be of enormous value in preventing a strange ship from running down and threatening to bombard us unless we paid an indemnity. It was all very well to say that the habit of civilised nations now was to present their bills at the end of the war and demand payment, and that we could send our bill in to the British Government and have it paid. He had lived in a district in this colony where they had had their property destroyed and their houses burned, and had suffered as much as any people could suffer under foreign invasion; and it took years and years before the settlers of that district were able to get any compensation, and many of them had not got it even to the present day. It would be of very small consolation to the colony to wait till the end of a war in the hope of getting compensation for the losses they had suffered. We wanted forts to protect ourselves from a sudden raid; and all honourable gentlemen knew that a colony was exposed to such raids through the fact of many foreign nations having ships of war in these seas, which were practically under no command except of the officers in charge of them. It was quite in accordance with the views entertained by some of those nations as to honourable war to come down and collect all the gold they could in the various colonies; and it was even known that such a scheme had been prepared. On that ground the forts protecting our chief towns, where most of our gold was lodged, were a wise protection as a matter of insurance. There was no waste of money in providing that protection. We were not going

to compete with the older nations in real warfare, but we wanted to prevent what might be called piratical expeditions against us; and we knew that we were surrounded by the ships of foreign nations which could carry out such an expedition at any time. He was surprised at that part of the speech of the honourable member for Christchurch North in which he expressed approval of the Naval Defences Bill and yet disapproved of these forts. The honourable gentleman must know that it was absolutely necessary to have safe ports to which ships of war could run for coals, or to refit in case of accidents through engagements or stress of weather, and that they should not, in these ports, be at the mercy of any small ship which might choose to attack them when in a disabled condition. The colony was therefore absolutely bound to provide ports into which English men-of-war could run, and which the men of those ships would help to protect in case of a strange ship coming down. He ventured to think that if the Committee considered the question dispassionately, and irrespective of any idea whether a Ministry had done right or wrong, it would come to the conclusion that the ports were absolutely necessary. If the forts were not there the British Government would not place ships of war on this station; or, if they did so during peace, the instant war broke out they would take them away to act in conjunction with other ships where they could get safe ports to run to in case of accidents. He hoped the House would see its way to complete the works which were undertaken. It was all very well for some honourable members to think that they were all great soldiers and sailors and engineers, and knew a great deal more about these matters than men of world-wide experience; but it appeared to him that, when they had taken the best advice in the world upon the subject, they were wise to act upon it. They had taken the best advice they could get from the ablest officers of our own country, and had acted upon it; and he ventured to think that, if war should break out—which he hoped would not be the case, though he feared that hope would not be fulfilled—and if our scheme of defence had to be tried, we should then feel that we had acted according to the best information obtainable; and that was all we could do. One honourable gentleman said that guns were changing every day, and asked, Why, then, should we expend money on them? To follow out that argument we must not arm ourselves at all; but he ventured to say that, in such case, if an enemy's ship were to come down and levy a contribution on us, take away our coal, destroy our ships, or anything of that description, there would be such an outcry throughout the Empire at our want of care and forethought that we should feel very small indeed, besides losing all hope of assistance in our difficulties. The Government did not propose to do more than complete the works already in hand; and surely it would be very unwise not to complete those works to a point at which they would be useful for the purpose for which we wanted them.

Mr. FITZHERBERT agreed with most that the Premier had said. The honourable gentleman spoke of having obtained the best advice procurable, and he presumed that was the advice of General Schaw. He had asked both the Premier and the Defence Minister to let the House have the report which General Schaw had sent in, but they had not supplied it, and he did not think they were treating the House fairly in keeping it in the dark as they were doing.

Mr. WARD said the Premier had stated that the Government had acted on the advice of Sir William Jervois in regard to these fortifications. But, although that advice had been received by the late Government, it had not been acted upon. Sir William Jervois in his report included the Bluff Harbour as one of the ports to be fortified, and it formed an important part of the scheme of that high military engineer; but no means had ever been taken to act upon that report—to protect that harbour. If an enemy wanted to make an inroad into the colony, what better point could be selected than Bluff Harbour to do so? It was right in the highway of commerce.

Major ATKINSON.—An enemy would have to land there.

Mr. WARD.—Yes. There were forts at all the other large harbours: and he would be very much surprised if the enemy did not land at the Bluff Harbour. It was not at all likely they would run past an undefended port to attack others that were guarded by forts. It was the commencement of the railway and telegraph system of the colony, and nothing could be easier than for an enemy to take charge of the railway track, cut the telegraph wires, and, if they thought proper, send troops up by rail, and attack the forts in the rear; and what a surprise to those in charge of the Dunedin and Lyttelton forts it would be to find them attacked by an enemy from inland instead of from sea! This was not an imaginary picture;—it was quite possible. There was Paterson's Inlet, in Stewart Island, which could hold the British Navy twice told, without any one knowing that the ships were there, and an enemy could easily take his fleet in there overnight, and land his troops at the Bluff in the morning. If there was to be a practical scheme of fortification they ought to follow the advice of Sir William Jervois and General Scratchley and include the Bluff Harbour; otherwise the scheme would be defective. He thought the Committee should agree to this vote.

Mr. LEVESTAM said it appeared to him that many honourable members took a wrong view of this question. The honourable gentleman who had just spoken told the Committee that an enemy would land his troops at the Bluff: but it was well known that nations did not send their ships out to far-distant colonies to invade them, but to stop their trade by destroying their ships at sea. It might be quite true, as the Premier said, that the Government had got the best advice; but he (Mr. Levestam) maintained that it was not necessary

to fortify the ports of the colony; what we wanted was to have a cruiser to secure them from attack. No doubt it was necessary to have places in which ships could refit; but one or two places would have been quite sufficient, and we had fortified too many ports. No doubt wherever mines were laid or torpedoes used there must be batteries to protect them, or the enemy would send boats and take them up; but we were doing more than that, for we were trying to put the colony into such a state of defence that it would be impossible for even a large ship of war to enter our ports, and it was not at all likely that such a ship would ever be sent here. He would therefore support the motion for reducing the vote.

Sir J. VOGEL must say a few words in reply to the Premier, who had dragged in the conduct of the late Government. The honourable gentleman always found some cause of complaint against his predecessors. It was not the case that this expenditure of £500,000 could have been stopped three years ago, because he hardly thought it was commenced three years ago; and, as he had explained, it was commenced under the irresistible influence of a panic. Then, the honourable gentleman lost all right to complain of it, because the present Government approved of the work so far that they were going to complete it. The honourable gentleman said they would complete the fortifications of the four towns: that meant also maintaining the fortifications, and would involve a very large expenditure, for every shot cost a considerable sum of money. Then, he noticed in the Auckland papers that, notwithstanding the Minister of Defence said he had not sanctioned the meeting of torpedo operators for a trial in Wellington as part of the holiday rejoicings, yet the department had done so, and they were under orders to come here. That showed how little control even a Minister had over such a department. The honourable gentleman said that if we were to make this a naval station we should require to fortify the towns. He had not lost sight of that, and had said that probably they would require one port to be fortified. The desirability of making the colony a naval station would sufficiently justify them in maintaining the fortifications of one city, and, unquestionably, Auckland should be the naval station, as it commanded the largest range of the Pacific. He had said he was in favour of having fortifications at Auckland, but the English Government could not be so unreasonable as to insist upon the colony maintaining fortifications at four ports. He was surprised that the honourable member for Nelson did not raise the question of the fortification of Nelson, and he had no doubt that if the honourable gentleman who was now Colonial Secretary had not been in the Government he would have wanted Oamaru fortified. He thought there should be one fortified station to which vessels could retreat for repairs and coaling, and he would have been glad if the Government had taken that view. To maintain the four systems of fortifications was, he felt sure, a great mistake.

Captain RUSSELL agreed with many of the remarks of the honourable member for Christchurch North, and with the speech he had made before the adjournment. That speech commended itself very much to his judgment; but he could not help being amused that the honourable member for Christchurch North should have been the gentleman to deliver it. The only reasonable presumption was that that honourable gentleman was the weakest member of the late Cabinet, and was unable to resist the importunities of his colleagues to do what was against his better judgment. He (Captain Russell) thought that to fortify the four cities of New Zealand could lead to nothing but useless expenditure. He believed that if a foreign cruiser came with hostile intentions to New Zealand she would avoid the ports that were fortified, and go to Oamaru or Timaru, or some other place, and there endeavour to punish us, rather than knock her head against the stone walls we had raised for that purpose. But if we were to take a fair share in the defence of the Empire—which he believed we should do—we must not depend upon a land force, but must go more than halfway to meet the enemy upon the high seas. To do that, we must be prepared to pay a considerable amount for naval defence, and have one port where ships could come in in case of injury or accident, or for other purposes. He did not believe that Auckland would be the best situation for the naval station, but thought that Wellington was undoubtedly, as its motto stated, supreme from its situation. There could be no doubt that, from a strategical point of view, no portion of the colony could be better than Wellington. Although Auckland, no doubt, commanded a better position for the Pacific-island trade, yet, when it was considered that from Auckland a vessel had to pass round the North Cape to get into the Pacific, he believed that at Wellington the vessels would be as near their work as in Auckland. It should be borne in mind, as the honourable member for Christchurch North had pointed out, that it was the expense of keeping up armaments that would ruin us in the future. The primary cost of the guns and of erecting fortifications was comparatively little; but the discharge of each gun was a matter of great expense, and so was the maintenance of men to look after the fortifications. He believed that when the pressure came, as it would inevitably come in two or three years, we should be unable to man these forts in the four ports of New Zealand to keep them in good order.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The Volunteers.

Captain RUSSELL said he was a Volunteer himself, and he should be very sorry to say a word against Volunteers; but it was of no use trusting modern armaments to men who were not in perpetual training for the improved ordnance. Advantage must be taken of the improvements of military science as far as possible, and we should get the most improved arms turned out of arsenals; but we could not possibly do that for four ports, and so he thought we should concentrate our energies

upon one port, and that that should be the port of Wellington, which should be made invulnerable, and also be provided with a proper dock.

Mr. BRUCE did not presume to speak upon this subject, like many honourable members, with any authority—that was to say, so far as the technical line of defence was concerned; but, as a matter of fact, the question they had first to consider was, To what extent did the circumstances of our position warrant us in spending money for this purpose? The method would come next. Defence expenditure was in reality a means to an end; it was an insurance against risk. He did not think there was any probability of that risk justifying us in the expenditure we had undertaken. We had armed ourselves mainly against the Russians; and could any member of the House for a moment believe that, if we had a single-handed conflict with Russia, one of her hostile cruisers would be seen in the South Pacific? Most certainly not. If Russia was wise in her day and generation, in the event of war she would keep every ship she had under the shadow of her guns, for there only would they be safe. Russia would never send her vessels of war away from coal, which was now, in naval warfare, the base of operations. A good deal had been said about the late Government undertaking these costly and indefensible works; but those who were primarily responsible for it were the inhabitants of the large towns, for they had brought pressure to bear which the Government was unable to resist, and which probably the present Government would have been equally unable to resist. He did not blame the late Government for the expenditure, although he considered the expenditure unjustifiable. He should support the Government in regard to this vote. The money had been spent, and it was for the House to swallow the pill. He hoped they would pass this vote, and that they would then hear no more upon this question of the defence of these principal ports of New Zealand.

Mr. MOSS said one point seemed to be lost sight of—namely, that New Zealand was no longer isolated. We had the French occupying a strong position in the Pacific, and having a powerful navy at their command. They held in the east many valuable islands and strong forts; on the west they were in an equally strong position. And, in addition to that, we had the Germans at Samoa and in the Bismarck Archipelago. Only last year he was told by a German gentleman on one of these islands that they would soon have one of the most powerful ironclads in the Pacific. The Germans had a large fleet, and they looked forward to the time when they would own the islands and colonies in the Pacific now in possession of Holland. Lately they had been allowed to occupy Samoa. A great deal was heard about the New Hebrides, but, to his mind, that was a very small affair compared with the occupation by the Germans of Samoa. He did not see how they could object to the French occupying the New Hebrides,

so close to their own colony of New Caledonia, while they allowed the Germans, in the way they had done, to seize an island of the greatest value—Samoa. The Germans were now, practically, in possession of the centre of the Pacific, alongside our own Colony of Fiji; and they were able to exercise from that point a more powerful influence than the French. On the coast of South America great nations were growing up, and New Zealand was no longer isolated. What we wanted to guard against was casual attack. New Zealand could not sit down apathetically and think of nothing but commerce. She had been brought into contact with other nations, and it was only by training her people to rely upon themselves for defence that they could hope to be in a position to hold the country. It seemed to him very unwise to decry the Permanent Force. He spoke as one of the oldest Volunteers in the colony, and hoped the Permanent Force would be carefully preserved, as it would be a nucleus around which the Volunteers could rally, and it must add very much to their efficiency. Even in the Carolines the Spaniards, who had so long been asleep, were now waking up. On all sides New Zealand was being faced by strong Powers, on whose forbearance she could only rely by providing herself with full means to face any force they were likely to be able to send against her.

Mr. ROSS said there was no doubt the vote would have to be passed, and instead of attempting to reduce it he would rather increase it to an amount necessary to pay off the whole of the liabilities, and stop all future expenditure. He had visited the fortifications at Otago Heads, and had heard various opinions expressed by naval and military men respecting them. Some said the works were useless, and some entertained a different opinion; but they were all unanimous in stating that the guns would have to be replaced by others of more modern construction. The honourable member for Egmont had said that the fortifications would be useful in protecting Her Majesty's ships if, becoming disabled, they had to run into our harbours for repairs or for coal; but the authorities in the Old Country on this subject ran in an opposite direction. The Duke of Wellington and Earl Dundonald condemned the construction of fortifications, and the opinions of such great authorities as these could not be disregarded. In his (Mr. Ross's) opinion this expenditure upon fortifications ought not to be continued. With regard to the Permanent Force, he thought it should be disbanded, and only a sufficient number of men kept on to look after the guns. His belief was that the Volunteers could grapple with any enemy that attempted to land on our shores.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote be reduced by £24,000."

AYES, 23.

Allen	Cadman	Fraser
Barron	Duncan	Goldie
Blake	Fitchett	Grimmond

Mr. Moss

Hodgkinson	Ormond	Taylor
Jones	Parata	Turnbull.
McKenzie, J.	Rhodes	Tellers.
Monk	Stewart, W. D.	Levestam
O'Callaghan	Tanner	Marchant.

NOES, 35.

Atkinson	Lawry	Richardson, G.
Carroll	Mackenzie, M.	Ross
Cowan	Mackenzie, T.	Seymour
Feldwick	McGregor	Steward, W. J.
Fergus	Mitchelson	S. Menteath
Fisher	Moat	Thompson, R.
Fulton	Moss	Thompson, T.
Hislop	Newman	Valentine
Izard	O'Connor	Withy.
Jackson	Peacock	Tellers.
Lance	Pearson	Bruce
Larnach	Richardson, E.	Macarthur.

Majority against, 12.

Amendment negatived.

Dr. HODGKINSON moved, That the vote be reduced by £1,000, to show the opinion of the House that the expenditure should be stopped.

Amendment negatived.

Vote, £80,000, agreed to.

#### CLASS XI.—RATES ON NATIVE LANDS.

Rates on Native lands for year ending 31st March, 1887, £15,000.

Mr. TURNBULL asked if this could not be paid from the Land Fund. Now that the new Land Bill had been passed there could be no doubt whatever that that Fund would soon be in credit. It was not right to take money from loan for such a purpose if it could be avoided.

Major ATKINSON said there was a very large deficit in the Land Fund now, and to put this vote on the Land Fund would be putting it on nothing. That Fund might be in credit next year, but it could not possibly be in credit before this money would have to be paid to the local bodies.

Mr. TURNBULL said if the money could be charged against what would soon accrue to the Land Fund plenty of other useful purposes could be found for this money—for instance, the Sumner Railway. It was most unfair to take these rates from the Public Works Fund.

Major ATKINSON quite agreed with the honourable gentleman that it was wrong, as a general principle; but this was the law—it was nothing but what had been done for years past. A large part of these rates were supposed to be only advances that would be recouped, but he was afraid that much of it that was supposed to be recouped never would be.

Vote, £15,000, agreed to.

Dr. NEWMAN wished to make a personal explanation. When discussing the vote for asylums on the previous day he had stated, and believed at the time he was fully warranted in doing so, that the site for the asylum at Porirua had been bought by the late Colonial Secretary, and all the expenditure incurred under the late Government. He had felt most positive about the matter, but had since found he had been mistaken. The land was bought by the predecessor of the late

Colonial Secretary, Mr. Dick, on the 14th February, 1884, the price being £2,050; and the late Colonial Secretary did not come into office until seven months afterwards, and therefore he had nothing to do with the purchase of the site. He thought the purchase of the site, as well as the subsequent expenditure, very wise, and he regretted that he had made the mistake of attributing the purchase of the site to the late Colonial Secretary instead of to his predecessor.

#### CLASS XII.—THERMAL SPRINGS.

Vote, Thermal Springs, £3,200, agreed to.

**PART II.**—Services chargeable to Moneys authorised to be raised under "The North Island Main Trunk Loan Act, 1884."

#### CLASS I.—PUBLIC WORKS, DEPARTMENTAL.

Head office, salaries and contingencies, to supplement vote to be taken under Part I., £5,000.

Mr. TURNBULL asked why this was separated from the £25,000 they had already passed.

Mr. MITCHELSON would explain that the £25,000 was for departmental expenditure as a whole, of which £6,000 was charged to Part I., £5,000 to Part II., and £14,000 to Part III. of the Public Works Fund.

Dr. NEWMAN thought the amount of £5,000 exorbitant. There would be a good deal of fighting about continuing the line; and, if it was not continued, could not the vote be reduced?

Mr. BUCHANAN said, if any reduction were made in the vote for the line, surely there would not need to be so much spent on the head office.

Mr. MITCHELSON said, No; the money would be saved.

Mr. TURNBULL thought it was high time now that the head office should be reduced.

Vote agreed to.

#### CLASS II.—RAILWAYS.

New works, £96,000.

Mr. ALLEN proposed that the vote be reduced by the sum of £21,000. He believed that the liabilities now existing up to the end of November amounted to £75,000, and he thought the balance of the vote might be struck off. The reasons which had induced him to move this reduction were these: First, the Ministers themselves, in their Public Works Statement, had invited the Committee to express an opinion as to whether or not this line should be continued. Now, taking into consideration the fact that the cost of completing the line had been largely under-estimated—under-estimated by an amount of over a million and a quarter—and the fact that another large sum in addition to the million which had been authorised would have to be borrowed, he thought the Committee should gravely consider whether they would vote anything beyond what was required to meet existing liabilities. There were other reasons. When the line was originally proposed it was held out, as an inducement to

go on with it, that the land through which the route ran would be acquired before the line was proceeded with. This had not been done, except as regarded a small part of the line; and that was a pretty strong reason why there should be no more expended upon the line at present. Other reasons for not proceeding had been brought prominently before the House during the session, one of them being the fact that it was doubtful whether it would not be more advisable to proceed to construct this line by way of Taranaki; and it seemed desirable not to go on with the line beyond the point now reached, or which would be reached when the present liabilities were liquidated, until it was known definitely where the line was to go. For these reasons he moved the amendment.

Mr. PEACOCK failed to see the justice of the conclusions to which the honourable member for Dunedin East had arrived. The honourable gentleman had told them that no more money should be spent until the question of route had been decided, especially considering the large extra amount of money which would be required to complete the line by the way of the Central route; but if the honourable gentleman had looked a little more closely into the matter he would have seen that that question was not in the slightest degree affected by the proposals of the Government at the present time. The position was this: The works had proceeded at the northern end of the line southward as far as the Poratautu tunnel, forty-five miles from Te Awamutu. A contract had been let for the construction of one mile and a half, including the tunnel, the whole to cost a sum of £56,000; but there was an intermediate section between that and another section, Waititi, and that hiatus required to be completed unless the honourable member wished the colony to spend £56,000 on a tunnel without there being any complete communication therewith. He thought that such a sum should be spent, at any rate, as would enable that money to be utilised, rather than that the expenditure should be thrown away. Besides, it had to be taken into account that if any deviation were to take place it would have to take place at a point lower down than the locality of the tunnel. So that the work should be proceeded with quite irrespective of the question of deviating the line. He thought, considering the large amount of the liabilities to be met, the honourable gentleman would see that there could be no reduction on that vote, and that the work should be completed as far as the tunnel. The honourable gentleman might see the advisableness of withdrawing his motion.

Mr. BUCHANAN hoped that there would be a majority in favour of the proposal of the honourable member for Dunedin East. He himself felt very strongly about this railway, for he believed that the Parliament had been guilty of greater waste in authorising the construction of this railway than it had been in connection with any other work for the past seventeen years. He had always felt that the expenditure of money on this line was nothing short of disgraceful, in the present circum-

stances of the colony, and in view of the fact that there was likely to be no return from the expenditure, either direct or indirect, for many years to come. When the question of route was under consideration, in 1884, he had always steadily voted against the work, holding that, although at some future time it would be necessary to construct the line, to go on with it now was to do it at least several years in advance of the time. The honourable member, in moving the reduction of the vote, had stated as one of the reasons for doing so that the land had not yet been acquired from the Natives, which was to recoup the colony for its expenditure on the line. That was so, and it was a very strong reason against voting this large sum of money, because the continuance of the line in the meantime would make the land more valuable, and the Natives would require the colony to pay a much higher sum for the land when it was purchased. Then, it must be remembered that the land was not wanted at the present time. There was plenty of other land available for settlement purposes, and there was therefore no need for the immediate prosecution of this line. The honourable member for Ponsonby had mentioned the Taranaki deviation.

Mr. PEACOCK said it was the honourable member for Dunedin East who mentioned it.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the honourable member for Ponsonby had mentioned it too.

Mr. PEACOCK.—Hear, hear.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he did not know that that had anything to do with the matter which the Committee had to consider. The Committee should decide that no further work should be proceeded with on the line at all. They knew the agitation which had been going on in Auckland in reference to this question some little time ago; and he thought that when the honourable member addressed himself to that question he should have shown reasons why the Taranaki deviation should take place.

Mr. PEACOCK said he had not advocated the Taranaki deviation.

Mr. BUCHANAN did not think that the Committee need be under any misapprehension in connection with this matter; and he did not think there was any reason why the deviation should take place. However, there were several reasons why the trunk line should not be gone with at all at present. In the first place, the contracts already in hand at the northern end of the line opened up all the really good country at that end, and the completed sections could be worked very well in connection with existing open lines.

Mr. PEACOCK asked, What about the tunnel?

Mr. BUCHANAN said there would be, as the honourable gentleman had pointed out, a small amount of waste in connection with that; but it seemed to be unavoidable, and he thought it better and cheaper to put up with that waste than to throw away a larger sum by spending more money on the line at present. The southern portion of the line already under

contract should be worked in connection with existing lines. He believed the line had now been constructed to the farthest payable point, and that it would be a great advantage to stop. He had indulged in the hope that, the proposed reduction of £500,000 on the Loan Bill having been lost, they would be able to make savings in detail on the estimates; but, if the motion of the honourable member for Dunedin East were rejected, he should expect to see no reductions, and he believed that it would be a matter for great regret throughout the country if the estimates were not reduced. No item could be reduced with more justice than this one.

Mr. PEACOCK asked, What about the liabilities?

Mr. BUCHANAN said the honourable member for Dunedin East had shown that there was £21,000 which could be struck off after providing for liabilities to date; and he earnestly hoped that the Committee would agree to the motion for the reduction.

Mr. KELLY would like to point out that the liabilities were set down at £128,000, and all that was asked for was £96,000. It seemed to him that, instead of taking anything off this vote, they would have to put something more on. But if the honourable members would look at the Public Works Statement they would see that the Minister did not propose to proceed further with the line than to carry out existing liabilities until the House had had an opportunity of reconsidering the question. Nothing would be done until after next session, and it was only wasting time to try and reduce the vote.

Mr. MITCHELSON explained that the liabilities on the 30th September were £141,028, so that the vote could not be reduced to the amount indicated. He was quite prepared to carry out the statement he made to the House the other evening, that the Government were quite willing to stop all further works on this line until the House had had an opportunity of considering it. He thought, personally, and he believed the other members of the Government agreed with him, that it was a great mistake ever to have commenced this line until arrangements had been made for the purchase of the land.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked how it was that the honourable gentleman put his liabilities down at £128,000, and only asked for £96,000.

Mr. MITCHELSON explained that that amount would cover all that was actually required to the end of the current year.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN said that many of the votes on the estimates appeared to be less than the liabilities, and he thought the House ought to be asked to vote the full amount to cover the liabilities.

Mr. ALLEN acknowledged that the figures he had quoted were wrong. He had taken them from the Minister's paper, where they were written in very small figures, and so had made the mistake. He understood that the liabilities were actually £165,000, so that it would be impracticable to reduce this vote by

*Mr. Buchanan*

£21,000 this year. However, the amount of reduction was immaterial, and a motion to reduce the vote by £5 would have answered his purpose just as well, because what he wanted to do was to test the question as to whether any more work should go on on this line. As the Minister gave an assurance that no further contracts would be entered into, he would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment withdrawn.

Vote, £96,000, agreed to.

Permanent-way, sleepers, and rolling-stock, £26,100, agreed to.

Surveys, £4,000, agreed to.

#### CLASS III.—ROADS.

Roads, £20,000.

Mr. BRUCE asked for an explanation as to the £19,500 to give access to the railway-line at the south end.

Mr. MITCHELSON explained that this was for roads which were being made from Marton through the bush. The money had been nearly all expended, and there were only a few pounds left.

Vote, £20,000, agreed to.

#### CLASS IV.—PURCHASE OF NATIVE LANDS, NORTH ISLAND.

Purchase of Native lands, £29,700.

Dr. NEWMAN asked whether this was the balance of the purchase-money of the Waimarino Block, or whether it was spread over other blocks. About 460,000 acres had already been bought, and about a million acres were under negotiation, tied up in such a way that it could not be got by any outsider. When that was purchased no one could say that there was no land along this line.

Mr. PEACOCK would like the Minister to express an opinion as to whether the balance of the £100,000 appropriated for this purpose for the North Island Trunk Railway would be spent in the vicinity of the part of line already made, or whether the money had been so far engaged that it would have to go for blocks along the Central line, some of those blocks being very far distant.

Mr. MITCHELSON said there was only £10,600 available out of the £100,000, and that would all be required to complete the purchases in the Murimotu district.

Dr. NEWMAN asked whether the whole of the Waimarama Block was paid for.

Mr. MITCHELSON believed that the whole of that block had been paid for; but there was land in the Kaimanawa district not paid for yet.

Mr. KELLY thought that if there was any land available for purchase at the north end of the line the Government should get it, and if they could not do so they should throw it open to others to buy it, for it was a great injury to the North Island to have it shut up.

Major JACKSON hoped the Government would take care to purchase the best of the land, for the system in the past had been to buy only the bad land and leave the good. Before they bought any land they should send

some competent person up to examine and classify it; and, besides that, they ought not to buy blocks at a distance from the line, but should confine their operations to land contiguous to it, which would be benefited by the construction of the line.

Mr. BEETHAM said that a great deal of land which had been purchased was simply worthless, and it was necessary to draw the attention of the Government in the strongest way to the necessity for buying only good land. The best of the land along this line was to be found at Pirongia, near the north end; whereas it would be simply waste of money to buy land in the Murimotu district. He trusted the Government would not depend upon the reports of any surveyors in the districts, but would get men who knew what land was to visit the districts before they purchased any land.

Mr. BUCHANAN said it seemed to him an entirely wrong principle on which to conduct these purchases to pay those who were carrying out the negotiations at so much an acre. Under such conditions as these there could be no incentive to act in the interests of the colony, and he desired to protest against such a mode of payment.

Mr. BRUCE could scarcely understand the suggestion of the honourable members for Wairarapa and Masterton that the Commissioner should not rely too much upon reports of commission agents employed by the Crown. As a matter of fact, it was distinctly contrary to law that commission agents should be employed by the Crown to engage in the purchase of Native lands, and he could not for a moment assume that the present Native Minister would do anything contrary to law. Speaking from personal knowledge, he could say that there was a good deal of worthless land on the east side of the Central line, but that particular portion which had just been alluded to was some of the finest land in the colony. He quite admitted that hundreds of thousands of pounds might be wasted on the purchase of land, good, bad, and indifferent; but, at the same time, he did not believe for a moment that the present Native Minister would act in defiance of the law by employing commission agents.

Mr. CARROLL quite agreed with what had fallen from the last speaker, and thought the time had come when they should have a different system for the purchase of Native lands by the Government. The late Government not only had highly-salaried Land-Purchase Commissioners, but officers were allowed to employ other men and pay them a large commission. He believed that, in connection with this Waimarino Block, a commission of £3,000 was paid for assistance to the Land-Purchase Commissioners. The whole thing had been carried out in a most deplorable manner, and he hoped to have the assurance of the Government that for the future more care should be taken in carrying out the land-purchasing operations.

Mr. TAIPUA thought the Government should defer buying any more Native lands for the present, and until there was a good Act passed.

The Government had very little money to spend, and consequently the Natives would get very little for their land. He believed the Waimarino Block had been purchased for 1s. 6d. per acre, and, as there was not much money, even a less price than that might be given. Another thing was that the Native lands round Taupo were in a confused state. Some of the Natives in that district had been treated with injustice, the land having been awarded to Natives to whom it did not belong; and some of the Natives had applied for a rehearing of their cases. He thought the Government should not purchase any more Native lands between this and the next session; and, as he was not clear on the amount that was to be spent, he should vote against the item.

Dr. NEWMAN apprehended that one reason for going on with the Main Trunk line was that it would open up the interior of the country for settlement; and, in spite of what had been said by certain persons, there was a large amount of land there that would be of value hereafter. A large amount of land had been negotiated for, and he hoped that the purchase would be completed, since its purchase was of vital importance to the construction of the line and the progress of settlement.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the Government did not intend to ask the House for sums for the purchase of lands other than those under negotiation; but it was desirable that the negotiations entered into should be completed. The Government had not asked for a large sum because it did not consider it advisable to attempt to purchase further blocks of land at present.

Mr. MONK hoped the Government would exercise very careful surveillance over the land-purchases. It was very disagreeable to insinuate that the land-purchases were not satisfactory to the colony; but he had evidence in his possession which justified him in making the statement to the House that such things as this occurred: that most worthless land was bought for the colony, while the good blocks were being reserved in the interests of private speculators. He believed the honourable member for the East Coast would bear him out in this: that the great bulk of the land round Tokano was very poor, and that the only blocks of good land there were being manipulated in the interests of private speculators. It was not necessary that this land should be bought at once to secure it for private speculators; but, as a matter of fact, it was religiously kept out of the portion for which the Government agents were negotiating. He had a letter which would show this, but thought it better not to read it, as it would affect outside persons. Next session there would be a strong opinion expressed on the part of the country that the Government should introduce such a change in the land-purchase system as should not leave an opportunity for those practices to be continued which were being decried all over the country.

Mr. KELLY was not aware that such scandalous transactions as the honourable gentle-

*Mr. Taipua*

man had referred to had taken place in the Taupo district, or that there was such valuable land at Tokano. There were certainly a few good patches here and there. He considered that the Government should not pass Acts preventing the Natives from getting what was fair and just for their land, so long as they sold it in small blocks. He quite understood the Government trying to get large tracts of country along the line of railway as cheaply as possible, but, in the case of small areas, the Government had no right to throw obstacles in the way of the Natives obtaining the best price they could get for those small areas. He did not think there had been many complaints from Natives with reference to the purchases on behalf of the Government. There had been only a few applications for rehearing with regard to land in the interior. With regard to this vote, he did not see what the Committee had to discuss, as the whole of the sum was a liability, the money having been spent.

Mr. MOSS was perfectly satisfied that no Government could undertake the purchase—especially the exclusive purchase—of Native land without very great corruption springing up. The agents were paid at so much an acre, and it was quite natural the agents should endeavour to purchase as large an acreage as possible. They were not all of the highest character and standing, and some of them resorted to dubious means to get the Natives to sell. Neither good nor bad agents were interested in the quality of the land they bought. It was well known that the Maoris never sold good land in large quantities while they had bad land they could sell instead. Yet we paid the purchasing agents by the acre, and so offered them a direct inducement to buy for the colony merely quantity without regard to quality or price. He hoped the Government would not continue the practice of endeavouring to monopolize the purchase of Native land; or, if they did, that they would not pay agents by the acre, but make them fixed officers of the department, acting merely as Government officials. If it were made a matter of acreage commission there must be not only great wrong sometimes done to the Natives, but a very great waste of public money in effecting purchases.

Mr. MONK maintained that the system of Native-land purchase was vicious and injurious to the interests of the colony, and to the northern portion of it particularly. Great complaints were also made of the monopoly that was given to a few surveyors by the exclusion of all others from the interior of the country. It was utterly impossible for agents not to be exposed to a great amount of temptation under the present system.

Mr. TAIPŪA hoped this money would not be spent in the Taupo district, because there were some Taupo chiefs in Wellington who had been to the Native Minister, and asked him for a rehearing. The Government should pause before completing the purchases in the Taupo district. And he had heard that women were instructed to sell the best parts of blocks



in those lands. They took their stand on clause 21 of the Native Land Administration Act, by which one owner could buy from another. These proceedings had been carried out in the Taupo district, and he asked the Government to pause before completing the transactions, and see whether some relief could not be afforded to those who had suffered.

Mr. HUTCHISON said the use of the terms "good land" and "bad land" was liable to lead to misapprehension in the minds of those not familiar with the actual property. The terms were really relative ones; but, generally, it might be said that good land was that which brought a high price, and bad land that which brought a low price: that was how the terms were generally understood. He would only say that, from his own knowledge of the lands bought by the Government adjacent to the line of the North Island Main Trunk Railway, none of the land the purchase of which had been made by the colony was of such a nature that the House need consider the purchase disadvantageous. There was not an acre of the land that could not be sold now at a high advance on the cost price, and the carrying-on of the works would greatly enhance the value of the land so acquired. Then, there was a very large block called the Murimotu Block, as to which there had been special legislation. That land belonged to the Crown, though it was now under lease to certain gentlemen. That was a most valuable block of about half a million acres, and the line of the railway was projected through it.

Major JACKSON hoped the Government would refrain from purchasing land at Taupo until the rehearing which had been applied for was decided. Whether those applying for the rehearing had a good or a bad case, they had made the application for the rehearing, and he thought the purchase should be delayed until that question was settled.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the Government did not intend to purchase any more land at Taupo, nor did they think any should have been purchased there.

Major JACKSON said he had heard a good deal about the land bought by the Government at Taupo, and a good deal of that land was bad, and the rest was worse.

Vote, £29,700, agreed to.

**PART III.—Services chargeable to the Moneys raised under "The New Zealand Loan Act, 1886."**

**CLASS I.—PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.**  
Vote, £14,000, agreed to.

**CLASS II.—RAILWAYS.**

Helensville northwards, £10,000.

Dr. HODGKINSON said this appeared to be a new work, which might be stopped, and a saving made.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the amount spent and the liabilities on the 30th September were £7,832, so there was very little left to spend.

Vote agreed to.

Grahamstown—Te Aroha, £10,000.

Dr. HODGKINSON said he should like some information in this case as to what the liabilities were.

Mr. MITCHELSON said in this case the liabilities were £200 in excess of the vote.

Dr. HODGKINSON said, then it was useless to attempt reduction. Perhaps in all cases the liabilities were in excess of the votes.

Vote agreed to.

Putaruru—Rotorua, £40,000.

Mr. VALENTINE said in this case the liabilities were set down at £50,653. What was the meaning of that?

Mr. MITCHELSON said not more than £40,000 was expected to come in for payment during this year.

Vote agreed to.

Woodville—Palmerston, £40,000.

Mr. ORMOND asked when it was expected to start the tunnel.

Mr. MITCHELSON said it all depended on when the loan was raised. The Government did not intend to let any contracts until it was perfectly certain that the money would be forthcoming to meet them.

Vote agreed to.

Vote, Mangamahoe—Woodville, £37,000, agreed to.

Blenheim—Awatere, £7,000.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON understood it was intended to practically stop the railway with the present contract, to make a dray-road from the end of it to the Awatere, and to build an expensive bridge over the river. The late Government had this matter under consideration all the time they were in office, and they resisted pressure to build this bridge, on the ground that there was very little traffic there, and that it would simply mean making a good roadway to a large tract of very fine land which had been locked up in the hands of a few individuals, and he understood that the building of this bridge would largely enhance the value of that land, while it would be of little use to any one else but the owners of the land until the land was cut up and sold. Therefore he thought the owners of the land should make a contribution towards building the bridge before it was made—the late Government would not make it except on that condition. He did not know if the present Government would take such a course, but he thought it was only fair that those people should be caused to contribute towards the cost of a bridge plainly for their benefit. The same course was taken a few years ago as to the bridge over the Hurunui, where, as the land was almost all held by a few individuals, it was thought right that they should contribute half the cost of the bridge, and it was not put in hand till they did so. It seemed only fair in this case to do the same thing.

Mr. SEDDON said in the Public Works Statement there was this passage:—

"To complete the line to the Awatere would cost about £99,000, which is much more than could be afforded for it out of the loan now proposed. It has therefore been decided to

recommend an allocation of £9,000 only, by means of which, in conjunction with existing funds, it will be possible to complete the first five miles at the Blenheim end for traffic, and to connect it with the Awatere by a dray-road, and also to build the railway-bridge over the Awatere for use in the meantime as a road-bridge. This will be a great boon to the locality, as the river is a very dangerous one to cross, and is also the only large river remaining unbridged between Picton and the Bluff."

He believed in fair-play. Here was the Government taking the functions of a County Council, and building a road-bridge for the local bodies. It was called a railway-bridge; but how many years would it be before it was wanted for a railway? The House had determined time after time that that line should not be extended. The bridge should not be made till those owning the land would disgorge something to the State. Here was an express resolution of the House against this line, and yet it was proposed to make what was virtually a part of it. There would be the usual thing in this case—they would spend £9,000 in making the bridge, and then they would be told that the railway must be extended a little further, in order that the State might get some return for the money; and so another political railway would be made, and private estates would be largely enhanced in value. He would draw a comparison between this case and that of the Teremakau. There was no communication between Kumara and Greymouth except by going twenty-five miles over the Marsden Hills, though the direct route would be only fourteen miles if the railway were made. The road was made from Kumara to the beach, within a mile and a half of the bridge, and the road came to within two and a half miles of the bridge on the other side. It would take only £500 to make the railway-bridge serve for a road-bridge. In contrast with the extract he had read from the Public Works Statement he would read the following reply, which the Minister for Public Works had given to the honourable member for Greymouth when asked what he would do in connection with the bridge over the Teremakau. The treatment shown in the two cases was very different, and he thought it his duty to bring the matter under the attention of the honourable gentleman. He would read from *Hansard* the reply given to the honourable member for Greymouth:—

"Mr. GUINNESS asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will take into consideration the advisability of having the railway-bridge over the Teremakau River, on the line of the Greymouth-Hokitika Railway, altered so as to make the bridge suitable for dray traffic?

"Mr. MITCHELSON said the cost of the alteration of this bridge so as to make it a combined one would not be very great, the estimate being £750; but the Government could not recommend this expenditure, as the department had furnished a report stating that a bridge at this

place for combined traffic would be exceedingly dangerous, seeing that the approaches were not open to view."

In one case £9,000 could be found for a new bridge; in the other £700 was refused for a work of absolute necessity.

Vote, £7,000, agreed to.

Greymouth-Hokitika, £24,000, agreed to.

Upper Ashburton Branch, £7,000, agreed to.

Livingstone Branch, £6,500, agreed to.

Otago Central, £70,000, agreed to.

Catlin's River Branch, £12,000, agreed to.

Riversdale-Switzers, £3,000, agreed to.

Seaward Bush, £5,000, agreed to.

Wyndham-Fortrose, £9,000, agreed to.

Additions to open lines, £40,000, agreed to.

Permanent-way, sleepers, and rolling-stock, £50,000, agreed to.

Surveys of new lines, £500, agreed to.

### CLASS III.

Costs and charges of the loan, £57,500, agreed to.

Public Works, departmental, £6,000.

Mr. TURNBULL asked if it was intended to keep on the Public Works Department at the same expensive rate as during the last two years.

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that the department would be gradually reduced, so that by the end of the three years and a half it would have assumed very small dimensions. There could not be much reduction this year, as the year was pretty well over; but next year the estimates would show a large reduction.

Mr. SEDDON directed attention to the fact that the Public Works staff on the West Coast was as large as when it had four times the work it now had to do. If no public money was to be spent there, surely there was no necessity for keeping on so large a staff. The number of persons continued to be employed in that office lately was one of the most glaring cases of maladministration to be seen in the whole department.

Mr. MITCHELSON said that as soon as the session was over he would look into these matters. No person would be retained in employment when there was no work for him to do.

Mr. SEDDON said he had been asking all the session for a return showing the cost of supervision and administrative expenditure in connection with public works, but he had been unable to get it. He thought the return had been deliberately kept back so that the House might not have it when this discussion came on.

Major ATKINSON said the Government could have no object in keeping the return back; but the department had been very closely pressed with work lately, and had not had time to prepare it.

Mr. MITCHELSON said he understood the return was now ready, and he would lay it on the table on Monday.

Vote, £6,000, agreed to.

*Mr. Seddon*

## PART III.

## CLASS I.

Immigration, £16,820.

Mr. WARD asked the Minister whether the work performed by the Immigration Officer who received a salary of £326 was the same as that performed by the Dépôt-master at Invercargill, who only received £25.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON might say that, owing to the advanced period of the year, the Government were not now able to make any substantial change; but they would deal with the whole question during the recess. As to the general question, the Government had intended to make suggestions in the direction of promoting immigration this session; but the question was so large, and the press of business had been so great, that it had been impossible to do so. The Government had in contemplation the idea of equalising the cost of passage to New Zealand to that from Great Britain to other colonies by reimbursing a portion of the passage-money by land-scrip issuable by the Agent-General; but that could not be dealt with this session. The allowance of £10 made to every nominated immigrant and £10 to each adult who satisfied the Agent-General that he brought £100 in cash with him had worked with highly satisfactory results, the particulars of which were given in the Public Works Statement under the heading "Immigration." During the recess the plan of giving assistance to immigrants of a desirable class by means of land-orders would be fully considered. Practical farmers with capital should be encouraged to come to the colony, and a better guarantee of the suitability of an immigrant could not be asked than the fact of relatives or friends here being willing to advance their proportion of the passage-money.

Mr. MOSS moved, That the whole vote be struck out, on the ground that it would be an indication that next session our loans should be relieved of a burden which was improperly put upon them. What right had we to borrow money to bring immigrants here? If the scheme was a good one, let the cost of it be put on the Land Fund, or on consolidated revenue. The colony had spent nearly forty millions in making the country attractive; and why should we give every person who had £100, and wanted to come out, £10 for doing so? In the present condition of the country the introduction of these immigrants would only have the effect of driving old colonists out of the country; for they could not get employment unless they accepted a rate of wages which was no inducement to them to stay. The only reason why immigration had been adopted in the old days was that it was charged on Land Fund. Public lands were then abundant, and no one objected. Then labouring-men could get a little money, and at once relieve the labour-market by going on the land; but they could not do that now without paying such an amount for the land that it meant ruin. The House had heard a great deal during the last few days of following the example of Victoria; and we had done that in regard to Railway Boards and other

matters: why, then, not follow her example in this respect also? Victoria had not found it necessary to borrow one farthing to introduce immigrants, and had not spent as much on that purpose in her whole existence as we had spent upon it out of borrowed money within the last few years. We had spent something like two and a half millions on immigration, and there was no other country in the world which had pursued such an extraordinary course. The House had now before it estimates of money to come out of loan amounting to some £3,150,000, and out of that there was only £1,000,000 for railways. All the rest, £2,150,000, was for purposes not one of which would any other country dream of borrowing money to provide for. This policy could only mean ruin made easy, and he ventured to say that if the House decided to stop paying for immigration out of loan the Treasurer would be more careful what else he put on loan in future. He moved that the vote be struck out, so as to put a stop to a policy so destructive to all hopes of sound finance.

Mr. SEDDON said that if ruin meant keeping up the supply of female immigrants he could tell the honourable gentleman that there were plenty of young fellows on the West Coast who would be very glad to be ruined in that way. If borrowed money was to be spent on roads and bridges, why should it not also be spent in bringing out a very desirable portion of the population? If immigration had not been stopped as far as single women went, there would have been a very much increased population in New Zealand long ago. There were plenty of miners on the West Coast, in good positions, who could not get helpmeets, and even in Wellington and everywhere else there was a demand for female servants which could not be supplied. If immigration were allowed free to single women, the Emigration Officers being careful in their selection, really good girls would come to the colony; on arrival they would get situations, and then send for their relatives, and the most desirable class of population would be obtained.

Mr. ANDERSON thought it was a very injudicious thing on the part of the Government to spend borrowed money on immigration when there were numbers of valuable young men and women drifting from New Zealand to the Australian Colonies. At the present time, when there were so many unemployed, who, unless a paternal Government found them work, would be on the verge of starvation, it was surely unwise to spend money on immigration. He would be in favour of reducing the vote, but not of cutting it out altogether.

Mr. PEACOCK would be glad if the Minister would state that in carrying out immigration steps would be taken so that only those with experience in agricultural and pastoral pursuits would be introduced, and that artisans and mechanics would not be able to take advantage of this vote.

Mr. COWAN hoped the vote would not be reduced. So long as assistance was given to nominated immigrants they could not go

wrong, but would get the best class of settlers. He wished to draw attention to the inadequate provision made for the Dépôt-master at Invercargill, the centre of a large agricultural district. In Dunedin £480 was granted, but the Dépôt-master in Invercargill was only to receive 9s. 7d. a day. It seemed to him preposterous.

Mr. KERR said he objected to bringing out pensioners, for they were of no use to this or any other country; and, as to giving lands to people to come here, there were thousands of people here of the best class of settlers who could not get lands. As a rule, farm-labourers who came from Home knew nothing about sheep and very little about agriculture as those pursuits were followed in the colony. He would do all in his power to prevent all immigration but nominated immigration. He did not know how a man with a few hundred pounds was to settle with advantage on land in the country, for in the best times it was all that settlers could do to make a living on the land. He hoped that people with small capital would not come to the country, for they would certainly be ruined, and no good would be done to the country.

Dr. HODGKINSON hoped the vote would be carried, and was surprised to hear any opposition to it. It was not intended to bring out labourers, but to induce men of small means to come, who would be the employers of labour. No better investment for the colony could be made than this, and, if all the public money had been spent as judiciously as it was proposed that this should be, it would have been a very good thing for the country.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE thought it was time that the House very seriously took into consideration the propriety of doing away with this vote altogether. He supposed there was no member who doubted the value of immigration—it was an excellent thing to encourage people to come to the colony; but it was a question of means just now. They could not go on spending loan-money for ever; a new departure must be taken some time, and it seemed to him that this was an appropriate time to take it. The immigration vote had been reduced before. In 1882 it was only £6,000, and in 1883 it was reduced to £3,000, and then it rose again; but during these years the stream came into the country at pretty much the same rate—there was no great variation in it. As to attracting persons of capital to this country, the idea was excellent; but he felt certain that persons fit to become the employers of labour would come out from England without the attraction of a cheap passage. He agreed with the honourable member for Parnell when he said that a vote such as this ought always to come out of the Consolidated Fund; and, if at any time they had a surplus in that fund, it could not be better laid out than in attracting immigrants; but until they could do it out of the Consolidated Fund he maintained it was the most ordinary prudence to do away with the vote. Of all sources of revenue the Land Fund was the one from

*Mr. Cowan*

which money should be taken for attracting immigrants to the country. He hoped this vote would be wiped out.

Mr. W. P. REEVES did not see why this vote should be made a scapegoat when the Committee was passing such enormous sums for useless and unprofitable railways. He certainly did object, however, to that part of the vote which was likely to be spent in introducing nominated immigrants. They could not employ the young men and women who were now in the colony, and it was notorious that they were flocking to the Australian Colonies. There was no career open to them here; and it was perfectly monstrous that they should be paying for importing people while young people, who had the first claim on the colony, were being driven from it for want of employment. It was altogether illogical and wrong; and, if nobody else would attack the vote, he would move, That, in the opinion of this House, nominated immigration should cease altogether. As to pensioners, a more undesirable class of settlers could not be brought into the country, and no money whatever should be spent in their introduction.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said that none of this money was intended to be devoted to that purpose.

Mr. FULTON thought it was time this vote upon the Loan Fund should cease. He should like to know how much of this vote was engaged.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said that all the authority that was asked beyond what was absolutely necessary to meet engagements to the 31st March was £10,000. He thought that was not too much to ask until the Government had time to give the matter full consideration.

Mr. LEVESTAM would like to know what would be done with immigrants when they got here; because it was absurd to talk of bringing people out when there was no work for them. How, too, could a man landing in the colony with a capital of £100 become an employer of labour? If people were brought out at a time when there was no employment for large numbers already in the country, they would only go to swell the ranks of the unemployed.

Mr. FULTON moved, That the vote be reduced by £10,000.

Mr. PEACOCK believed that this contribution of £10 towards their passages would serve as a great inducement to a very desirable class of immigrants.

Dr. NEWMAN said the whole country, from end to end, was flooded with people who were travelling the roads and could not get work, and, if people were brought out who had not sufficient money to enable them to employ labour, they themselves would only swell the ranks of the unemployed. The cities were filled with skilled artisans and others who did not know where to get their next job, and in vain they travelled about from Wellington to Napier, to New Plymouth, and back, in search of employment. The Government would be simply bringing out immigrants to people the Australian Colonies if it continued to bring

out those who could not become employers of labour; and in his opinion the amount of £70,000 on the loan-schedule for immigration should be struck out.

Dr. FITCHETT thought it would be right to strike out what was intended for nominated immigration; and, if the vote were reduced by £3,000, the Government should take that as indicating the opinion of the Committee that nominated immigration should cease. If a man, by hard work under the unfavourable conditions of the English labour-market, gave such evidence of thrift and backbone as to be possessed of £100, he thought such a man would be certain to succeed in New Zealand, and that was a very desirable class of settler to introduce.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN said the object of the first immigration vote, and the ostensible object of every such vote since, had been to provide labour for the public works. Now we were cutting down the public-works expenditure, and yet it was asked that we should import labour. It was perfectly evident that there was now more than enough labour in the colony for our reduced public works, and therefore to vote money for immigration was simply throwing it away. As to bringing out people with capital at the cost of the colony, would it not be far wiser to give the money to provide with capital people already in the country, to enable them to go on the land—hand it to young farmers who wanted to go on land, but whose means were too small? Here we were actually throwing away money to provide a thing we did not want. More than that, we were actually going into debt to do it, for it was to be done with borrowed money. It was the maddest thing ever done, and he earnestly hoped the vote would not be passed. The vote for this purpose had, after much fighting, been reduced some years ago, and yet it was now proposed to increase it again, when it was less wanted than ever, merely to satisfy the cry of a few people who had fads in their heads.

Mr. W. P. REEVES said, if the amendment of the honourable member for the Taieri were lost he should move to reduce the vote by £3,000.

Mr. MOSS said there had been an attack on this vote for years past, and a small reduction had always been made, which the Minister as constantly said he would accept as an indication of the views of the Committee. But the Committee had never succeeded in getting effect given to its wishes, and it never would until it struck out the vote altogether. They should not allow this vote to appear on the loan estimates at all. Put it, if it must be voted, on the consolidated revenue, and then it would at least be kept within due bounds. They had begun the session with great intentions of reform; yet a more mad appropriation of loan-money than the present estimates displayed was never asked for in the House. Out of over three millions proposed on these so-called public-works estimates, less than one million was for railways. How could any country stand such a policy? It was worse

than anything he had yet seen. Only one-third of the money was for railways; yet they were told last session by the then Government that there was to be no more borrowing except for railways. Now we were to spend less than one million for railways, and over two millions for all kinds of other purposes. They should strike out the whole vote, as an indication of the will of the Committee that they did not wish immigration, at all events, to appear again on the estimates; or, if any of the vote was left, it should be just sufficient to meet liabilities already incurred, and not one pound more. He did think it was high time they made a firm stand, so that the vote should never more appear on the estimates.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said the vote of £16,720 must be passed, if the Committee did not want the Government to be unable to meet its liabilities. It would be quite open to decide as to what should be done in the future; but the amount now asked for there was no option about.

Mr. CADMAN asked what were the duties of the Immigration Officers. Over £1,300 was set down for their salaries, which seemed a very large sum to administer so small a vote. What could these officers have to do, now that immigration had virtually stopped?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said the whole matter would be revised by the Government. At present things were set down just as they had stood in the past.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN said it appeared impossible to cut down the vote by £10,000, as proposed; but they ought to obtain an assurance from the Government that no further sum should be spent on immigration. They must vote this £16,720, after the Minister's explanation; but they should express an opinion which would induce the Government to stop spending money on immigration beyond the amount the Committee was now asked to vote. He hoped that would be done.

Mr. MILLS hoped, as there was so much business yet to be done, they would not spend more time in discussing whether they should vote what had already been spent, and therefore what must be voted. They would be fully able to come to a decision and express their views as to further expenditure on immigration when on the schedule of the Loan Bill, which included £70,000 for immigration.

Mr. FULTON said the Committee should come to a decision which would prevent commitments being made in the future. They could do that by reducing the vote by £10,000, as he proposed. The Minister would then have to meet his engagements out of unauthorised expenditure, and no harm would be done, and the honourable gentleman would recognise the wish of the Committee that he should not make any further engagements at all. It would therefore be quite competent for the Committee to cut down the vote by £10,000. It was a matter that deserved the most careful consideration.

Mr. KELLY said this vote was very small, and there were many people in the colony who

wanted to nominate their friends at Home. Every person landed in the colony was worth £7 a year to the colony, and so in less than the two years he repaid the colony the £10 it might spend to get him here. He hoped honourable members would not take so narrow a view of this matter as many of them seemed inclined to do. He should support the vote.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN said, if the honourable member for the Taieri insisted on pressing his amendment to reduce the item by £10,000 he would lose the votes of many honourable members, because it had been shown that it was impossible to reduce it by so much. He thought the Committee might express its decided opinion by reducing the vote by £20. If the amendment of the honourable member for the Taieri was not carried he should move to reduce the vote by £20, so as to enable the Committee to plainly express its opinion to the Government that there should be no further expenditure at all on immigration.

Mr. TAIWHANGA could not understand why there should be so much objection to this vote on the part of the European members. The introduction of people to the country meant an increase to the revenue, and if the right sort of people were brought out it increased the value of the land, and made things prosperous. If the Natives had control of their own lands they would soon raise a loan on them, and spend it in bringing people out to the country, because they could see, if the Europeans could not see it, that they would greatly add to the value of their lands by so doing.

Mr. BEETHAM congratulated the honourable member for the Northern Maori District on the common-sense tone of his remarks, which offered a very good example to many members who had had great experience in the House. It seemed as if some honourable members thought that New Zealand was going to be saved by a cheeseparing policy; but he had no such notion. He believed that, if the colony was to be put on the right path again, it must be by a systematic method of dealing with the Crown lands, and the introduction of the proper class of people; and money spent in that direction would be well spent. He had been surprised at the remarks which had fallen from some honourable members whom he had always regarded as men of common-sense, in regard to this question. Among these he included the honourable member for the Taieri, and he confessed that he could not understand that honourable gentleman taking up the line of argument he had taken up. It was in remarkable contrast with what had fallen from the honourable member for the Northern Maori District, who had grasped the idea of borrowing money to settle his lands, just as any business-man would do.

Mr. STUART-MENTEATH thought that, if this vote were placed on the estimates for the purpose of attracting population to the colony, for the purpose of inducing people with capital to come, it would have just the opposite effect. The English farmer with a little capital, before he decided to emigrate, looked a little into

the affairs of the country he was thinking of going to; and if he found that the Government of the colony were taking votes year after year out of loan, in order to introduce population to the country,—if he found that useless railways were being constructed,—if he found that it was hard to get land except at a high price,—if he found that, when he got out here and got a piece of land, the next day in all probability a bursting-up land-tax would be put upon him, or, at any rate, that the imposition of a tax of that sort was a question within the range of practical politics in the colony,—if he found that, should he be absent from the colony for a year, he would be treated as an absentee, and specially taxed, if some people could have their way,—if he found that there was a sort of war being carried on against settlers,—if he found that there were all sorts of proposals to harass a settler who acquired a little money,—if an intending emigrant found out these things, he would naturally eschew the country where such things were done, where such things were seriously talked of. So long as steps were taken to continue bringing out immigrants by borrowing, by heaping up the debt, our action would have the strongest tendency to prevent honest, hardworking, sensible farmers from coming to the colony. With regard to the nominated immigrants he thought that the honourable member for the Northern Maori District and the honourable member for Masterton had this point in common: They both looked upon immigration from the point of view of an increase in the value of landed property which they already possessed. If he had a large estate in the colony he should decidedly try to get the taxpayer to join in paying to introduce population into it, because it would undoubtedly have the effect of enhancing the value of the estate which he possessed; but he would submit to the House and to those who were interested in landed property that in the present circumstances that was a shortsighted policy, a policy which must recoil upon the landowners themselves; for the more people that were introduced into the colony during a time of depression the stronger would become the cry of the landless for a share in those estates which the landowners possessed, and the greater would be the political difficulties which the landowners would make for themselves. To force into the colony more labour than capital could employ would lead to greater political disturbance than we had yet seen; and he was convinced that injudicious action of this kind in the past had led to a great deal of the trouble that had been experienced. If population had been allowed to come to the colony in its natural course, and had settled itself into the natural industries of the colony, there would have been none of this political ebb and flow of the wildest kind that they had at the present time. He was surprised that those honourable gentlemen who were landowners had not by this time learned prudence by experience. He should certainly vote for the amendment.

Mr. Kelly

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said it appeared to him that many speakers had misconceived the nature of the objections which he and others had raised against this vote. It was not a question of cheeseparing as against extravagance, as the honourable member for Masterton had said; it was not a question of stopping immigration, as he had suggested—many of the members who were opposing this vote were quite in favour of immigration being encouraged: the question was as to the source from which the money was to come. What he objected to was the money coming out of loan. If the revenue would not supply the money necessary for this purpose, no money should be spent in this direction. The time would soon come when there would be no money to spend out of loan; and the colony might as well at once commence with this item in reducing their loan expenditure. This money was put down on the estimates more from habit than from anything else.

Mr. BRUCE could not help thinking that there was a very great deal of misapprehension in reference to the value of immigration to the colony. It had been stated that an immigrant was worth so much to New Zealand—a man at a certain time of life, or of a certain occupation. Some honourable gentlemen thought that such a man was worth £200. At any rate, different estimates were placed before the House from time to time. But, as a matter of fact, those estimates were what he might call jumping at conclusions; because colonising must extend. These men went into the bush and settled the country; but they required roads to be made for them, and required educational expenditure in outlying districts, which in reality was of an expensive character: and therefore he did not believe that immigration, from some points of view, was so beneficial as some people were inclined to believe. However, he quite admitted the value of immigrants of the right class; and what he wished to impress upon the Committee was this: that the House must strive to preserve the equilibrium between labour and capital. It must not introduce more labour into New Zealand than the capital of the colony could absorb, and he thought that at the present time, when the price of produce was so low—so low as compared with what it had been—it would be injudicious to spend money out of loan on the introduction of labourers. As to introducing men of capital, he did not believe that any of these fancy schemes would have much result in that direction. If the colony adopted wise methods of disposing of the land, if the land was sold to people on as favourable terms as they could secure by crossing the Atlantic, if the colony gave them freehold tenure, and did not disturb the political system by fads—if he might use such a term—like perpetual leasing, then the colony would, he doubted not, get its share of the best class of immigrants. He had listened with a little surprise, he must admit, to the argument that immigration would increase the price of land, and must be supported for that reason. He had a little land in

the colony, and he would like to see it increase in value; but he would not endeavour to indirectly increase its value by borrowing money on it to spend on immigration. That would be a very bad investment, for the reasons pointed out by the honourable member for the Taieri.

Sir G. GREY thought there was a considerable misunderstanding as to this vote. The honourable gentleman who last spoke pointed very justly to the equilibrium which should be maintained between the supply of labour and the demand for it, and he could not help thinking we should never get that by using borrowed money to import labour. The true measure of equilibrium would be, that our revenue should be so large, and we were paid such a price for our produce, that there was a demand for labour in the colony. Then we might import labour at the public expense. But we should remember that to ask the whole population to tax themselves in order to introduce labour at the present time would be absolute cruelty. Nothing could be more humiliating to human beings, many of whom could not get work for themselves, than to be called upon to contribute out of the small sums they possessed to make it more difficult for them to live and to support their families. The Government had positively refused to adopt a plan proposed to them of encouraging settlement on the land by the young people of our own population; and, if they were going to give bounties to people for settling on the land, those bounties should be given to our own young people. But that had been refused, and at the very same time the Government was going to give bounties to foreigners to come here and increase the distress which already existed. Persons living in the colony could not get land; and what could be more cruel than to say to them that they should be taxed to introduce people with the absolute intention of increasing the price of land, and rendering the wealthy more wealthy than they were? He thought that, having refused to aid our own people to get on the land, and having refused to take off the burden which pressed upon them in the form of too high rents, the House was bound to refuse to pay one single penny in the way of taxation to introduce immigrants. A policy of justice, good-faith, and mercy to their fellow-countrymen called upon them to follow this course, and he would vote for a motion that would take from the Government the power of introducing any immigrants at the public expense.

Mr. BEETHAM had not heard what fell from the honourable member for Mount Ida, but he would like that honourable gentleman to understand that he did not apply his remarks to this vote, but referred to the action of the honourable gentleman, and of the honourable member for the Taieri, as being against the principle of the vote. He alluded to the future, and argued that the cutting-down of the salaries of the Civil servants, and such savings, would not do for New Zealand what would be done by a policy which would introduce a proper class of settlers on the land.

Major ATKINSON said the Government had in no way refused to provide means for the settlement of our own people on the land. They had passed an Act this session which would greatly facilitate that, and he did not wish it to go forth that the action of the House had been adverse to settlement. Nor had they refused to relieve those persons who were suffering from too high rents, for they had also made provision against that, so that no one should suffer between this time and such time as Parliament would meet again. With regard to the vote now before them, there was one thing on which they were all agreed, and that was that they did not want to introduce a large quantity of labour. As far as he had listened to the arguments, he had not heard a single honourable member propose that; but speakers who had opposed the immigration vote seemed to assume that this was the object of it. That was not its object, and that would not be its result. There were two special difficulties in the way of getting suitable immigrants to come here: one was the uncertainty of our land-laws, and the other was the fear of taxation. That deterred a large number of our own young men from going on the land, and induced them to seek other employment, as he could say from personal experience amongst his own neighbours. That was one great difficulty; and another was that we were at the end of the world, and the passage-money here was a serious item as compared with the passage-money to other colonies, which were offering favourable terms and good land. It seemed to him that, if the Government could by any means equalise the passage-money, with the great advantages of climate and soil and other matters which New Zealand had, we could greatly increase our immigration. He hoped that the present Land Act would enable them by next session to have got matters into such a shape that persons coming from England, as well as our own young men, would be able to get land without difficulty, and without having to knock about the towns for month after month without being able to get the land they wanted. He hoped, also, that they would be able to contrive some means by which people with moderate capital could come to this colony at something like the cost at which they could get to other colonies which were competing with us. To do that we must give them some assistance, either in money or in land-grants, which latter he would much prefer if we could afford it. He agreed with those who said that all this should come from surplus Land Fund; but was it wise, in our present position, while greatly reducing borrowing, and endeavouring—and, he hoped, successfully—to bring it to an end, and while we were still using borrowed money for making roads and railways, to cease to give assistance to the introduction of that class of immigrants which the colony wanted—namely, the small farmers? He could not, perhaps, see as far as some honourable members, and was not prepared to take the heroic measures they would. They no doubt believed honestly that by stopping borrowing suddenly the colony would recover

more rapidly than under the proposals of the Government; but he contended that it would not; and, believing that, he asked, would they be wise in cutting off all immigration of a proper class until the consolidated revenue was restored? He ventured to say that for two or three years, unless our produce greatly increased in price, it would be absolutely impossible to provide out of revenue any amount of money to devote to this purpose—that was, to equalising the passage-money to this colony to that paid to get to other colonies. Would it not be wise to put aside a moderate amount for that purpose? To his mind it would be, and that was the reason why he wished to see this vote passed. He did not believe in introducing more labour: that would be a fatal mistake, and do a great deal of harm. Nor had he any leaning towards raising the price of land. One of the great difficulties at the present time was that the land was at a fictitious value, and above what it would produce. He hoped the Committee would not be carried away by any sentiment or any idea that the Government were proposing to introduce labour with a view to raise the price of land. He would be no party to such a thing; but he would be a party to equalising the cost of passage to New Zealand to that to other colonies; and, if, under liberal land-laws, people, on their arrival here, could at once get their land, that was what was wanted. The colony could not afford to give very special inducements, as some honourable gentlemen would do, to our young men to go on the land; it could not afford to build houses and stock their land for them; but the Government had proposed and carried measures which would enable the young men of New Zealand to get land at a reasonable rate, and without the difficulty that had hitherto existed. He hoped the Committee would see its way to granting this vote, as it was one on which he considered our prosperity greatly depended.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said that, notwithstanding what the Premier had stated, he hoped the Committee would not grant this vote. The Premier had said what was no doubt worthy of attention, but nothing to induce them to continue expenditure for this purpose. He had said something about an heroic policy; but it was not heroism that was demanded, for what was proposed was not a reduction in the sum that had for some time back been spent upon immigration, but an increase. Then, as to the attraction of capital here, it was not in the least necessary to spend money upon immigration to attract persons here who would become the employers of labour. He believed that the cessation of borrowing would render the country much more attractive to persons who would become the employers of labour than a paltry vote of this character. The Premier must have forgotten that Victoria attracted a far larger number of persons than New Zealand did, although Victoria spent no money on immigration. There was no doubt at all that, if they were to spend money for this purpose, it should be out of revenue. To



ake it from loan was a most pernicious and extravagant policy.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN wished to point out that, though the Premier had said that one of the great difficulties we had to contend with was the high price of land, he proposed to introduce immigrants with capital, who would compete for the land, and thus increase its value. He (Mr. O'Callaghan) wished to know why they should spend borrowed money to import those who would compete for land the price of which was too high already.

Sir G. GREY was satisfied they ought not to allow immigration to go on. The Premier had made no answer whatever to the objection that was a cruel proposal to ask the people of this country to tax themselves to do that which would increase their miseries. Let the Premier open the lands of the country on some wise and fair principle. No such principle was developed in the present Land Bill, which was a mere repetition of old things tried before *ad nauseam*, and which had been of no good whatever. Let him march with the progress of the times. Other countries were giving land for nothing—land of the finest kind—and requiring only a short residence of three years, and were giving funds to help immigrants. That assistance was given to foreigners, while we were doing nothing. The subject had been grossly neglected during the present session; and it was the duty of the Committee to have recourse to the heroic policy of absolutely refusing to vote any sums at all for immigration during the present session.

Mr. R. THOMPSON thought the time had arrived when they should cease to spend borrowed money on immigration; and he trusted the Committee would carry the amendment as an indication that borrowed money should be no longer spent for this purpose. At the present time the best class of our young men, the sons of country settlers, were leaving the colony by the hundred, because there was no inducement to them to settle on the land. He hoped the Committee would take a decided stand, and support the amendment of the honourable member for the Taieri.

Mr. GRIMMOND said the honourable member for Auckland Central had asked them to adopt the heroic policy of throwing out this vote; but he thought it would be an instance of Spartan heroism if, when we had no money of our own, we borrowed money to bring people out to compete with us. He hoped the House would agree to the amendment of the honourable member for the Taieri. They had heard that it was not intended to bring out labourers, but he thought that immigration was for the purpose of bringing in a supply of labour when it was required. Why should they borrow money to bring out wealthy people? Was it intended that they should bring out tourists to look at the country?

Mr. TANNER said this was not a fresh plan for immigration, but merely a proposal affecting the unexpended balance, which was to be applied so as to induce the very class of persons to come out that everybody had been

declaring the country wanted—people who would bring out capital with them and settle upon the lands. It was to him utterly inexplicable that obstacles should be thrown in the way of this vote.

Mr. SAMUEL thought it must be clear that the object of the vote was not to procure cheap labour. He believed that no Government could continue in office that would use an immigration vote for that purpose; and therefore, to put it on the lowest ground, no Government would, for its own sake, use the money for such a purpose. What was to be done was to offer facilities to the right class of immigrants to come here. They might safely vote this sum, and he might say he wished its amount had been larger, and that some of the money they were devoting to public buildings and unproductive works had been applied to this purpose.

Mr. TURNBULL would specially point out to the Colonial Treasurer that he would not need to go to England for people with capital if the lands of the colony were opened up. He knew of numbers of men who had saved up considerable sums, and had left New Zealand for Australia, simply because they could not get land here. But if the land were opened, as was expected under the new Land Bill, these people would return to New Zealand from Australia, and settle permanently in this country. There was no hope of this so long as twelve million acres were held under lease by only 1,924 persons. As soon as the land was thrown open for *bonâ fide* settlement they would have no need to go to England for settlers, as those who had gone to Australia would return and take up land.

Mr. TAYLOR said they would be simply throwing money away if they used it for the purpose of bringing out people with capital, unless these people were bound to reside in the colony for a certain time. Otherwise they would simply go over to Australia.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote, 'Immigration, £16,720,' be reduced by £10,000."

AYES, 37.

Allen	Jones	Ross
Anderson	Kerr	Steward, W. J.
Barron	Lawry	Stewart, W. D.
Blake	Loughrey	Taylor
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Thompson, R.
Cadman	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson, T.
Feldwick	Moss	Turnbull
Fitchett	Newman	Walker
Fraser	O'Callaghan	Ward.
Graham	O'Connor	
Grey	Parata	Tellers.
Grimmond	Perceval	Fulton
Hutchison	Reeves, W. P.	Levestam.

NOES, 23.

Atkinson	Kelly	Ormond
Cowan	Macarthur	Pearson
Fisher	McGregor	Pyke
Hislop	Mitchelson	Richardson, G.
Hodgkinson	Moat	Samuel

Seymour	Valentine	<i>Tellers.</i>
Smith	Whyte	Beetham
Taiwhanga	Withy.	Tanner.

## PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
McKenzie, J.	Fergus
Stuart-Menteth.	Peacock.

Majority for, 13.

Amendment carried, and vote as reduced, £6,720, agreed to.

## CONSOLIDATED FUND.

## CLASS I.—LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT.

Vote, Legislative Department, £26,000.

Mr. PEACOCK hoped the Premier would state the intentions of the Government about this vote.

Major ATKINSON said it was proposed to take off the amounts in addition to statutory salaries, not to pay Chairmen of Select Committees, and to make reasonable reductions in other officers' salaries.

Mr. PEACOCK asked when the reductions would take effect.

Major ATKINSON said nine months of the financial year had already expired, and the officers had drawn the present rates for that time, and they should of course receive proper notice of the reduction. The House would no doubt wish its officers to receive proper notice before any reduction was made.

Mr. FULTON said there was another question which had engaged the attention of the Committee year after year, and that was as to who was responsible for these estimates. They had always been told that virtually no one was responsible, but that the Government merely submitted the estimates as they were given in by the Speakers. He would like to have an assurance from the Premier as to what would be the course in future.

Dr. NEWMAN thought the reduction mentioned by the Premier in the case of statutory officers would be altogether too sweeping. Some of these officers had been over twenty years in the service, and, considering the circumstances of each case, it would be altogether too sweeping to take off 25 per cent. of their salaries at one swoop. It was far more than the needs of the country required, and, in fact, it was panic legislation.

Mr. PEACOCK said what he wanted to clearly understand was, when the reduction on the present emoluments was to begin to take effect. He had not ascertained that yet.

Major ATKINSON took it that the House would wish to give reasonable notice to its officers before their positions were affected. Practically, no reduction could be made this year; but there might be an intimation to the Government that amounts over the statutory sums were not to appear again on the estimates, nor were the payments to Chairmen of Select Committees to appear. As to the Government taking charge of the Legislative estimates, he had promised the House that he would consult the Speakers on the subject; but he regretted to say that he had not done so, and

could not make a definite statement, lest it should appear discourteous to the Speakers. But the Government had come to the conclusion that they ought to be responsible, and therefore he should consult the Speakers and endeavour to make that change. No doubt, constitutionally the Government were responsible.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN thought it advisable the Premier should point out the intended reductions in each item.

Major ATKINSON said he thought that would be unnecessary, and, indeed, a waste of time. The reductions he had indicated would be made, and the salaries of non-statutory officers would be reasonably reduced where it was considered advisable. He took it the House desired that all public servants should have proper notice of any change affecting them. That was the proposal of the Government.

Mr. O'CONOR said the Governor's salary, the salaries of Ministers, and the payments to members had all been reduced, though they had been fixed by statute, and the reason urged was that they should set an example in economy. Was the thing to stop short there, or were they to follow it up with the public officers? He thought, unless that was done, it would be very unfair. The House expected the Government to show a thorough revision of the departmental expenditure, and there was no place where revision was more required than in those Chambers. A Committee, of which he was Chairman, had, in a recent session, inquired fully into and reported on the whole subject, and had shown that they were paying to gentlemen large salaries for three months' work—that those gentlemen were receiving salaries for many months when they were doing no work whatever. He was sure the majority of honourable members expected that the expenditure in this department would be brought within reasonable limits.

Major ATKINSON said that was the proposal of the Government.

Mr. O'CONOR said he should like to see the Premier take the whole of these departmental estimates and recast them, showing the reductions. He thought the Government should lead them in effecting a very considerable reduction in both Houses.

Major ATKINSON said the Government did not propose to reduce the salaries fixed by statute. It might be that, on full consideration, the Government might see fit next session to propose a revision of all statutory salaries; but as to that he could not say. The comparison between the payments to members and Ministers and those to permanent officers would not stand, for the position was not the same in the different cases. Honourable members were not Civil servants at all; they were not earning their living from their public position; they were, so to speak, political officers. The same rule could not apply to honourable members as to permanent officers, whether in the Legislative Department or in the ordinary Civil Service. All public officers should receive fair and reasonable notice before any reduction took place in their salaries. He hoped

honourable gentlemen would mark the distinction between permanent officers and political officers.

Mr. PEACOCK asked if it was proposed, in cases where there were statutory salaries and additional sums added to those salaries, to take away those additional sums in respect of the portion of the financial year yet unexpired.

Major ATKINSON said it was proposed to touch no officer's salary without giving reasonable notice to the officer, and Legislative officers would have the same notice of reduction as the rest of the Civil servants. The Government would proceed, after the prorogation, as soon as they had recovered from the fatigues of the session, with the work of reorganization, and proper notice would be given to every one as to what reductions were intended affecting them.

Mr. BARRON asked if it was the intention of the Government to take the Legislative Department under their own control, as suggested by a Committee of the House, instead of leaving it under the control of the two Speakers. The late Premier endeavoured to make the change, but found it was impossible to effect it. If the present Premier was placed in the same difficulty, what step did he propose to take to assert the constitutional right of the Government to assume control of that department?

Major ATKINSON presumed that, if the constitutional right to that control existed—and he had no doubt of it—there would be no difficulty in asserting it. The custom had been for the two Speakers to send in their estimates, and, owing to a feeling of delicacy or to a desire to get out of a difficulty, Ministers had not interfered with those estimates or taken any responsibility for them. But he had no doubt that, constitutionally, Ministers were responsible. He was sorry that it had slipped his memory to see the Speakers. But he had not done so, and, of course, as a habit had grown up in connection with these matters, one did not like to assume an authority which had fallen into disuse, without a little consultation. But he could say this: that when next year's estimates for the Legislative Department came up the Government would be able to distinctly tell the House what items they recommended to Parliament.

Mr. WARD asked whether the Government intended next year to propose an alteration in the amounts fixed by Act for officers such as the Speakers.

Major ATKINSON said that was a matter which the Government would have to take into consideration during the recess.

Mr. WALKER asked if it was the intention of the Government to give notice to officers whose salaries were to be reduced, and, if so, what notice would be given.

Major ATKINSON said that reasonable notice would be given to all officers of the House. They would be all treated alike. As soon as the Government got to business they would give notice all round. He thought the House desired that its officials should be treated

with as much tenderness as was possible under the circumstances.

Mr. HUTCHISON took the item, "Legislative Council—Chairman of Committees (also by Act, £300), £120." He understood the Premier did not propose to interfere with the £300; but did he intend to alter or reduce the £120?

Major ATKINSON.—Not this session.

Mr. HUTCHISON asked, why not? This was a political officer. He was on the same footing as the Chairman of Committees of the House of Representatives, he was elected to his office like other honourable members, and, like other honourable members, he should be cut down. He (Mr. Hutchison) did not see why this officer in the Legislative Council should not be reduced; and he would move to strike that item out.

Mr. LEVESTAM did not see why these items should not be all reviewed, whether they were fixed by Act or not. The honorarium was fixed by Act, and honourable members had been elected under the terms of that Act as to payment. Yet the Act had been altered, to set an example, as it had been put. Why, then, should the example not be followed? What difference was there between altering an Act to reduce the honorarium and altering an Act to reduce these salaries? If these salaries were not to be altered the Premier should put a vote on the supplementary estimates to restore to members the lost honorarium.

Mr. SAMUEL agreed that the Government had acted wisely in beginning with the Governor, though the present occupant of the office could not be affected, and then going on to reduce their own salaries and the honorarium of members. As to the mode of these reductions, the Government had a perfect right to determine when they would make the reduction apply to themselves. No one could object to that. Neither could there be any objection to honourable members reducing their own emoluments retrospectively, because the matter rested with themselves, and they could do as they pleased, or as a majority of them pleased. All these reductions were carried out by the parties affected themselves, and it was for themselves to determine when they should take effect. But, when they came to deal with officers of the House, and Civil servants, a different principle came into play. These persons had accepted office on the understanding that they were to be paid a certain amount per annum, a part of which had been fixed by statute, and the other part of which had been voted session after session; so that they had a perfect right to suppose when they accepted office that they would be paid these amounts. That was true in fact, whatever it might be in law. Therefore he thought that, so far as this session was concerned, they should be paid as usual; but next session they would commence their work under the different terms that the Government and the House might decide upon. Then, as to members of the Civil Service, the House should act honourably and straightforwardly with them. Notice should be given that, after a certain date, giving them fair notice, we should

not be prepared to pay them so much as we had hitherto been paying them, and during that time it would be for them to consider whether they would take the reduced salary or not. If they chose to take it, of course they would accept the position at the lower salary. If they thought they could do better they would seek other employment, and they would have time during which to seek other employment. The colony should treat its employes just as private employers treated their employes. He hoped honourable members would take a fair view of this matter. They had acted generously to the colony in reducing their own honorarium—for it was a generous act—and he hoped that they would not spoil the effect of their generosity by acting ungenerously and unhandsomely to the employes of the colony.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN said the argument of the Premier with regard to gentlemen who were receiving salaries would apply to the Chairmen of Committees, and in their case the reduction was to be retrospective. Therefore it ought to apply to the other cases. The constituencies had expected that these reductions would be made this session, and there could be no doubt that the officers of the Legislature had expected it, and that ought to be sufficient notice to them, without any actual notice being given to them.

Major ATKINSON said the Chairmen of Committees stood in the same class as other members of the House. He thought it would be shabby to knock the additional amounts off; but, of course, it would rest with the Committee to decide, although he must say that, looking at the services these officers rendered, the offices they held, and the losses they were liable to suffer—for he believed that one Chairman lost both his salary and his honorarium—he did not think it fair to strike these sums off.

Mr. FISH demurred to what the honourable member for New Plymouth had said. These estimates should have been passed four or five months ago, therefore it would not be right that reductions should be made for that period; but the officers of the House knew that the House had full power to deal with their salaries, and so did all the Civil servants, and therefore there would be nothing unfair in making reductions for the rest of the year. That was also the intention of the Premier, as was shown by the first page of the estimates; and, as they had reduced Ministers' salaries and the honorarium of honourable members, every one else ought to be put on the same footing. He must, however, point out that there was something misleading in the estimates as put before the House. The Government said they intended to reduce the £26,000, set down this year, to £15,000; but out of that difference had to come £9,000 for extra expenses for last session, so that the real reduction was only about £2,000. He would support any honourable member who would move that the reduction should apply to the remainder of the year.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN would point out that in Table 9 attached to the Financial Statement,

*Mr. Samuel*

which showed the proposed reductions in the estimates, there was no mention at all of any reduction in the Legislative Department. Therefore he thought the House should take the matter in hand itself and say where reductions were to be made.

Mr. O'CONOR said his expectation was that the Government would take in hand the administration of the Civil servants attached to the two Chambers, and that, in doing that, they would make reforms and reductions in the same way as they proposed with regard to the other Civil servants. He saw no indication of that in the proposals which were brought down. He did not want to do injustice to any one, but he would like to see a thorough reorganization of the Legislative Department, which would effect economy. It appeared by the proposals before them that the House was not to have an opportunity of expressing its views and saying what reductions should be made.

Mr. TURNBULL said that in the Financial Statement the Treasurer said that he proposed to make savings to the extent of £71,000 to the end of the current year: he would like to know whether it was the intention of the Premier to carry that out.

Major ATKINSON did not think the Government would be able to do that now, as they had expected that Parliament would be prorogued at least a month sooner.

Mr. GOLDIE thought that the officers whose salaries were fixed by Act should be paid that sum and no more, and, to effect this, he would move, That the vote be reduced by the sum of £720.

Dr. NEWMAN said that had an all-round reduction of 10 per cent. been proposed there would have been a keen discussion upon it, and probably it would not have been carried; but the proposal now made would reduce some of the salaries by 20 per cent. The Assistant Clerk had been twenty-four years in office, and it was proposed to reduce his salary by 20 per cent. He (Dr. Newman) ventured to think that the proposal was grossly unjust.

Mr. W. D. STEWART thought there was a very obvious distinction between what might be termed the political officers of the House and the servants of the House. The Speakers and Chairmen of Committees, he held, should be confined to their statutory salaries; but it would not be fair to interfere with the salaries of the servants of the House except upon proper notice, and until that notice was given they should receive the same salaries as hitherto.

Mr. MILLS agreed with the remark of the last speaker that the salaries of officials should not be reduced without notice. That was a matter that should be left to the Government to adjust. The Speakers and the Chairmen of Committees, being members of the Parliament, should share the same fate as members generally, and have their salaries reduced; but he thought that one-half of the supplementary salaries should be granted to them, to cover the period up to the time of their election. The supplementary salaries should not be drawn by them for the latter part of the year, as reduc-

tions were anticipated and were made a prominent feature during the elections. Perhaps these amounts should be reduced by one-half.

Mr. FISH trusted the motion of the honourable member for Auckland West would be assented to. If the House did not do that, then the retrenchment cry was a miserable and utter sham. He would point out that the reduction proposed by the honourable member for Auckland West was about the same percentage as the reduction that had taken place on the honorarium. The Speakers and Chairmen of Committees of the Houses should be reduced the same as other members of the Houses; and he considered that the salaries which had been paid to them hitherto had been much too high.

Mr. PEACOCK thought it was a question whether the extra allowance granted to the Clerk and Clerk-Assistant of the House, and the Clerk of the Council, had not practically become a part of their salaries. He was, of course, speaking of them as altogether distinct from the political officers of the House. The House, he thought, would be quite justified in entirely taking off the extra allowance from its political officers; but it did not necessarily follow that they would be justified in making such large reductions in the salaries of the permanent officers.

Mr. TURNBULL considered it was a pity they had passed the Bills they had passed, because he could see that if they had got into the estimates first there would have been no reductions at all.

Major ATKINSON would like to point out that the Committee was mixing up the salaries of two distinct classes. The money had already been voted by interim supplies, and the salaries paid up to the present time to the permanent officers of the House on the basis of the last estimates; and these officers were practically Civil servants; but that was not the case with the Speaker and Chairman of Committees. He would like also to say that some fifty or sixty members were not reduced at all this year, except to the extent of £5; they would receive within £5 of the amount they would have had for both sessions under the old Act.

Mr. BEETHAM said that honourable members were losing sight of the fact that there were two sessions this year, and the officers of the House received only the same annual pay.

Mr. GOLDIE withdrew his amendment.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN moved, That the vote be reduced by striking out the following items: Chairman of Committees, Legislative Council, £120; Chairman of Public Petitions Committee, Legislative Council, £50; Mr. Speaker, House of Representatives, £200; Chairman of Committees, House of Representatives, £100; Chairman of Public Petitions Committee, House of Representatives, £100; Chairman of Native Affairs Committee, House of Representatives, £100.

Sir G. GREY thought the Colonial Treasurer should give some indication of the reductions which it was intended to effect in the Legislative Department.

Major ATKINSON said the Government had never had charge of these estimates, and they had never been thought out by the Government. It would be their duty during the recess to give the matter full consideration.

Mr. HUTCHISON drew the attention of the Premier to the fact that under the Pensions Act of 1884 a saving could be effected even upon the amount payable under the Act to the Speaker of the Legislative Council, inasmuch as he had recently been appointed to that office. The 6th section of the Act related to the point to which he now drew the Premier's attention.

Major ATKINSON said he would look into the matter, and was obliged to the honourable gentleman for drawing his attention to it.

Mr. O'Callaghan's amendment, reducing the vote by £670, was agreed to.

Mr. TURNBULL moved, That the item, "Serjeant-at-Arms, £250," be reduced by £5. He moved this as an indication that next year they did not require this officer.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said the Serjeant-at-Arms was a very necessary officer. He thought, however, they might do away with one of the Interpreters, seeing that two of the Maori members spoke English.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote, £25,330, be further reduced by £5."

#### AYES, 20.

Cadman	Goldie	Thompson, T.
Cowan	Monk	Turnbull
Duncan	O'Connor	Whyte
Feldwick	Peacock	Withy.
Fish	Perceval	Tellers.
Fraser	Steward, W. J.	Hutchison
Fulton	Thompson, R.	McKenzie, J.

#### NOES, 39.

Allen	Kerr	Parata
Atkinson	Lawry	Reeves, W. P.
Beetham	Levestam	Samuel
Blake	Macarthur	Seymour
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Stewart, W. D.
Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	S.-Menteath
Dodson	McGregor	Tanner
Fergus	Mills	Valentine
Fisher	Mitchelson	Walker
Graham	Moat	Ward.
Hislop	Newman	Tellers.
Jackson	O'Callaghan	Fitchett
Jones	Ormond	Pearson.
Kelly		

Majority against, 19.

Amendment negatived, and vote, £25,330, as reduced, agreed to.

#### CLASS II.—COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Colonial Secretary's Department, £151,513.

Lunatic Asylums, £44,454.

Mr. ALLEN directed attention to the item, "Christchurch—House Steward, £300," and moved, That the item be struck out. He understood the officer indicated was no longer occupied at the asylum.

Mr. HISLOP said the amount could not be struck off, as it had been paid, the officer

having received notice that he would have to retire.

Major ATKINSON said the whole of the officers employed in these departments would come under revision during the recess, and the Government would bring down very considerably reduced estimates next session.

Mr. ALLEN said he had been mistaken about the matter he had alluded to.

Amendment withdrawn.

Mr. FISH asked whether the engagement of the Inspector of Asylums was fixed for any particular period.

Major ATKINSON said the engagement was for three years from the time of appointment.

Vote, £151,513, agreed to.

#### CLASS III.—TREASURY AND REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

Vote, Colonial Treasurer, £33,903, agreed to.

Vote, Stamps and Deeds, £26,460, agreed to.

Vote, Postal and Telegraph, £274,437, agreed to.

Customs and Marine, £66,413.

Mr. TURNBULL asked what were the intentions of the Government respecting the San Francisco mail service.

Major ATKINSON said the Government would consider the question during the recess.

Mr. LEVESTAM asked whether the cadets in the Civil Service would get their customary increase of £10 this year.

Major ATKINSON replied in the affirmative.

Mr. LEVESTAM noticed that a cadet who was employed in the Land Transfer Department at Nelson had only been put down for the same sum as last year.

Major ATKINSON said the cadet in question would receive whatever he was entitled to.

Vote, £66,413, agreed to.

Vote, Justice, £108,665, agreed to.

Vote, Mines, £20,888, agreed to.

Vote, Working Railways, £725,000, agreed to.

#### LAND FUND ACCOUNT.

Vote, Payments to local bodies, £18,000, agreed to.

Vote, Lands and Surveys, £98,307, agreed to.

Vote, Rates on Crown lands, £42,000, agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to twelve o'clock p.m.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Monday, 19th December, 1887.

Second Readings—Third Readings—Local Government—Government Railways Bill—Land Bill—Wellington College and Girls' High School Bill—Wanganui Harbour Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

Mr. Hislop

#### SECOND READINGS.

Christchurch District Drainage Bill, Gisborne Harbour Bill, Invercargill Waterworks Reserve Bill.

#### THIRD READINGS.

Christchurch District Drainage Bill, Gisborne Harbour Bill, Invercargill Waterworks Reserve Bill.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS asked the Hon. the Attorney-General, Whether the Government intend to make provision for granting bonuses for the three best essays on a thorough system of local government?

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER replied that the Government had no intention of granting such bonuses.

#### GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

##### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 34.—Commissioners may grant licenses to sell liquors.

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON moved to insert the word "not" after the word "may."

The Committee divided.

##### AYES, 5.

Grace	Mantell	Swanson.
Johnson	Shepherd	

##### NOES, 21.

Barnicoat	Martin	Richmond
Bonar	McLean	Scotland
Buckley	Menzies	Stevens
Chamberlin	Peacock	Taiaroa
Dignan	Peter	Waterhouse
Hart	Pharazyn	Whitaker
Lahmann	Reynolds	Williams.

Majority against, 16.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported.

#### LAND BILL.

A message was received from the House of Representatives, disagreeing with the amendments made by the Legislative Council in respect to clauses 33 and 34 of the Land Bill, and transmitting the following reasons for so doing:—

"(1.) That the change in the constitution of the Boards was approved by a large majority of the House of Representatives.

"(2.) That a system of elective Land Boards brings the working of the Lands Department under the review and control of the public, the proceedings of the Board being open to the public and the Press.

"(3.) That a Commissioner would be subject to pressure difficult to withstand except by the assistance and advice of a Board, and that a Minister having extreme views could administer the Land Act partially except for such a check, the Commissioner being his servant, and subject to dismissal by him.

"(4.) That the local knowledge of the members of the Board as to the requirements of settlement and the price of land is invaluable.

"(5.) That a feeling of security is engendered

by selectors knowing that in the Board they have a Court of appeal from arbitrary decisions of a Government."

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS moved, *That the Council insist on their amendments in the Land Bill with which the House of Representatives have disagreed; and that the Hon. Mr. Bonar, the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, and the mover be appointed a Committee to prepare reasons for the Council so insisting.*

Agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS subsequently brought up the following reasons for insisting on the amendments made by the Council in the Land Bill:—

"(1.) That the amendments disagreed with were carried by a large majority of the Legislative Council.

"(2.) That, as the Commissioner would, by subsection (6) of clause 84, have to exercise his functions in the mode prescribed to the Board, publicity would be the same in the one case as in the other.

"(3.) That the tendency of elective Land Boards is to weaken the responsibility of Government in matters of land-administration.

"(4.) That the Commissioners have in all cases sufficient knowledge to enable them to judge as to the requirements and the prices of land.

"(5.) That the feeling of security in the decision of the Commissioner would be strengthened by the knowledge that he is not controlled by local influences, more especially as there will be a right of appeal direct to the Government against any arbitrary decision of the Commissioners.

"(6.) That in several instances the expenses of the Board are out of proportion to the returns of revenue; and, in the interests of economy, the change made by the Council is desirable."

He moved, *That the reasons be agreed to.*

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—Before the Council agrees to those reasons, I wish to state that I disagree with them. However, I will not detain the Council by expressing my own individual opinions and my reasons for disagreeing, because I am aware that the feeling of the Council is against me. But I mention this now, so that hereafter the fact may not be overlooked that I disagreed with those reasons, and agree with the reasons which led the House of Representatives to disagree with the amendments of the Council.

Reasons agreed to.

A message was subsequently received from the House of Representatives asking for a Free Conference on the matter, which was agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. Stevens, the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, and the Hon. Mr. Bonar were appointed Managers of the Conference.

#### WELLINGTON COLLEGE AND GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL BILL.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said, in reference to this order of the day, he would respectfully inform the Council that this Bill was now merely in the ordinary position of being down for second reading.

The Hon. Mr. PETER moved "*the previous question.*"

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said it was quite apparent that there was a very considerable misapprehension as regarded the action of those who had been opposing this Bill; and he was not quite sure that honourable members themselves all realised the nature of that action. One would think, from some remarks which had fallen from honourable members, that those who were adverse to the Bill had been animated by a feeling of a nature adverse to the interests of the City of Wellington. But, as a matter of fact, it was just the very reverse. And what was the object of the action they had taken in this matter? It had been that there should be no power given to sell the freehold of one of the most important reserves in the City of Wellington. If the mortgage, with power of sale, were given, it was possible that some day or other Wellington might wake up and find itself with neither a high school nor a site for a high school; and the Hon. Mr. Johnson, who had strongly defended this Bill, must, he thought, see that this was the necessary result of the action he was taking. They were anxious that Wellington should not lose the site for a high school; but, if this Bill were accepted, it was possible that the site for a high school might entirely pass away from the City of Wellington. He agreed with every word that had been uttered by the Hon. Mr. Johnson in reference to the importance of having a high school for Wellington, and he quite admitted that there should be a proper high school in Wellington. The action the honourable gentleman was supporting, he repeated, might lead to Wellington being deprived of a high school and also of a site for a high school. If there were any difficulty in this matter, he thought the proper course would be for the Government to meet it boldly; and it was still in their power, by some additions to the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill, to provide that assistance should be given to the Board of Governors to extricate them from the difficulty in which they were at the present time placed. But he strongly hoped the Council would not agree to reverse that line of policy which had been laid down for its guidance for many years past, and would not on this occasion establish a precedent for selling those reserves. Generations unborn might repent their hasty action in giving power for the sale of this site, and he sincerely trusted that such power would not be given. They had always acted as the guardians of these sites, and he believed there was not a single case—and he had looked into the matter pretty closely—in which they had authorised a sale of this character. In 1871 a Bill was passed with the view of removing some conditions regarding the reserves that had been made for the benefit of the City of Wellington, and in the Act of 1871 the allocation of these reserves for certain specified purposes was made to the Superintendent of the province. That was, of course, at the time provincial institutions existed. The provincial authorities at

the time were anxious to realise on some of these reserves with a view to building a hospital; and a portion of them—Fitzherbert Terrace and Charlotte Street—that had been let with a right of purchase were in course of sale when the Legislature itself interfered, and passed an Act providing for satisfying claims by money payment, and vesting the reserves in the Superintendent. So that the Legislature, when it appeared in this matter, only appeared to prevent the sale of the site of these buildings in accordance with the policy laid down for many years, that it would not grant mortgages with power of sale of sites. At the same time there was an Act passed to enable the Governors of the College to borrow a sum of £5,000 upon the mortgage of the place; but these stipulations were at once put in:—

“4. If at the time appointed by any mortgage for the payment of the principal money secured thereby the Governors are unable to pay off the same, they may, if they shall think fit, borrow such sum of money as may be necessary for the purpose of paying off the whole or any part of such principal money, and may secure the repayment of the same and the interest to be paid thereon in manner herein-before authorised in regard to the moneys originally borrowed under this Act.

“5. Nothing in this Act shall be deemed by implication or otherwise to take from any person his right of claiming compensation from the colony for the deprivation or dispossession of any estate or interest which he may have had, or to which he may claim to have been entitled, in any land which has been granted for the endowment of the College.”

He hoped the Council would regard this matter from the point of view he had indicated—that they would be in favour of the principles they had laid down for their guidance, and that, whatever they did, they would not authorise any persons to sell these very valuable reserves, which were set apart not only for their interests, but also for the interests of those who were to follow. This was a sort of postscript to a lady's letter. The Bill had been brought down entirely with a view to this; the rest was all padding. That being the principle of the Bill, he hoped they would not consent to read it a second time, unless an absolute promise were made to them that there should be inserted a similar proviso in the Wellington College Bill to the one to which he had referred.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON would like to refer to the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse as to his action in regard to this Bill, because he thought the honourable gentleman misapprehended it. He simply supported the second reading of the Bill on the ground that, as had been pointed out, the Bill contained other matters, which affected the College as well as the Girls' High School, and it was to the object of getting these considered that he addressed himself in speaking on the subject. The great object he had was to enforce upon the Council what seemed to him to be the justice of the trustees in bringing forward a

Bill of this kind, and endeavouring to obtain the necessary funds to pay for this building. Unfortunately, he had overlooked, at the time he was speaking, a circumstance he had drawn attention to when this question was introduced into the Council by the Hon. Mr. Reynolds on a former occasion. On that occasion the Hon. Mr. Reynolds showed him the contract under which the erection of this building was undertaken, and he then saw what were the conditions of the contract. He now asked the permission of the Council to read an extract therefrom, for he was quite certain that it would place things in a different light from what they had been in previously. He had it on good authority that before this contract was executed by either party it was submitted for approval to the Hon. Sir Robert Stout, then Premier and Minister of Education; and there was a clause at the commencement of the contract against which the Minister wrote, “Approved.”—ROBERT STOUT, Minister of Education.” The clause was this:—

“And whereas the Governors have no moneys available for the purpose of paying for the erection of such buildings, but have entered into such contract on the faith of a promise by the Government of the Colony of New Zealand, through the Minister of Education, to provide them with moneys, by way of loan or otherwise, for the purpose of paying for the erection of such buildings,” &c.

Under these circumstances he thought the trustees were quite justified in expecting the Government would assist them in getting the money that was necessary for putting up this building. That was the argument he used when the Hon. Mr. Reynolds introduced a similar Bill to this last year. At the same time he wished the Council to clearly understand that he never for an instant thought the Council would allow the power of sale contained in the Bill to apply to the school-site, and he believed the trustees themselves contemplated such an amendment of their proposal. Something had been said about the transferring of the Hospital reserve, and he quite agreed that it was an unfortunate thing that it had been transferred from the Hospital Trustees to the College Governors, but he maintained they had nothing to do with it at the present moment. He had been under the impression that other property of equal value would be handed over to the Hospital at the time, but he could not find any record of that at all. On this point he did not think it should be raked up and thrown at the heads of the Board of College Governors, because surely it was their duty to turn the property to the best advantage when it was placed in their hands. It was no doubt an objectionable thing to transfer it to the Governors in the first instance; but, that having been done, he did not think they should now accuse the Governors of doing that which was wrong in making use of the property.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL said he was not present when the question was put on a former occasion, and therefore he wished to say a few words in reference to the course he intended

*Hon. Mr. Waterhouse*



to take up; and he should vote that the Bill be read a second time. He should not support the retention of the clause providing for the power of sale.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS wished to say that in the discussion that had taken place on this subject he did not think it necessary to make any lengthy remarks. He urged strongly in the former discussion that the Bill should not be rejected, because it provided for the constitution of the institution in question. There was one point he must refer to, and it arose out of the personal explanation made by the Hon. Mr. Buckley the other day, when the Hon. the Speaker intimated that he (Mr. Stevens) would not be allowed to speak then, but that he would have another opportunity of doing so. His honourable friend then quoted from the mortgage given in connection with this contract to put up the building; and, in the course of his remarks, it became quite certain that an important recital in that mortgage had escaped his attention. It would be remembered that the honourable gentleman stated that the mortgage had been approved by the Minister of Education, who had noted his approval in the margin. That was perfectly correct; but among the recitals in that mortgage which the Minister of Education approved by his signature there appeared a recital that the Governors entered into a contract with the contractors on the faith of a promise made by the Government to meet this engagement. He believed that was substantially a fair interpretation of this recital. He thought it right to state that in order that the honourable gentleman might treat it as a kind of supplement to his remarks the other day, and be in perfect possession of what was expressed in the document which received the approval of the late Minister of Education. He had further to say, in conclusion, he thought it would be very desirable that those few words should be read out of the mortgage for the information of the Council, so that it might be proved whether or not his words were correct.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said it was quite true the provision did escape his notice. The more one looked at the recital the more one would find that there was an inclination to provide funds for the erection of this building by vote or other means, but not by mortgage. He could not lay too much stress on the remark of the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, that he would not in any way interfere with the passing of this Bill except for the express purpose of preventing the sale of the reserve. He (Mr. Buckley) had fallen in for a fair share of abuse in connection with the non-passing of the Bill. He was very glad to have been the means of preventing the Bill from passing in its present shape, and he hoped the Council would never pass a Bill to give away such a reserve as was intended by this Bill to be virtually given away.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said the Hon. Mr. Johnson seemed to lay great stress on the

fact that Sir Robert Stout approved of the erection of this school, and that he approved of the borrowing of the money upon the terms upon which it had been obtained.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON said he had merely referred to the promise made by Sir Robert Stout, and to the fact that it was contained in the contract.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said that Sir Robert Stout had no power to go outside the law, and if he did so he could not in any way bind Parliament to carry out the agreement. Besides that, in the mortgage-deed it was clear enough that the only security was upon the rents and profits of the endowment held by the Board, and without power of sale. The Act of 1878 provided that there should be no power of sale. The 18th section of the Bill was word for word with what was provided in the Act of 1878, with the exception of three words slipped in at the end, and some half-dozen words which had been omitted. The three words slipped in were "the lands or," going before the words "the rents and profits." Then, the words which had been omitted were, "but without power of selling the freehold of such lands." It was quite clear that the Act of 1878 laid it down distinctly that no mortgage should be given over these lands with power of sale of the freehold. The Bill before the Council intended to reverse that portion of the Act, and give to the Board of Governors an opportunity of giving a mortgage over the freehold of the land, as well as over the rents and profits. Supposing the mortgage were to be given, what would be the result? With a revenue of £35 a year and interest amounting to £420 a year, what would be the result? From what sources would the governing body be enabled to pay their interest? If they were not in a position to pay their interest there was no question about it that the mortgagees would step into possession. The result would be that there would be such a hue and cry throughout Wellington, and such pressure brought to bear upon Parliament in order to get Parliament to find the money and take up the mortgage, that that would be done. It was not denied that that would be the result. If it was considered that there was an obligation on the part of the Government to pay this money, why did they not bring down a vote for the purpose of settling the whole matter? He did not say that there was a liability on the part of the colony to make up £4,700, or whatever the amount was—he rather thought there was no such obligation; but, if the Government were satisfied that there was an obligation, let them ask for a vote for the purpose, and not pass a Bill like that. It was merely a public deception, and, he should say, a public fraud, to introduce a Bill like that, knowing that the governing body had not the means of paying the interest on the money borrowed.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE would like to know whether the Government proposed in Committee to strike out the power of foreclosure sought to be given. The reason he was interested in

the measure was this: He was sure that the Girls' High School had been placed in the wrong position, and that some day, if £7,000 were borrowed on the reserve with the right of foreclosure, the security would be realised upon and the reserve would be lost. The Girls' High School had been built in a wrong part of the town. Rather less than one-third of the population of Wellington lived on the north side of Manners Street, whilst two-thirds lived on the southern side. The Girls' High School had been built at the extreme end of the town. He felt pretty certain that if the power of foreclosure were given the security would be realised upon, and the citizens of Wellington would lose the reserve. He did not agree with the Hon. Mr. Reynolds that in that case an agitation would be got up and that a vote would be put on the estimates to get over the difficulty. It was simply impossible to get a vote at all for the City of Wellington; therefore he felt bound to protect what Wellington had got. Already Wellington had lost its Hospital reserve, and he was afraid that a similar thing would occur in this case. He was quite willing to take the measure provided the right of foreclosure was excised. What was to be the future of the Girls' High School he did not know, but, if it was fit to live, in the meantime the fees must pay the interest on the mortgage. At the present time the fees were twelve guineas a head per annum, and, if necessary, they would require to be increased. There was an important reserve given by the Provincial Council to the Masonic body. That reserve was situated in the middle of the town. It was, however, mortgaged by the Freemasons for a comparatively small sum of money. The interest was not paid, and one fine day in walked the man who held the mortgage, and realised the security for a trifle, and the Masonic body lost the endowment. Such a thing might happen in this case if the site of the school proved unsuitable. He was not going to sit in his place in the Council and see the reserves of the colony made light of. He wanted to know from the Minister in charge of the Bill whether he proposed to strike out the right of foreclosure.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said he did not propose to strike out the power of sale. He would take the Bill as it stood.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN had not the slightest hesitation in voting against this Bill. He felt that it was necessary to show that the Council meant to stop such dealing with reserves. He hoped the Council would throw out the Bill until the measure was brought down without the right of foreclosure.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES said it appeared to him that it might be better if the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill would allow it to remain over for the present, and introduce the subject again at the next meeting of Parliament, which could not be far distant. It appeared to him that honourable members who objected to the Bill would agree to all its provisions with the exception of the power of sale. It seemed to him that that power was very objectionable, and that the Bill ought not to pass

*Hon. Dr. Grace*

containing it. He proposed to vote for the second reading of the Bill, as he did on the former occasion, but he would support the elimination of the power of sale from the clause when that clause came under consideration.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN would vote for the second reading for precisely the same reasons as had been stated by the Hon. Mr. Menzies, and he would follow exactly the same course with regard to the striking-out of the power of sale.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN said the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse had attached a good deal of blame to those who voted for the second reading of the Bill. He (Mr. Lahmann) was one of those who voted for the second reading, but it was also his intention to alter the clause so as to eliminate the power of sale. He had never been an enemy of Wellington interests. For the last fifteen or sixteen years, since he had been a member of the Council, he had always voted in the interests of Wellington as far as agreed with his duty.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said he was willing to allow the second reading to pass, as he saw that there was a majority of the Council in favour of the excision of the objectionable clause.

Amendment negatived, and Bill read a second time.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 18.—Power to Governor to borrow money.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS moved, That the words, "the lands or," in the 2nd subsection of the clause, be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

#### AYES, 10.

Bonar	Miller	Stevens
Grace	Richmond	Waterhouse
Hart	Shephard	Whitaker.
Johnson		

#### NOES, 14.

Barnicoat	Martin	Reynolds
Buckley	McLean	Scotland
Chamberlin	Menzies	Swanson
Dignan	Peter	Taiaroa.
Lahmann	Pharazyn	

#### PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Baillie.	Holmes.

Majority against, 4.

Words struck out.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS moved the addition of the following words at the end of the clause: "but without power of sale of the freehold of such land."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be added."

#### AYES, 10.

Buckley	McLean	Swanson
Chamberlin	Reynolds	Taiaroa.
Dignan	Scotland	Waterhouse.
Martin		

## NOES, 12.

Bonar	Lahmann	Pharazyn
Grace	Menzies	Richmond
Hart	Miller	Stevens
Johnson	Peter	Whitaker.

## PAIR.

For.	Against.
Holmes.	Baillie.

Majority against, 2.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported, with amendments, and read a third time.

## WANGANUI HARBOUR BILL.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN said the object of this Bill was to enable the Wanganui Harbour Board to levy a rate not exceeding one farthing in the pound on the value of property in the Counties of Wanganui and Waitotara, and three-eighths of a penny in the pound on the value of property in the Borough of Wanganui, as security for £30,000, which they proposed to borrow under the authority of the Harbours Act. They had authority to borrow £100,000, of which £60,000 had been raised and spent in improving the river and harbour. The Bill had been reported on favourably by the Local Bills Committee, and he would state, as briefly as possible, some of the facts and reasons which, he trusted, would induce the Council to agree to the second reading of the Bill. The Bill as introduced into the House of Representatives included the greater part, or, at any rate, a portion, of Rangitikei in the rateable area; but the rateable area now included only the Counties of Wanganui and Waitotara and the Borough of Wanganui. He was quite aware that many objections could be raised to the exclusion of Rangitikei, which apparently benefited as much as the other counties by the works for which they were proposed to be rated; but it had been found impossible to induce the people of Rangitikei and their representatives to allow that part of the country to be included, and therefore the promoters of the Bill had to content themselves with making the rating-area extend over those places he had mentioned. He must confess there was a good deal of reason to be found on the part of the Rangitikei people for wishing their county to be excluded, because the produce of that district now, to a large extent, went direct by rail to Wellington: at any rate, that was their contention. Whether it practically did go to the extent they maintained he could not say; but there was no doubt that that argument could be used by the Rangitikei people; and, if they were allowed to vote on this subject, they would vote almost unanimously against a rate. Under these circumstances a certain amount of rate was lost; but that was a very small proportion of the whole. It amounted to some £60 or £70 out of the £1,800; and a sufficient amount remained to pay the interest on the money proposed to be borrowed. Wanganui Harbour was in a somewhat peculiar position. Whereas it was originally proposed

to carry out the improvement of the harbour entirely out of the money raised, without imposing a rate, it was found that it was impossible to carry out the plans of the engineers beyond that portion of the work which really did not improve the harbour to any appreciable extent; for the harbour was now in this position: that, whereas £60,000 had been expended chiefly in improving the river, if a further sum of, at any rate, £15,000 was not spent in making a protecting-wall—a sort of breakwater—the whole £60,000, or a large amount of it, might be considered to be thrown away. It might be argued that this was only proposing to throw good money after bad; but the reports of the engineers were entirely favourable to the continuation of the work. They believed, if the work were continued to the extent of 900ft. or 1,000ft. more, they would be able to obtain a depth of 18ft. on the bar. The original proposal was to carry it out to a very much greater extent than that; but, as the engineers originally stated, they did not expect to obtain any great benefit from the works executed till they had reached a distance of 1,500ft. The distance now reached was about 900ft., and even at that a certain amount of improvement had been effected. There had been no failure in the predictions of the engineers as to what was likely to occur when only a portion of the work was completed. The engineer who was employed up to the time the works were stopped owing to the want of funds said,—

“From time to time a little of the stone that is stored adjacent to the spot for the purpose may be required to trim the southern face. There has been no subsidence whatever in the body of the wall, and none need be anticipated. With regard to the effect of the work done, although at times this is very marked from the upper end of the cliff to the outer end of the wall, still, as I have frequently pointed out, but little direct benefit in ordinary weather is obtained in increased depth on the bar. Mr. Stewart and myself, reporting in April, 1883, said, ‘This section of 900ft., although it would check the tendency of the channel to be carried through the North Spit in times of flood (which result is found to give a shallow bar), yet would not probably have much effect in deepening the bar.’ These opinions have been amply borne out by the results. Owing to the outer end of the wall being still within the adjacent low-water line, large quantities of sand are carried round the point by the incoming flood and deposited on the river-face of the work. In fine weather this will always be the case till the wall is carried out into deep water.”

There were some further details with which he would not trouble the Council. The Harbour-master had written as follows on the 1st December last:—

“The channel over the bar continues in the same position as last month, with a depth of 14ft. at high-water spring tides, and 11ft. at high-water neap tides. The South Spit has made considerably, and extends towards the end of the breakwater, making the channel

much narrower, and consequently deeper, than it has been for some time back."

That report, and others to the same effect, which he thought it would be only wearying the Council to go into, tended to show that the work was to a certain extent beneficial now; and when it was completed it would be likely to be more beneficial in the future, because it must not be forgotten that the engineers never expected any great benefit to arise till the work had been carried out to a distance of some 1,800ft. Messrs. Barr and Oliver, the original engineers, said,—

"The lengths between equal depths of water in the river-entrance and the ocean, as measured within the walls proposed, would be as follow:—

Low Water.	High Water.	Distance from Ocean to River.
10ft. ..	18ft. ..	1,800ft.
14ft. ..	22ft. ..	2,410ft.
20ft. ..	28ft. ..	3,450ft.
22ft. ..	30ft. ..	4,420ft.
24ft. ..	32ft. ..	4,800ft.

That is, that, with the formation of a channel 2,600ft. long, the largest class of vessels trading to the colony from Britain could enter the river at high water; or, with one 4,600ft. long, such could enter at any state of the tide."

That was an extract from the first report made by Messrs. Barr and Oliver. It would be seen that, with a sea-wall 1,800ft. in length, a depth of 18ft. at high water would be obtained. He knew it was a very common opinion, and had been expressed in petitions presented to the Council, that the depth of water would not be realised, that the money would be wasted, and that they might just as well stop the work where it was at present. His reply to that was this: that those opinions were simply the opinions of amateurs. There had not been a single engineer who had expressed an opinion contrary to those which he had read, and the whole of the objections were from persons who had no more knowledge of the matter than any member of the Council, further than they might have by going down to the works and looking at them in a cursory way. The persons in favour of the work were engineers competent to give an opinion, and those who were opposed to it did not pretend to have any professional opinion on the matter. They only said, on general grounds, that it was not likely to prove a success. He did not think any competent marine engineer would say that these undertakings must invariably be successful; but in this case he would say there was an extreme probability of this work being successful, and he would be prepared to say that, if the whole matter rested entirely with the Council, they would be justified in saying, "Let the work go on." But the real position was this: that it did not rest entirely with the Council, but with the people in the country who had to pay the rates. His contention was this: that the Council had no right to refuse to allow these people to have their choice of an almost useless harbour or submit to a rate which was not excessive, thus giving a fair

opportunity for a good port to be opened for a large extent of country. The people wished to make the harbour sufficient to allow ordinary vessels, such as the Union Company's steamers, and vessels of that class, to enter the Wanganui River. This would enable produce to be taken to Sydney and to different parts of the colony at a cheaper rate than at present. The cattle-trade was greatly injured owing to the small class of steamers which at present carried it on. The question involved in the Bill ought to be left to the ratepayers themselves to decide. Personally he was perfectly willing to pay his share of the rates, and he thought he would be paying something like one-fiftieth part of the whole rates. That showed the sincerity of his conviction that the request made in the Bill was a reasonable one. All that he asked the Council to do was simply to allow the locality concerned to exercise its choice in the matter. If a mistake were made it would fall on the locality, and if the undertaking was a success it would be an exceedingly good investment. He would willingly accept an amendment which was to be proposed with reference to the constitution of the Board. The object of the amendment was to give representation on the Board in proportion to the rating of the different sections of the country. Instead of leaving the counties less represented than Wanganui, it was proposed to place them on an equality. He was perfectly willing to accept that amendment, and he should be willing to accept any other reasonable amendment. He begged to move, *That the Bill be now read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN thought it was desirable to carefully consider how far they were going to allow these local bodies to go on borrowing. The Council was considering a little while ago the case of a Board which had borrowed money and expended it. They had then to strike a rate, and the rate had completely changed the opinions of a large section of the community, and now that they had got the money they were afraid to spend it. The district was not able to stand the drain. He thought, if this Bill were allowed to pass, they would have something of that state of things in Wanganui. The circumstances of these people were not such that they could stand the same rating-power now that they thought they could two or three years ago. The Harbour Board rates, the property-tax, and all the other rates were becoming a serious sum to collect. He would ask his honourable friend, who knew Wanganui, whether he could stand on that breakwater and tell the Council that if the Legislature did not authorise further expenditure any harm would occur to the breakwater. He had had the pleasure of spending a holiday at Wanganui, and he went down on to the breakwater; and, without any hesitation, he could say that no harm could take place to the breakwater as it at present stood. The further the breakwater was carried out the greater risk there was. He would be the last one to oppose borrowing for deepening harbours to let ships in. In this and other cases, however, there should

*Hon. Mr. Pharasym*

be some reconsideration of the borrowing-power before permitting any more Harbour Boards to borrow money. The honourable gentleman had quoted from reports of engineers with reference to large ships entering the river. He wondered, if those engineers were asked to rewrite that report, whether their opinions would not be modified. He thought they would to a very large extent. As for his honourable friend thinking that the expenditure of £40,000 would enable the Sydney steamers to call there, the honourable gentleman would be much disappointed with the result of the expenditure. Knowing the place as he did, he felt that there was not the slightest necessity for spending the money asked for in order to save what work had been done. It was quite the reverse. Like a great many things on which money was being spent, it was purely a matter of speculation. It would be speculation if they were to spend money in continuing the work out further. As to voting-power, he was very glad that his honourable friend had consented to make the alteration he had indicated. It was well known that in a scattered district votes were difficult to get in, whereas in the Borough of Wanganui everybody would vote, and the majority was sure to be in favour of the proposal, because the money would be spent there. It was as fair that Rangitikei should pay as any other place. The Bill now before the Council was not the Bill as published in Wanganui, because Rangitikei had been struck out. He hoped the Council would not pass the Bill. He moved, *That the Bill be read the second time that day six months.*

The Hon. Mr. HART thought it was only due to the persons interested in the passing of the Bill to state a few facts connected with it. As far as the pier outside the land had gone hitherto, it had had the effect, by the scour of the water, of deepening the water to 14ft.; but, when it got to the end of the pier, as the water spread out the sand caused the depth of water to decrease again. If, however, the pier were carried out 900ft. further, it would carry the scour down to a lower level, and a greater depth would be obtained, and the result would be to enable coasting-vessels of a larger size to enter; and that would be a great benefit to the district by cheapening the freight of produce to Sydney and other places. That was the object of those who sought to get the Bill passed. The Bill provided that there must be an absolute majority of the possible votes that could be given to approve of the loan being raised, before the loan could be raised. Under these circumstances it was apparent that it would be in the hands of the ratepayers to say whether they would have the Bill or not. The work was comparatively useless at present, and it required to be carried out further to insure a benefit to the district.

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND trusted the Council would not pass this Bill. It must be obvious that the operations in this harbour were in the highest degree speculative. He was not speaking from his own impressions only about the matter. He had the statement

of a settler at Wanganui who had resided in the district for thirty-five years. That gentleman had watched the work with interest, as he had been engaged in work of a similar kind on the east coast of England. He was a man well known in his day, and had had enormous operations to carry on; and his opinion was that the result was exceedingly doubtful, and that the works already done did not justify the very high hopes which had been expressed. It appeared that up to the present day the largest ship that had entered Wanganui was the vessel that brought the first settlers—a boat of 350 tons, which arrived in 1848. He trusted more time would be taken to learn what the prospects of the affair were, before the colony, in its present indebtedness and depression, allowed the local body to expend more money on the work. Before any such works were undertaken the colony ought to have had the best technical advice that England could afford as to whether the works should be proceeded with. He thought enough blunders had been made, and it was time that such things should be stopped.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said one honourable member had referred to the necessity for being careful as to how far they allowed the Board borrowing-powers for this work. They had already passed an Act authorising the Wanganui Harbour Board to borrow £100,000, and the Board had already expended some £70,000, and all that was wanted now was that they should have further taxing-powers so as to enable them to raise sufficient funds to complete the works. So that they were really asking for no further borrowing-powers. With reference to the works, he did not think there was any chance of any mishap happening to the training-wall. The blocks were peculiarly adapted for the work, and were very large. He was speaking from his own experience, having been at Wanganui during the session. When a member of the Government he had a good deal to do in connection with the papers relative to the Wanganui Harbour, and he must say he had not been quite satisfied that the work was a prudent one. That was what induced him to go there this session and examine the work for himself. He went on purpose to see it before the Bill came before the Council. He did not profess to be an engineer, but he thought that any one with eyes in his head could see at once that the work had really been satisfactorily carried out. The Harbour Board of Wanganui had made the same mistake that all other Harbour Boards had made in the colony, by commencing at the wrong end. He saw the training-wall that had been put up there. It was put up for about 90ft., and the Harbourmaster informed him that, so far, there was an extra depth of 4ft. He felt perfectly sure that if that wall were carried out another 90ft. there would be a depth of 18ft. or 20ft. Now, if that could be done it would be well to pass this Bill. He had no doubt of this himself, and he was not one who would advocate any scheme unless he thought it a proper one.

He had no interest in Wanganui at all, and, had it not been that he had had grave doubts of the propriety of going on with the works, he certainly would not have gone to Wanganui this session. So far as he could judge after seeing the Harbourmaster and seeing the work, his impression was that the training-wall ought to go out to somewhere about 270ft. in all. This would give about 23ft. depth at low water. He thought the depth would be 24ft. if the retaining-wall went out 270ft.: and he considered the Council would be doing wrong if they prevented the people of Wanganui from carrying out this work, inasmuch as they had to pay rates, or, rather, interest, on the £70,000 which they had borrowed, and unless they had facilities for borrowing the other £30,000 which they were authorised to borrow they would have reason to find fault with the Parliament and say, "We cannot pay our rates, or, rather, interest, because our works are not completed, and you have thrown obstacles in the way of completing these works by rejecting the Bill." He trusted the Council would think better of it, and that they would carry the second reading of the Bill without taking a division.

The Hon. Mr. HART would like to correct an erroneous impression on the part of the honourable gentleman who last spoke. The people in these counties were under no harbour rate whatever. The original authority to borrow was based on the security of property vested in the Board. This Bill proposed to give additional security, and gave power to impose a rate with the consent of the ratepayers.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said he would not have risen to speak on this Bill had it not been that he wished his action in reference thereto to be understood. He read the Bill when it was first introduced with great attention, and he read likewise the petitions which were sent in in reference to the Bill. It appeared to him that the petitions contained some weighty allegations. He had therefore turned up the report of the Select Committee to see what answer had been given to those allegations, and was astonished when he saw that the Committee had contented themselves with taking evidence in support of the Bill, and had taken no evidence from the other parties who had forwarded petitions. It appeared that the very object they had in view in sending the petitions had miscarried, and that the duty which devolved on the Committee they had certainly failed to perform by failing to record the evidence of some of those parties who were opposed to the measure. He did not profess to be able to give an opinion one way or the other as to the works; but he took his stand on this: that before passing the measure they should see they were doing no injustice to any person whatever. It did appear from the petitions he had alluded to that if they passed the Bill in its present shape they would be inflicting an injury on the parties who were presenting petitions; and, as no evidence had been called on the other side of the question, he should feel it his duty to vote against the Bill. With regard

*Hon. Mr. Reynolds*

to the exclusion of a portion of the district from the rateable area, it was quite clear that one portion had been taken and the other left without any idea of justice in the matter whatever. One was just as much entitled to be left as the other was, and one was just as much entitled to be taken as the other was. He thought there ought to be some clearing-up of this point; and they would be in a false position till then if they were to support this Bill. They did not give the discontented ratepayers the right of appeal. They were a Court of appeal, and they decided on the districts without giving those affected the opportunity of presenting themselves to a Committee of the Council and of stating what were the reasons why they prayed the Council to exclude them from the operation of the Act. His sense of the injustice to the ratepayers who were not consulted on the subject would necessitate his voting against the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT did not wish to argue this question or hear it argued on legal grounds. He intended to vote for the second reading of this Bill, and so intended not with a desire to impose a rate on the district, but because he wished to put the ratepayers in a position to impose a rate on themselves if they thought it to their own advantage to do so. With reference to country districts, he thought these would not receive so much benefit from the expenditure on the harbour — that the benefit would be chiefly confined to Wanganui itself; but the rates in Wanganui would be double in proportion to the rates from the country districts. As to taking the evidence of the petitioners, had there been any evidence the Committee would have taken it. The petitioners merely complained that the rating district was not large enough, and they wished parts of the country now excluded from the rateable district to be included in it.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON thought the statement which the Hon. Mr. Barnicoat had just made should have considerable weight. The complaint from these petitioners was, as the honourable member had mentioned, that the district which it was proposed to rate was too small. He thought it would be decidedly unjust to those districts which were now proposed to be rated were they to be the only ones to have to bear this burden. It had been pointed out that the Bill did not ask for larger borrowing-powers. It had those powers already, and it merely asked to have a further security for raising that loan. When this loan was proposed there were considerable reserves given for the purposes of this harbour, and there was no intention whatever of rating the freehold property. The proposal now before them seemed to him not to be a right one. So far as he could learn, the works which had been already done were not a success; certainly the channel of the river was not so good as it had been. One honourable member had mentioned that he had been there this session. He had also been there, and coming up the river the captain of the boat remarked to this effect: "There was no difficulty in getting over the bar; the

difficulty was in going up the river;" and from what he (Mr. Johnson) saw that was so. The channel was a most tortuous one, and apparently there were a number of places where the captain felt a great anxiety in passing, although the boat would not be drawing a great draught. From what he had seen elsewhere he should doubt whether the expenditure of additional money in the manner now proposed would be at all a success. There must be great risk about it; and, seeing the difficulties of the settlers in the district, and that this district was a very limited one—far too limited, he thought, in fairness—and seeing there was a great doubt as to whether the works, in the end, would be anything like a success, he certainly thought it would be better to postpone the question for the present, and he should vote against the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR would just like to say that his sympathies were naturally very much with these small harbours, and he did not think it was fair to judge of them when the works were only partly executed. The Council was told that the works would require to be carried out 900ft. or 1,000ft. before the expected benefits could be reached. In his report on the harbour Sir John Coode said no attention was to be paid to the alterations until his scheme had been considered. It could not be expected that a moderate expenditure would cause great results. He was inclined to assist this Board, more especially as they had given assistance to other Boards to carry out their works. He thought the question that had been raised by the last speaker was a very serious one indeed—that was, that the district to be rated was not a fair one, and that the ratepayers were not to contribute alike. He thought, therefore, this matter should stand over for the present at all events, and that would be his reason for voting against the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN said the objection to the rating-area was no doubt a very important one. He was perfectly free to admit that, as a matter of strict justice, a portion of Rangitikei ought to have been included. But some time ago—as long ago as 1885—a compromise was arrived at between the different parties representing the districts proposed to be rated, and they settled that the line, so far as Rangitikei was concerned, should be drawn at the Turakina River. That portion of the area, however, had been struck out in the other House, as he had explained in introducing the measure. It was estimated that £65 Os. 8d. would be lost by the change in the districts. The other districts were as follow: Wanganui Borough, which was estimated to contribute £781; the County of Wanganui, £590; and the County of Waitotara, £584. It seemed to him that a still greater injustice would be inflicted on these people by refusing to allow them the opportunity of rating themselves, notwithstanding the amount of injustice they now suffered from. He would next refer to what had been said by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse as to the Committee having only taken evidence on one

side. He was not desirous of defending the members of the Committee, but he would point out that the reason they did not take evidence on the other side was that there was no evidence to take; they could get no more from the petitioners than what appeared in their petitions. Reference had been made to the report of a pupil of Mr. John Rennie. No doubt he was an engineer, but he was not a marine engineer; and he (Mr. Pharazyn) thought that gentleman had always taken a very strong prejudice on this question; and, as to his competency to judge, he might mention that some years ago the river broke out on the opposite side of the east sandbank, which enabled a harbour to exist in Wanganui at all. That gentleman considered it was advisable to let that opening remain, and to allow the river at Wanganui to form a new channel. It was obvious to any one gifted with common-sense, without being an engineer, that had this been done the whole thing would have gone into a variety of channels. In 1879 there was only a depth of 7ft. 4in., while in 1886 there was a depth of 12ft. 10in. It was perfectly true, as had been stated by the Hon. Mr. Reynolds, that the Harbour Board made a great mistake in beginning at the wrong end. He had a calculation which showed that the rates to be raised would amount to £1,956. The following was a return showing the probable proceeds of the rate proposed to be levied on the Borough of Wanganui and Counties of Wanganui and Waitotara:—

	Valuation.	Rate.	Proceeds.
	£		£ s. d.
Wanganui Borough ...	500,000	3d.	781 5 0
Wanganui County ...	506,855	3d.	590 9 5
Waitotara County ...	561,373	3d.	584 15 3
			<hr/> £1,956 9 8

By the repayment of the £10,000 loan from the Insurance Department the Board would be relieved of the interest on that sum, amounting to £650 per annum. By a recent revision of the scale of wharfage charges the Board's ordinary revenue had been increased so as to meet all ordinary expenditure, which included interest on existing loans. The interest at 5 per cent. and sinking fund of 1 per cent. on £30,000 would require a sum of £1,800 annually—an amount fully covered by the proposed rate, irrespective of the surplus the Board would enjoy by the repayment of the Insurance loan. The feeling of a considerable number of the Wanganui people—he was speaking of both the country and the town—was that they would rather pay a certain amount of rate than see the work useless. The work had cost less than works of that class generally did. The breakwater had been exposed to two or three winters, and it had been exposed in an unfinished state to the heavy seas, and, practically, no damage had been done. Taking all these things into consideration, he hoped the Council would agree to the second reading of the Bill and would finally pass it through Committee.

The Council divided on the question, "That

the word 'now,' proposed to be omitted, stand part of the question."

AYES, 7.

Barnicoat	Lahmann	Reynolds
Buckley	Pharazyn	Shephard.
Hart		

NOES, 18.

Bonar	Martin	Stevens
Chamberlin	McLean	Swanson
Dignan	Menzies	Wahawaha
Grace	Miller	Waterhouse
Johnson	Peter	Whitaker
Mantell	Richmond	Williams.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Baillie	Holmes
Kenny.	Peacock.

Majority against, 11.

Amendment agreed to, and Bill ordered to be read the second time that day six months.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to eleven o'clock p.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

*Monday, 19th December, 1887.*

First Readings—Education Reserves—Land Bill—Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at eleven o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### FIRST READINGS.

Building Societies Bill, Tamaki West Licensing District Bill.

### EDUCATION RESERVES.

Mr. SMITH wished to ask the Minister of Education if he was in a position to give a reply to the question which he put to him on Saturday with regard to the sale of certain education reserves.

Mr. FISHER said he had made inquiry into the matter, and had ascertained that so far back as May, 1886, application was made by the Wellington School Commissioners to the Government for funds to enable them to pay rates on certain secondary-education reserves. Many subsequent similar applications were made. To these requests the Government consistently replied that they had no funds for such a purpose. The next stage, as was now generally known, was that certain education reserves had been announced to be sold by public auction in order to pay these rates; but the singular part of the whole proceeding was that the reserves announced to be sold were reserves for primary education: that was to say, reserves for primary education were to be compulsorily sold by public auction to pay the rates on secondary-education reserves. The honourable member was aware that the question was put to him (Mr. Fisher) late on Saturday, after all the Government officials had left

the public offices, and there was no time to ascertain why these particular reserves had been announced to be sold by auction. But that information he would obtain in the course of the day, and would inform the honourable gentleman in regard to it.

Mr. SMITH asked the Minister of Education if he would be good enough to state what were the names of the School Commissioners who had taken action in the matter.

Mr. FISHER said the School Commissioners for the Wellington District were Mr. J. R. Blair (Chairman), Mr. C. P. Powles, Mr. Marchant (Commissioner of Crown Lands), Mr. Mason, Mr. Ballance, and Mr. W. H. Warren (Secretary).

Mr. ORMOND would point out that the School Commissioners had plenty of funds with which to pay these rates, and had full powers to disburse moneys in any way the law required.

Mr. SMITH asked whether the Minister of Education intended to stop this sale.

Mr. FISHER pointed out to the honourable member for Napier that the correspondence related to an application by the School Commissioners to the Government for funds to enable them to pay the rates levied on secondary-education reserves, and the Government replied that they had no funds for such a purpose. Then came the announcement of the sale of certain reserves by public auction, and the discovery that the reserves announced to be sold were primary-education reserves. In reply to the honourable member for Woodville, he might state that he certainly thought the sale ought to be stopped; and immediate inquiry would be made with that object.

Mr. TURNBULL would like to know if the School Commissioners assigned any reason for selling primary-education reserves to pay rates on secondary-education reserves.

Mr. FISHER said that, so far as one could gather from the correspondence, the reserves appeared to have been abandoned to their fate.

Mr. IZARD asked if the Minister of Education would state what was the amount of rates against the reserves in question.

Mr. FISHER said that, so far as he could gather, there was an amount of £54 odd claimed by the Masterton County Council, and £35 odd by the local body at Alfredton. He did not know whether there were any other claims against the reserves. The claims began in the year 1886.

Mr. COWAN would like to draw the Minister's attention to the fact that not only public reserves seemed to be at the mercy of local bodies, but private property was in the same position. Very serious injustice was done under the present system. The Southland County Council, for instance, a few weeks ago, advertised about a hundred sections for sale for non-payment of rates. Some of these properties belonged to private individuals, some were public bodies' endowments, and some reserves for educational purposes. He thought the attention of the Government should be strongly drawn to the fact, and that the power



of sale for non-payment of rates should be very much modified. In the present case, for instance, if the matter had not been brought under the attention of the Government the sale would have proceeded; and he therefore hoped the Government would fully consider the whole subject so far as dealing with these public reserves was concerned; and he also thought that, in the interests of justice, there should be some different provision as to the sale of private property for the non-payment of rates. The matter was a very important one, and it was exceedingly fortunate it had been brought up. He moved the adjournment of the House.

Mr. BEETHAM was aware that in the Wairarapa District there were many reserves which had long been a block to settlement, and the settlers adjoining those reserves were put in a very disadvantageous position, because they were not able to get any assistance towards fencing; the rabbit-rates were not paid in respect to the reserves, nor were the ordinary rates paid to the local bodies. It seemed there was no legal power of sale, and yet he presumed the Registrar had taken legal advice on the matter. He was very glad attention had been drawn to it.

Mr. TAYLOR thought the honourable member for Masterton must have made some mistake; because, if reserves were blocking settlement, their being sold by auction would soon remove that obstacle. He thought the facts that had been brought to light showed that the trustees of these reserves greatly neglected their duty by allowing public property to be drifted about in this manner, and the sooner they were put under some different management the better for every one. The remarks that had been made absolutely proved that it was imperatively necessary that something should be done about the management of these reserves, for they were being managed in a monstrous way now. Those who had the control of these properties were greatly neglecting their duty in not using them so as to carry out the purposes of the trust. He trusted the Government would take some decided stand, and would cause those who did not properly administer the properties to retire from the trusts.

Dr. NEWMAN said the question of dealing with education reserves in this province had been a burning one for many years; but it was now in process of solution, because, under the recently-passed Public Bodies' Leaseholds Act, sufficient power was given to beneficially deal with reserves. Under that Act the College Governors had been able to lease a considerable number of their reserves in the Wairarapa advantageously. As to the Education Board's reserves, there would be no difficulty in leasing them at a very early period. These reserves could not be leased formerly except at ruinously low rates: in fact, he had known of one case in which a lease had been granted for twenty-one years at one penny per acre; and he thought such bargains as that should not be allowed at all. All the reserves in the Wairarapa could now be let at a satisfac-

tory price, and thus any block to settlement removed. There was one difficulty in the way, however, with the Education Board. There was a large reserve close to those which had been about to be sold for rates, which belonged to the College Governors, who had no money to survey or they could let it easily; and if they could get an advance to pay for the survey it could be let within the next eighteen months at a good rate. And in the case of the primary-education reserves, assuming they were surveyed they could now be easily let, and their rents would reduce the cost of education to the Government.

Mr. ORMOND said the remarks that had been made seemed to show a general condemnation of the School Commissioners for not performing their duties properly, as they had full power to do. The facts that had been stated certainly showed a great amount of laxity on their part, and he hoped means would be taken to compel them to attend to their duties. He would point out that the Crown Lands Commissioner was usually the Chairman of the body having control of these reserves, and it was his duty to bring under the notice of the Board any claims against the property, and it was then the duty of the Board to provide for those claims out of the funds at their disposal—nothing could be more simple. He supposed the Commissioner was the Chairman here, and he hoped it would be distinctly ascertained whether the Commissioner had done his duty in this respect, and on whom the blame rested. If these complaints were substantiated it would show that the Government ought to take steps to put the management of the reserves in the hands of gentlemen who would better administer them.

Mr. FISHER said he was glad to hear the remarks of the honourable member for Napier, for he must admit that the apathy of the Wellington School Commissioners in this matter had greatly surprised him. The remarks of the honourable member for Masterton and the honourable member for Hokonui opened out a much wider view of the question. Those remarks were worthy of, and would receive, the best consideration of the Government.

Mr. SMITH said he had brought the matter under notice partly because the reserves in question were situated in the district he represented, and, quite naturally, he did not wish to see them disposed of in the manner proposed. It appeared that the Commissioners had let the rates for the secondary reserves go by default, and the local body was virtually seizing the primary reserves to pay the rates on secondary reserves. The same Commissioners had control of both, and he supposed that under the law the local body presumed they had this power. He hoped the Government would fully consider and deal with this important matter.

Mr. BEETHAM said he had made no charge against the Commissioners, but he condemned the system. He knew the Commissioners had hitherto been unable to lease some of their re-

serves, and they had now no power to sell as they had some years ago.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

#### LAND BILL.

A message was received from the Legislative Council stating that the Council had passed the Land Bill, with certain amendments, in which they requested the concurrence of the House of Representatives.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON moved, That the amendments be agreed to, except the striking-out of clauses 38 and 34 of the Bill as it passed the House, and the insertion of a new clause 34; and that Mr. Beetham, Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie, and the mover be appointed a Committee to draw up reasons for such disagreement. The Council had struck out the provisions for electing Land Boards, and had made provision for abolishing Land Boards altogether, as was proposed by the Bill when first introduced.

Mr. SEDDON moved that the name of Mr. O'Callaghan be added to those to be appointed to draw up reasons for disagreeing with the amendments made by the Council in this Bill.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON thought three was the number ordinarily appointed, and if there were too many the business would not be got through so quickly as otherwise.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN wished to know whether the Minister would take into consideration the excision of subsection (7) of clause 26 as a matter for disagreement with the amendments of the Council. That subsection provided that renewal of education reserve leases should be subject to the approval of the Minister. He thought the House would like to see that subsection retained.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said there had been so much feeling in connection with this matter that he had not thought it wise to reopen it by objecting to this amendment.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN said there had been a good deal of feeling over the Waste Lands Boards question also.

Sir J. VOGEL asked if the House was to understand that the Minister disapproved of the amendment made by the Council with regard to Land Boards, because he understood that the amendment made by the Council was supported by both members of the Government in that Chamber.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said he was not responsible for what took place in another Chamber. The Waste Lands Boards clause as passed by the House had been thrown out by a very large majority in the other Chamber. He understood the figures were 20 to 5.

Sir J. VOGEL said it was rather a strange thing, especially coming from the Government, which boasted that its members always voted together, that in the other Chamber the two Ministers should have supported this amendment. It seemed to indicate that the amendment was made with the consent and connivance of the Government. Yet here the Government were proposing to object to that amendment.

*Mr. Beetham*

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON thought the honourable gentleman was hardly justified in using the expression "connivance" in regard to this matter, and he would point out that the members of the Government in the other Chamber had voted for the Bill as it was introduced into this Chamber, although in this House the Government had to accept the amendments made by the House.

Sir J. VOGEL said there could be no doubt that the members representing the Government in another Chamber voted for and accepted the amendment made by the Council in this clause. As to connivance of the Government, if there was no proof of it, it was a reasonable supposition. He had simply raised the point because, if the House meant to insist on its decision, it would probably be well to appoint Managers who were strong upon the point. For his own part he thought the Land Boards should be retained.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN moved, That this House does also disagree with the amendment made by the Legislative Council in striking out subsection (7) of clause 26. He had no desire to enter into the reasons, for the matter had been thoroughly threshed out. But he thought there was a considerable majority in favour of the position that was taken up.

The House divided on Mr. O'Callagan's amendment.

#### AYES, 19.

Beetham	Levestam	Steward, W. J.
Buxton	Moss	Turnbull
Cadman	Ormond	Walker.
Cowan	Reeves, R. H. J.	
Duncan	Seddon	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	Seymour	Fitzherbert
Lance	Smith	O'Callaghan.

#### NOES, 53.

Allen	Graham	Peacock
Anderson	Grimmond	Perceval
Atkinson	Hislop	Reeves, W. P.
Barron	Izard	Richardson, E.
Blake	Jackson	Richardson, G.
Brown	Jones	Ross
Bruce	Kerr	Samuel
Buchanan	Lawry	Stewart, W. D.
Carroll	Loughrey	Taylor
Dodson	Mackenzie, M.	Thompson, R.
Feldwick	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson, T.
Fergus	McGregor	Vogel
Fisher	McKenzie, J.	Ward
Fish	Mitchelson	Whyte
Fitchett	Moat	Wilson.
Fraser	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fulton	O'Connor	Marchant
Goldie	Parata	Tanner.

Majority against, 34.

Mr. O'Callaghan's amendment negatived.

Motion agreed to.

Subsequently, the following reasons were brought up by the Managers for disagreeing with the amendments made by the Legislative Council:—

"(1.) That the change in the constitution of the Boards was approved by a large majority of the House of Representatives.

"(2.) That a system of elective Land Boards brings the working of the Lands Department under the review and control of the public, the proceedings of the Land Boards being open to the public and the Press.

"(3.) That a Commissioner would be subject to pressure difficult to withstand except by the assistance and advice of a Board, and that a Minister holding extreme views could administer the Land Act partially except for such a check, the Commissioner being his servant, and subject to dismissal by him.

"(4.) That the local knowledge of the members of a Board as to the requirements of settlement and the prices of land is invaluable.

"(5.) That a feeling of security is engendered by selectors knowing that in the Boards they have a Court of appeal from arbitrary decisions of a Government official."

The following reasons were subsequently received from the Legislative Council for insisting on the amendments:—

"(1.) That the amendments disagreed with were carried by a large majority of the Legislative Council.

"(2.) That, as the Commissioner would, by subsection (6) of clause 34, have to exercise his functions in the mode prescribed to the Board, publicity would be the same in the one case as in the other.

"(3.) That the tendency of elective Land Boards is to weaken the responsibility of Government in matters of land-administration.

"(4.) That the Commissioners have in all cases sufficient knowledge to enable them to judge as to the requirements, and the prices of land.

"(5.) That the feeling of security in the decision of the Commissioner would be strengthened by the knowledge that he is not controlled by local influences, more especially as there will be a right of appeal direct to the Government against any arbitrary decision of the Commissioners.

"(6.) That in several instances the expenses of the Boards are out of proportion to the returns of revenue, and in the interests of economy the change made by the Council is desirable."

On the motion of Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON, it was resolved not to agree with such reasons; and it was ordered that a Free Conference be asked for: Messrs. M. J. S. Mackenzie, Beetham, and G. F. Richardson to be Managers on behalf of the House.

#### SUPPLY.

The House went into Committee of Supply.

#### CONSOLIDATED FUND.

##### CLASS V.—EDUCATION.

Vote, £360,624.

Mr. FISHER.—As this vote relates to a very large and important question, in which the people of the colony generally feel a keen interest, I desire to express the hope that the discussion upon which we are about to enter may be approached in an impartial and dis-

passionate spirit. In order to eliminate from the discussion one contentious element, I desire to explain, with regard to the Order in Council to which such frequent reference has been made, that that Order was issued as an answer to hundreds of applications for information forwarded by every educational institution and every educational authority in the colony. No step has been taken, and no step is proposed to be taken, under that Order, until this House, by its vote, shall have expressed its decision on the whole question. Having given that explanation, I hope the House will eliminate from the discussion any discordant feeling which may have arisen in consequence of the issue of the Order in Council. Now, I desire to place the proposals of the Government before the Committee in the plainest possible form; and I may explain that the discussion is taken in Committee in preference to being taken in the House for the reason that it will give members an opportunity of expressing their opinions upon the specific points raised in a way in which they could not have been expressed in a restricted debate in the House. I shall explain to the Committee in short form what the proposals of the Government are, and I will ask honourable gentlemen to make a note of each proposal as I proceed, for that will facilitate the discussion upon the several points, and will avoid frequent requests for information upon those points as the discussion advances. The proposals, then, are these: By raising the school-age to six we anticipate that a reduction of about 8 per cent. on the total educational expenditure would result. We should save, say, from £26,000 to £30,000. We can only put it approximately, because there is a difficulty, as honourable members are aware, in ascertaining the exact number of children under six attending the schools. That is the first proposal. The second proposal is to take away the 4s. capitation at present paid, which will mean a further saving of about £16,000. The late Government, it will be remembered, had already taken 1s., and we propose to take the other 4s. That means a further reduction of £16,000. The third proposal is to substitute the principle of "strict average" for the principle of "working average" in making out the returns. That change, I anticipate, will result in a further saving of £8,000. The fourth proposal is not to renew the vote of £8,000 for the training of teachers which appears annually on the estimates. That is the vote for the maintenance of the training colleges, or normal schools as they are called, in the different education districts. Having thus clearly placed the proposals of the Government before the Committee, we propose to give the Committee an opportunity of voting separately upon each. To give that opportunity any member of the Committee on either side of the House may submit a proposal to reduce the total vote by £5. The first discussion will be taken on the question of raising the school-age; and, if a resolution to reduce the vote by £5 is carried, that will be accepted

as indicating the decision of the Committee that the school-age is not to be raised. Then the Committee will be invited to make a second and further reduction of £5 on the total vote, and if that is carried the resolution will be taken to mean that the capitation of 4s. is not to be withdrawn.

An Hon. MEMBER.—How can we show that we wish a shilling taken off each year?

Mr. FISHER.—We do not propose a gradual reduction at all. If the Committee desires the reduction to be gradual, there will be no difficulty in making that clear by a subsequent distinct proposal to that effect. We shall have no difficulty in dealing with that point when we reach it. Next, if the Committee objects to the substitution of the principle of "strict average" for "working average," it will carry a resolution for a further reduction of £5. As to the fourth proposal, if the Committee objects to the abolition of the training colleges, it will reduce the total vote by a further sum of £5. Thus there are marked out four distinct stages. I propose that the discussion shall, so far as is possible, be restricted to the consideration of the particular questions in the order in which I have named them. I make these suggestions in the interests of the Committee itself, because the Committee will better understand while discussing one subject that the others have to come on in the order in which they will be put.

Mr. W. P. REEVES said it was understood that, if the school-age were raised to six years, certain provision would be made to prevent the change falling heavily on country schools.

Mr. FISHER.—I will explain all that in due course. With regard to the question of raising

the school-age, possibly many honourable members have not yet had an opportunity of reading the evidence given before the Education Committee. I do not propose to read any of that evidence, or even to discuss it, but I propose to put before the Committee the net results of the investigations of that Committee as far as they have gone, and I shall state briefly the opinions of some most experienced men—gentlemen of high educational standing in this colony—who have forwarded to the Education Committee their opinions generally upon the subject of education. The answers given by experts in regard to the question of raising the school-age to six numbered thirty-nine. Of the thirty-nine, twenty were in favour of raising the school-age, sixteen were against it, and three offered no opinion at all. Of course it is fair to analyse these opinions, and it is fair also to say that, while twenty witnesses, principally School Inspectors, were in favour of the age being raised, the sixteen against are mainly gentlemen interested in the maintenance of the system as it is. I should mention that all these gentlemen have given opinions upon other questions submitted to them by the Education Committee, and, as their opinions, being the opinions of experts, are interesting and valuable, I presume I need make no apology for placing them before the House. In addition to being interesting and valuable, they also show how diversified are the views of those best qualified to express opinions upon the question how and in what manner retrenchment should be effected. The names of the witnesses, their opinions, and their educational standing are as follow:—

Name of Person or Board.	As to raising School-age to Six Years.	In favour of	As to Payment of Fees for higher Standards.	Suggestions for Retrenchment.
*Mr. Hodson, Insp., Nelson and Marl.	Yes	...	Yes	Cannot suggest.
*Mr. O'Sullivan, Insp., Auckland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Sweep away with Boards.
*Mr. Sullivan, Insp., Westland	Yes	Yes	No	Abolish Boards. Reduce number of Inspectors; make them inspect only.
*Mr. McDonald, Waitaki Br. Ed. In., Otago	Yes	...	No	Abolish either Boards or Committees.
*Mr. Gibson, Grad. Lond. Univ., Taran.	Yes	Yes	No	General education in all parties, however, grants to Committees.
*Dr. Brown, Chairman Ed. Board, Otago	Yes	Yes	No	Abolish Boards. Reduce number of Inspectors. Enlarge districts. Larger classes for teachers.
*Mr. Houghton, Insp., North Canterbury	Yes	Yes	No	Reorganize classes. Reduce number of subjects in smaller schools. Abolish Boards.
*Mr. Wood, Insp., Christchurch	Yes	Yes	Yes for Standards V. and VI.	Mediate savings over £139. Country Committees to have larger districts, each Committee to have charge of several schools.
*Mr. Fidler, Insp., Auckland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Abolish Committees and Boards. Reduce numbers of members. Advertise in Gazette.
*Mr. Murray, Insp., New Plymouth	...	No	No	Abolish inspection and examinations to be done by department; salaries on fixed scale.
Mr. Anderson, Insp., North Canterbury	...	No	No	Abolish Boards. Equalize districts. Local contributions to buildings. School-buildings to be a burden on reserves.
*Mr. Petrie, Insp., Naseby	Yes	Yes	No	Change in duties of Insp.; place under Dept. Districts to bear part cost of buildings.
*Mr. Robinson, Greymouth	Yes	Yes	Uncertain	Abolish Boards and limit powers of Committees.
*Mr. Gammell, R.A., Southland	Yes	Yes	No	Small rate, not to exceed 1s. per child.
*Mr. Smith, Sec. Ed. Board, Hokitika	Yes	No	No	No suggestion.
*Mr. Veale, Ed. Board, Taranaki	Yes	Yes in populous districts	...	No suggestion.
*Mr. Brown, Sec. Ed. Board, Wanganui	...	No	Small fee above Stand. IV.	Inspectors and teachers to be under department. Uniform rates of salaries.
*Mr. Whitelaw, Hon. Sec., Taranaki	...	No	No	Plans of buildings to be made by a central architect.
*Mr. Just, Hon. Sec., N. Cant. Teach. Inst.	...	No	No	Percentage reduction on grants for primary, secondary, and higher education, and general cost of working Act.
*Mr. Purdie, Sec., Wellington Ed. Inst.	...	No	No	Reduce capitation-grant. Reduce vote for school-buildings.
*Mr. White, Pres., Otago Ed. Inst.	...	No	Above Stand. IV. Scholarships to be provided	No school-books at Government expense. "Teas" and prizes not to be provided by Government. Abolish schools for separate sexes in country districts. No grants to secondary schools. Fix rate of maximum expenditure per scholar in small schools.
*Mr. Cowles, Hon. Sec., Nelson Dist. Teach. Association	...	Yes	No	Abolish training-schools. Place Inspectors under the department.
Mr. G. Hulke, Newtown, Wellington	Will not state	Yes	No	Not given.
*Mr. Pryde, Sec. Ed. Office, Dunedin	Yes	Yes	No	Combine small schools.
*Mr. Hahn, Hon. Sec., Southland Ed. Inst.	...	No	No	Combine grants. Abolish Committees. Smaller districts to Boards. Local rate for buildings. Elective Boards. Inspectors under department.
*Mr. Aitken, Pres., S. Cant. Ed. Inst.	...	No	No	Abolish present capitation-grant. Make fresh regulations for salaries, &c. Parliament to vote sums for scholarships.
Mr. Neill, Sec., Ed. Board, Southland	...	No	No	Enlarge school districts. Place teachers on Civil Service list, with colonial scale of salaries.
*Mr. Murdoch, Hon. Sec., Canterbury	...	No	No	Abolish Boards and Committees, and make Education Department do the work.
Midland Chairman	Not given	Yes	Not given	School-buildings to be partly paid for by districts.
*Mr. Kelly, Chairman, Ed. Bd., N. Plym.	Yes	Yes	Only Stand. VI.	Reduce Boards. No allowance to Committees. No State aid to secondary schools and colleges. Inspectors to be under Dept. Abolish scholarships and district high schools.
*Mr. Taylor, Insp., Dunedin	...	No	No	Teachers to examine and classify scholars in Standards I. to IV.; Inspectors, V. and VI.
*Mr. P. Goyen, Ed. Office, Dunedin	...	No	No	Reduce capitation allowance on children under seven and over thirteen.
*Mr. Matheson, Sec., Wanganui Branch Ed. Inst.	...	Yes	No	Merge all reserves into reserves for primary educ. Dispende with High School Boards.
*Mr. Rice, Sec., Ed. Board, Auckland	Yes	Yes	No	Make savings in salaries of staff. Reduce capitation-grant.
Rev. W. Tabbs, Auckland	Yes	Yes	No	Discourage small schools.
Rev. G. Barclay, Timaru	No	No	Not given	None given.
*Mr. Worthington, Wellcom. Str. Sch., Au.	Not given	No	Yes	None given.
*Mr. Mowbray, Wellington	Yes	Yes	Yes, over St. VI.	No.
*Mr. Stead-Elles, Sec., Ed. Office, Nelson	Yes	Yes	No	No.
*Mr. Goodwin, Insp., Auckland	Yes	Yes	...	No.

† School Teachers' Associations—against.

\* School Inspectors—in favour of.

Now, Sir, in discussing the question of raising the school-age it has to be remembered that the children enter the school at five years, and, as a rule, they pass the First Standard at about nine years. Therefore the question which the country as well as this Committee has to consider is this: Is the country in a position to pay for a period of four years £4 a head for somewhere between forty and fifty thousand children while they are passing through a number of infantile exercises which do not advance them very much in any proper scholastic sense? I think it a sufficient demand upon the resources of the country that it should be asked to begin to pay this £4 a head at six years of age. We have the opinion of Dr. Brown, Chairman of the Otago Education Board, that it is positively injurious to the physical system of the children that they should be sent to school at this early age; but, he says, being Chairman of an Education Board, "we are interested in getting them into the schools for the purpose of obtaining the funds. Therefore," he says, "I do not speak so strongly as I otherwise would about the necessity of keeping these children from the schools." That is refreshingly candid. One sees plainly that, while these gentlemen—medical men as well as educational experts—hold these rigid opinions in regard to the necessity of preserving the physical systems of the children, their view is modified or altogether obliterated by the other consideration that the Boards want the money which the presence of these children produces. I come now to the point raised by the honourable member for Nelson. He wishes to know whether we intend to carry out the proposal that a pupil who has passed the Sixth Standard shall not continue to be educated at the public expense. I may say that I was not aware, until I assumed the office of Minister of Education, that there was a Seventh Standard taught in the public schools. The common impression throughout the country is that the standards end at Standard VI.; but the Education Report for the year shows that there are 1,667 pupils in the public schools who are in a Seventh Standard, and that the cost to the country of their education in that standard is about £7,000. It is therefore a question for Parliament to consider, whether these pupils should obtain this higher education gratuitously and at the cost of the country. I hold that it was never intended they should. Why, I have learned from reading some Inspectors' reports that the headmasters of certain schools are not engaged in teaching Standards I., II., III., IV., V., or VI. They are exclusively engaged in teaching Standard VII., while the rest of the school is neglected. Now, I am quite aware that, in connection with the education of children of tender years, the kindergarten system is highly approved by men like Professor Huxley and Matthew Arnold, and I should like to see some such system introduced into this country. And while speaking upon this branch of the subject I should like to mention that,

*Mr. Fisher*

while I am not in favour of denominational education, it is a singular thing that one religious body—the Anglican Synod of Auckland—should be in a position to offer to educate all our children of tender years at a cost of 80s. per head per annum. Now, if that can be done, is it right that we should be asked to pay £4 per head per annum for children five years of age? I think this is the proper place to mention, in connection with this proposal to raise the school-age, that the Government give an undertaking that no country school shall be closed in consequence of the adoption of this proposal, should it be carried. We give that distinct undertaking. The Government will provide whatever money may be necessary: but, at the same time, I think the expense of these schools might be very considerably reduced if female teachers were appointed, as is the case in many other countries. I do not think it at all necessary to employ high-class teachers for the work of going through the infantile training of these young children. Now I have said all I have to say in regard to the first of our proposals. I come now to the second: the proposed reduction of 4s. in the capitation. In discussing this, or any other proposal which touches the cost of the education system, I hold that Parliament is bound, as a matter of right, to take into consideration that large proportion—one-seventh of the population—who labour under a serious disadvantage because they are unable to avail themselves of our educational system. It is our duty to make that disadvantage as light as possible by reducing the cost so long as we take care not to weaken or lessen the efficiency of the system. That is the point which I have to urge in regard to the necessity for making reductions. Common justice demands that we should have some regard for the feelings of that large section of the community who, on conscientious grounds, object to avail themselves of our education system, and who object to the high rate of expenditure incurred in keeping it up. That is the position. On the one hand stand a large and important section of the community who quite rightfully demand that the cost of the educational system, from which they derive no benefit, shall be minimised. On the other hand stand a great and influential scholastic guild who regard education, and the education system, as a fetish to which ought else should be sacrificed. But, Sir, above and beyond all this, we have to consider the interests of the taxpayer as a whole. It will be the aim and object of this Government, as much as it was the aim and object of any Government which preceded it, to maintain the efficiency of the education system; but at the same time I say that, taking into consideration the financial condition of the country, we are bound to see whether any reductions can be made without weakening or breaking down the system. We say such reductions can be made. I hear an honourable member, in an undertone, say, "Show us how this can be done." In answer

to that, I say that it hardly devolves upon the Government now to show how that can be done, for it has already been done by several Education Boards in the colony. The Hawke's Bay Education Board has frequently made known its willingness and its ability to carry on the education system at a less amount than the sum now voted. The Auckland Education Board has also frequently discussed the question of making reductions; and on a recent occasion it voluntarily showed a reduction in its expenses to the extent of £1,000. But there is a Board in the colony, the name of which I do not care to give, which shows, by its own estimates, that on its ordinary maintenance account it will have in December, 1887—at the end of the present year—a surplus balance of £5,601 13s. 4d. Indeed, the difficulty with some Boards has been how to spend their surplus money, and some of them have spent it in a manner similar to the manner mentioned by the honourable member for Dunedin South a few evenings ago, in his reference to the expenditure on high-school buildings in Dunedin.

Mr. DODSON.—Will the Minister give us the name of the Board?

Mr. FISHER.—I would rather not give the name of the Board, but I will give the name of another Board which has taken up a very creditable position. It is the case of the Otago Education Board, which has voluntarily offered to meet the exigencies of the country by reducing its expenditure by a sum of nearly £9,000 a year. Now, this proposal of the Otago Education Board is to be found fully explained in the *Otago Daily Times* of the 18th November last, in which paper will be found a very able speech by Dr. Brown, the Chairman of the Board, from which I take this businesslike sentence:—

"The total estimated reduction, calculated on these lines, would come to between £8,500 and £9,000, giving a fair margin over the estimated loss of revenue."

In connection with this subject I may be permitted to read a letter which I subsequently received from a member of the Board, who says,—

"Dunedin, 18th November, 1887.

"DEAR SIR,—You will have received yesterday a telegram from our Chairman giving the result of the financing of a Committee of the Otago Education Board, convened to consider the question of retrenchment. In moving for the appointment of this Committee, I considered I was simply discharging an obligation that now lies upon every public body in the colony to support the Ministry of the day in their effort to bring about radical retrenchment. In my opinion we can come down to £10,000-per-annum reduction, if necessary, without in the slightest degree impairing the efficiency of the service; and, if we can do this in Otago, the colony can surely reduce £100,000. The most pleasant feature of the whole business is the cheerful co-operation of the teachers themselves, who, as a body, are perfectly satisfied to have their incomes shrunk to meet the

exigencies of the situation. I feel certain that you will appreciate our spontaneous efforts to assist you, and that our action will greatly strengthen your hands in dealing with other Education Boards.

"I simply took action on the broad ground of retrenchment, and from no other reason: indeed, as a matter of fact, I cannot be classed as a supporter of the present Ministry.—I have, &c.,

"JOHN F. M. FRASER,

"Member of Otago Education Board."

I ask honourable members to specially mark that part of the letter which refers to the willingness of the teachers to assist in the retrenchment scheme, because it has been said that the only result of our proposals will be a reduction in the salaries of the teachers, and a feeling of antagonism has been set up on that account. Some Education Boards have taken up a distinctly antagonistic attitude. The Wellington Education Board has thought proper to send out to the teachers a definite intimation that the proposals of the Government mean a reduction in the salaries of the teachers, and that only. I do not think that is at all a creditable manner in which to meet the proposals of the Government. It would have been much better if the Board had taken time to consider the subject before sending out such an intimation.

Dr. NEWMAN.—It was the Chairman who sent that circular, not the Board.

Mr. FISHER.—Then I think the Chairman took upon himself a function to which he had no proper claim. Now, Sir, with reference to the salaries paid to teachers in New Zealand, it has been said that they are much lower than the salaries paid elsewhere. That is a question upon which the Committee should have full information before it comes to a decision on our proposals, in view of the statement having been broadly circulated that those proposals involve a reduction of the teachers' salaries. The following table will show the salaries paid in New Zealand and in other colonies:—

#### NEW SOUTH WALES.

10 per cent. are ..	Under £100.
35 " ..	Between £100 and £150.
50 " ..	Between £150 and £300.
5 " ..	Over £300.

The maximum salary of a master is £400.

#### NEW ZEALAND.

30·8 p. cent. are ..	Under £100.
53·6 " ..	Between £100 and £200.
11·9 " ..	Between £200 and £300.
2·8 " ..	Between £300 and £400.
0·9 " ..	Between £400 and £483.

Average salary, £150 2s. 2d.

The Victorian salaries are very much the same, and the Victorian Minister of Public Instruction has stated in Parliament that the Victorian teachers are the highest-paid teachers in the world. It should also be remembered that, in addition to their salaries, many teachers in New Zealand receive liberal bonuses. Especially is that the case in the



Otago Education District. And further, the greater proportion of teachers in New Zealand are provided with residences. I do not say that these residences are given free in all districts, but in many they are. In making these comparisons, I desire to illustrate the further point as to the necessity for the adoption of some more general plan for the payment of teachers. For what do the figures in regard to the salaries show? They show this inequality: The highest salary paid to a headmaster is £495, in Hawke's Bay. The lowest, £272, is paid to the headmaster in Taranaki—who, it may be presumed, is a man of equal scholastic attainments. The highest-paid headmaster in Otago gets £483. The highest assistant-master at Hawke's Bay receives £353; the head assistant at Wanganui receives £177. In Otago the highest head assistant receives £287, as against £353 in Hawke's Bay; and in other parts of the colony the payments are as follows:—

	A.		B.		C.	
	1.	2.	1.	2.	1.	2.
Auckland ...	£ 455	£ 80	£ 250	£ 30	£ 170	£ 28
Taranaki ...	272	84	180	50	114	55
Wanganui ...	347	128	177	60	197	90
Wellington ...	370	120	230	80	190	25
Hawke's Bay ...	495	153	353	80	153	73
Marlborough ...	300	130	162	40	130	15
Nelson ...	300	73	280	12	140	44
Grey ...	320	140	245	60	150	18
Westland ...	339	175	210	75	151	19
North Canterbury ...	459	86	326	65	164	30
South Canterbury ...	340	130	210	50	164	64
Otago ...	483	153	267	70	197	70
Southland ...	351	149	255	100	163	59

Columns A 1 and 2 give highest and lowest salaries for headmasters in the several districts; columns B 1 and 2, highest and lowest for assistants; and columns C 1 and 2, highest and lowest for sole teachers.

There is another instructive feature about this. In Table M, attached to the Education Report, we find that Otago pays £64,002 to 510 teachers, or an average of £125 per teacher; while Auckland pays £54,359 to 640 teachers, or an average of £84 per teacher. These figures, I say, point to the necessity for the adoption of some better general plan, under which men of equal attainments, of equal standing, men who are equally studious, and who devote themselves with equal earnestness to educational pursuits, should receive salaries proportionate to their attainments and ability. I now come to the third of our proposals, which is the substitution of the strict average for the working average. The working average is arrived at by making allowance for what one might call extraordinary circumstances, allowances being made for absence on account of weather, sickness, and other causes. If we adopt the strict average we shall pay upon the average of the number of children who have actually attended school. That is all I need say upon that point. And now with regard to the fourth proposal—

*Mr. Fisher*

namely, the proposal to abolish the vote for training-colleges. I am bound to say, with regard to these colleges, that the results obtained from them in different parts of the colony differ very widely. There are four of these colleges, located in the four principal cities, and the vote of £8,000 is divided amongst them. One is bound to admit that the results obtained in the Otago Normal Schools are very much better than those obtained in the other districts. I cannot speak with any authority with regard to the results obtained in Canterbury, beyond saying that they do not equal those of Otago; but, with regard to the North Island, I feel justified in saying that the results do not in any sense justify the expenditure. It is also worthy of remark that, while the four principal education districts have had the benefit of these training-colleges, the Education Districts of Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, Marlborough, Westland, and Southland have got on just as well without such institutions. In fact, the general experience is this: that those teachers who have not been trained at the training-colleges turn out to be more efficient public teachers than those who have received their training at these institutions. The principle upon which these colleges are conducted is this: The students or pupils attend a two years' course, during which term they receive at the different institutions from £40 to £60 a year; so that on the average they receive, say, £100 for the two years' attendance, and, in addition to that, they receive their two years' tuition. It happens also that the pupils are mostly females, many of whom, having received a hundred pounds and two years' education, decline for various reasons to take up the work of teaching. Then, with regard to the male pupils, they do not prove to be more successful than other teachers not trained in the training-colleges: in fact, they are less successful than those brought up in the ordinary schools. But I take it that upon this point the House would prefer to have the opinion of an expert. I will therefore read the opinion of Mr. Fidler, M.A., Inspector of the Auckland Education District. Having spoken of the schools in his district, and of the work sometimes being very mediocre, he expresses this opinion:—

"Some of the schools classed as very mediocre were in charge of certificated teachers from the Training College, and I regret to have to say that in them either the work or the discipline was not what was to have been expected in schools conducted by those who were supposed to have gone through a thorough course of training in the art of teaching."

That is the experience of Auckland. When we come to Wellington the experience of members of the Education Board is that the sooner the Training College is abolished the better. Having mentioned that, I need say no more with regard to Wellington. I think it much better that we should adopt the Victorian system, namely, that of training our teachers in the public schools, which is more likely to give them experience in the work they will be called



upon to perform when they come to occupy the position of teachers. The instruction given in the training-colleges is purely of a literary character, and is not calculated to enable the teachers to carry out the duties which afterwards devolve upon them. And, even if we speak of literary training, I am bound to say that the literary training imparted in the training colleges is much below the standard of that which could be obtained in the universities of the colony; and I believe the highly-paid Professors in these institutions are absolutely starving for want of pupils. What better function, then, could these Professors take upon themselves than that of training teachers for the public schools? Many of the headmasters and assistant masters of the public schools are gentlemen who have taken university degrees, and they have proved the best qualified and most able teachers. I would suggest that our teachers for the public schools should undergo a properly-graduated course of training or apprenticeship in the public schools, and that at the end of a four or five years' course they should be granted the E certificate, which would give them a fair standing as teachers. In this way we could provide an ample supply of efficient assistants. Sir, I might detain the Committee much longer in discussing this branch of the question, which is to me a most interesting study. It is a portion of our education system in which I take a great deal of interest: but I do not wish to take up the time of the Committee longer. I have only occupied time sufficient to explain the proposals of the Government, so that the Committee may clearly understand them, and the form in which they will be put to the Committee. An honourable member asks me to say something in regard to the Syllabus. That is a subject on which very strong opinions are held, and I do not feel justified in burdening the general question with the consideration of that branch of the subject now.

Mr. SEYMOUR would like to hear the honourable gentleman's views on the subject of higher education, as that was a subject of very great importance in this country.

Mr. FISHER.—I wished to confine this discussion exclusively to the question of primary education, and to the proposals submitted to the House by the Government; but, since the question of the cost of higher education in New Zealand has been raised, I feel bound to say that the cost of higher education in New South Wales forms a very strong commentary upon the cost of higher education in New Zealand. For instance, the income of the high schools in New Zealand for 1886 was,—

	£	s.	d.
From endowments ..	21,711	2	5
From school-fees ..	21,189	13	7
From votes of Assembly	3,725	0	0

£46,575 16 0

Cost to State .. 25,436 0 0

The average attendance of pupils was 2,213. It follows therefore that the cost per head was £21 1s. 10d., of which—

	Per head.
	£ s. d.
The parents contributed ..	9 11 0
Parliament ..	1 14 0
Endowments ..	9 16 10

Total cost per pupil .. £21 1 10

In New South Wales there are six high schools, with an average attendance of 688 pupils, who cost a fraction over £10 per pupil.

Total cost of these schools is .. £7,079  
Less fees paid by pupils .. 3,751

Net cost to State .. £3,328

The figures relating to the cost of high schools in New South Wales are taken from the "Special Report of the Assistant Inspector-General of Victoria on Public Instruction in New South Wales." Mr. Brodribb, the officer named, was specially instructed by the Victorian Minister of Public Instruction to visit New South Wales and report upon the school-system of that colony. His report was extremely interesting, and was rather a surprise to the Victorian people, for it showed that in many respects the school-system of New South Wales was superior to the Victorian system. As I have shown, the cost per high-school pupil in New South Wales is £10, against £21 1s. 10d. in New Zealand.

Mr. FITZHERBERT asked if the Minister would say something about industrial and Native schools.

Mr. FISHER wished to inform the Committee that he had specially excluded all questions from this discussion which did not directly affect it. He thought this was not the time for entering into questions relating to the Native schools or the industrial schools. He was sure if they once touched upon the industrial schools they would open up the whole question of the administration of charitable aid.

Sir J. VOGEL asked if the Minister considered school-buildings beyond the limits of the present discussion.

Mr. FISHER did not say that the expenditure upon school-buildings went beyond the scope of the present discussion, but the expenditure upon school-buildings was a question already disposed of, having been discussed on the public-works estimates.

Mr. W. P. REEVES said the Minister had told them that the saving proposed by reason of the school-age being raised to six years had been estimated to come to about £26,000. On the other hand, the Minister of Education told honourable members that a certain sum would be required to keep the country schools open. Had any estimate been made of the sum that would be required to keep the country schools open?—because that would materially interfere with the saving to be effected.

Mr. FISHER said an amount would be taken in the Appropriation Act to cover the necessary cost of keeping the country schools open.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—What amount?

Mr. FISHER asked whether it was not sufficient that the Government gave a pledge, understanding, or undertaking that the country schools should not be closed. Might it not be left to the Government to adopt the very simple process of taking an amount which would be sufficient to keep the country schools open?

Mr. SEDDON said that, if the matter were left to the Government, one Board might be treated liberally and another might be treated in a contrary manner. It was giving too much power to the Government.

Mr. FISHER hoped the honourable gentleman would accept the assurance that the Government would take the view that they were dealing with the system of education, and not with a particular district or with a particular Board or with a particular member. They would take the large view of the matter.

Mr. W. P. REEVES said the reason why he pressed the question was that it distinctly ought to have weight with the House as to whether they should adopt the proposals of the Government. There was only one reason why they should adopt their proposals—namely, that this large saving was to be made; but, if a considerable portion of it was required for keeping country schools open, then there was no reason why the proposals should be adopted.

Mr. FISH said that, in any event, there must be a considerable saving if the plan of the Government was carried out. It would not affect large schools or suburban districts, but small country schools, and he imagined then that not many country schools would be affected. There would be a very large saving; and, if they desired to make any attempt to save on the education vote, they should leave a considerable discretionary power with the Government until the experiment was fairly tested. He was disposed to place the fullest confidence in the Government in this matter.

Mr. CADMAN said there was one thing the Minister had not explained, and that was with respect to opening new schools in the country districts. This was a very important matter, as in a few years a number of new schools would be required all over the colony.

Mr. FISHER would like the honourable gentleman to understand that, although they were endeavouring to curtail expenditure, the Government would not fail to make provision for new schools. He hoped the honourable gentleman was as clear in his mind on that point as he (Mr. Fisher) was.

Mr. LEVESTAM said there was another matter on which the honourable gentleman had not spoken at all, and that was as to withholding the capitation for any boys or girls who had passed the Sixth Standard, irrespective of age. What he wanted to know was this: Did the Minister of Education intend to adhere or not to what was stated in the Proclamation, that capitation money would no longer be paid for children who had passed the Sixth Standard? The Minister had carefully avoided to state that, although he had asked the question very distinctly. He should like the

Minister to reply distinctly to that question. Another statement made by the Minister was that, out of thirty-nine gentlemen who had been asked to state their opinion as to the school-age, nineteen were in favour of raising the school-age and sixteen were against it; and he then went on particularly to tell honourable members that these sixteen were all interested in continuing the age as at present. But he did not tell them who the nineteen were, and whether they had any interest the other way.

Mr. FISHER said they were mostly School Inspectors.

Mr. LEVESTAM would like the honourable gentleman to explain what his intentions were with regard to children who had passed the Sixth Standard but who were not of the age of fifteen.

Mr. FISHER said the answer was that as a rule the pupils were close up to fifteen when they passed the Sixth Standard. He could understand the honourable gentleman's objection coming from the members from the West Coast, where there were no training colleges; and yet the children on the West Coast passed the Sixth Standard a year earlier than those in any other part of the colony. His opinion was that, where a bright or intelligent child, male or female, distinguished itself and got to the Sixth Standard below the age, that child ought to be taken up by the Education Department and educated as a pupil-teacher; and, whether made a pupil-teacher or not, it ought to have the right to go forward and take a scholarship if it could do so. That was a point to which he should pay special attention. But there were children of well-to-do people—he would not say wealthy people, because he did not wish to raise class distinctions—who were kept in the schools after they had reached the age-limit and had passed the Sixth Standard; and what he said was this: that if those people wished to give their children a higher-class education which the children of the mass of the people did not get they ought to pay for it. If they desired to reach a higher standard of education than the generality of children attending the common schools, they ought to attend the colleges or district high schools, and the Education Act, section 56, said that for the education given at district high schools those who received it should pay.

Mr. SMITH thought that, if the school-age were raised, it would be wise at first to let it apply only to the boroughs, and let country schools be entirely exempted. There would then be a chance of carrying the proposal; but he did not think that country members would agree to their schools being affected. In his own district there were a large number of bush schools, mostly in new settlements, and about a third of the children attending them were under the age of six. Therefore, if these children were shut out, the schools would be starved. There was also this consideration: The parents of these children were mostly poor people, and even the mothers had often to be absent from home at work, and it was far

better that these children should be safe in schools than running about uncared-for. Even if no capitation were paid on them they should be allowed to attend the schools. He hoped the whole proposal as to raising the school-age would be abandoned; but, if not, it should certainly be confined to the borough schools.

Mr. FISHER said that, representations having been made to the Government by members on both sides of the House as to the strong feeling existing with regard to the school-age proposal, the Government had determined to modify their proposals. He did not say that any communication or representation to the Government made by a section of members should be regarded as binding on the Committee; but the honourable members to whom he referred, speaking for themselves, had suggested that, if the Government did not press the proposal for raising the school-age, they would not object to the other proposals of the Government. He did not know how far that might be in accord with the views of the Committee as a whole, but, speaking for the Government, he was disposed to accept the agreement.

Mr. SEDDON disagreed with the other proposals. He could understand that members representing large centres should be indifferent on the question of school-age; but a large number of country schools would be affected, even were the proposed compromise agreed to. With a view to saving time, he had prepared certain questions to put to the Minister; and he would ask the honourable gentleman, first, if he would place on the table the opinion of the Crown Law Officers as to the power to raise the school-age by Order in Council alone. If the honourable gentleman thought it was not advisable to lay the opinion on the table, would he give some idea as to the clauses relied on by the Law Officers as giving that power? The Education Board of Otago had put certain queries to Sir Robert Stout, one of the ablest lawyers of the colony, in regard to this matter, and that gentleman had replied,—

"I am asked to advise the Board generally on their position—(1) the position of the Board regarding their teachers; (2) the position of the Board relative to the Normal School pupils—and also regarding the circular that has been issued by the Education Department, of the intention to pay a less amount towards the Board's expenses than has been paid formerly.

"This circular states that the amount to be paid, beginning in January, 1888, will be £3 15s. for each child in average daily attendance; but that no children under six years of age, and no child that has passed the Sixth Standard, will be paid for.

"I assume that the Parliament will be asked to sanction these proposals by Act, as, in my opinion, the Governor in Council has no power to make regulations to give effect to them. The power of the Governor in Council to make regulations is limited to nine things: see section 100, which is as follows:—

"The Governor in Council may, subject to

the provisions of this Act, from time to time alter and repeal regulations and orders—

"(1.) For the organization and management of the Department of Education:

"(2.) For defining the principle on which daily average attendance shall be calculated:

"(3.) For the examination and classification of teachers:

"(4.) For the employment, education, and examination of pupil-teachers:

"(5.) For the issue of certificates of competency to teachers:

"(6.) For the establishment and management of normal or training colleges:

"(7.) For defining the standards of education which, under the provisions of this Act, may be prescribed by regulations:

"(8.) For prescribing the times and manner of auditing the accounts of Boards and Committees.

"(9.) For making such other regulations as may be necessary to secure the due administration of this Act.

"And all such regulations shall fix a day on which the same come into force, and shall be published in the *Gazette*, after which they shall have the force of law, and shall be laid before both Houses of the General Assembly as soon after they are passed as circumstances will permit."

"If it were contended that under subsection (2) there was power to alter the school-age I might point out that this subsection refers obviously to subsection (2) of section 8, which is as follows: 'In payment to the Board of every district of a sum of £3 15s. for each child in average daily attendance at a public school, such average daily attendance to be computed in manner prescribed by regulations.'

"The regulations to be made under subsection (2) can only define how this average daily attendance is to be computed. It makes no provision for either fixing the age or the standard the child has reached as a test of payment.

"The Act makes two provisions regarding the age of pupils. (1.) The school-age, under section 83, is defined as being between five and fifteen; and I submit that the obvious meaning of the Act was that all children were to be admitted free who were between those ages. (2.) The other provision of the Act dealing with school-age or attendance is that called the compulsory clauses. In these—89 and 90—there is provision that the children must attend between seven and thirteen. Their parents or guardians may apply for exemption, *inter alia*, if the child has passed a certain standard; but there is nothing compelling a guardian or parent to do so, and I am of opinion that, if the exemption were not asked, a parent or guardian would be bound to send the children between these ages. If the new regulation is carried out sections 89 and 89 of the Act would be altered or modified. Of course the Government may expect School Committees and Boards to receive children in the schools for which there is to be no capitation-allowance. But surely this would be a positive alteration

of the Act. I am of opinion that regulations for defining the principle for calculating the average daily attendance cannot declare that children of school-age are not to be deemed to be enrolled, and that the regulation is *ultra vires* of the Governor in Council.

"I mention these points, and I assume that, though the Governor in Council has, on the advice of his Ministers, made a regulation, the Parliament will be asked to validate it by amending the Education Act. If the Act is not altered, and the proposals are attempted to be carried out, then they will be given effect to without the sanction of the law, and I should hardly think such a step will be taken by any Education Department.

"Obedience to the law is the important thing to be observed in a country with institutions like ours; and a Department of Education, whose duties are onerous and important, will be the last to disregard the law and set an example that cannot help being baneful.

"1. The position of the Board regarding teachers.—I am of opinion that the Board have no power, without the consent of the teacher, to lower any teacher's salary unless three months' notice of the intention to do so is given. The teachers are practically three-monthly servants, and their salary cannot be lowered at a week's or a month's notice.

"2. The engagements entered into by the Board with Normal School students are binding on the Board. They have been made under the sanction of the Act and of the regulations approved by the Minister under the Act, and I do not see how the Board can refuse to carry them out. It may be said if the Board are sued they have no funds. That would mean, however, that all the assets are exhausted; and that cannot well be said. If the true position of matters was pointed out to the Minister I cannot believe that he or the Parliament will ask the Board to repudiate contracts solemnly and legally entered into, unless indeed it is thought desirable to destroy the education system altogether. I cannot believe this is desired, and I am of opinion that the alterations have been proposed without a knowledge of the position in which the Education Board are placed.—ROBERT STOUT."

It was true that the attendance of children under seven or over thirteen could not be made compulsory; but, if the parents chose to send them, had not the Board legal power to claim from the Government capitation in respect of them? The Government had told them that the Crown Law Officers were of opinion that the Boards had no legal remedy in such circumstances; but, seeing the opinion given by a gentleman of such standing in the legal profession as Sir Robert Stout, it was only right the Committee should have the fullest and most certain information possible on the subject. While the general rule against the production of the opinions of the Law Officers might be a good one, he thought the Committee should be told what clauses the Law Officers had relied on as to the power to issue the Order in Council. On that point he wished

to have clearly defined what the position of the Government was and what was the position of the Education Boards. Unless the matter was cleared up there might be a lot of money wasted in litigation. If there was any doubt as to the power of the Government, would they, if the House decided that the school-age should be raised, bring in a Bill to give effect to the wish of the House?

Mr. PYKE thought the last speaker was under a misapprehension. Schoolmasters were not paid by capitation. He knew a school in which there were only twenty children, and the master received £145 salary and £20 bonus. As a general rule, the salaries came to less than the capitation in the boroughs and more in the country. He must enter his protest against the compromise proposed by the Minister, for he was most strongly of opinion that the school-age should be raised. He thought, in the first place, that it was a waste of public money to send children between the ages of five and six to school. Why should the State schools become State nurseries? If it was necessary to keep schools open for these children, let kindergärten be established. To send a boy of five years to school was an act of cruelty, to begin with; both mentally and physically the child would be injured thereby, and there was no patriotism, no common-sense, no humanity in doing that which would tend to ruin a child body and mind. He remembered a long time ago a song very popular in England, of which a verse ran thus:—

There's a good time coming, boys,  
A good time coming;  
Little children shall not toil  
Under, or above, the soil  
In the good time coming,  
But shall play in healthful fields,  
Till limbs and mind grow stronger,  
And every one shall read and write.  
Wait a little longer!

We ought to allow our children to play in "healthful fields" a little longer. It might be said that these were sentimental reasons; but there was a good deal of truth and philosophy in sentiment sometimes; and, apart from that aspect of the question, any one who knew anything of the matter would know that there would be a good deal of saving by raising the school-age as had been proposed: and every one must know, too, that the colony was not in a position to any longer keep baby-farms. For these reasons he should be compelled to vote against the Minister if he allowed the school-age to remain as it was at the present time.

Mr. FISH regretted to say that he found himself in a most unfortunate position. During the whole of this session every measure which the Government had brought forward up to the present time he had felt it his duty to oppose, and now, when a matter came up on which he could heartily support them, he found that the Ministry were weakly ready to accept a compromise. If there was anything good in the proposals of the Government as laid before the House by the Minister that morning it was with regard to this question of the reduction of the capitation-grant, paying upon a strict

Mr. Seddon

average instead of a working average, the abolition of the training-schools, and the increase of the school-age. The last, to his mind, was the most important of all; and yet that was the proposal which the Minister was willing to give up! He felt so strongly upon this point that he should divide the House upon it and take a vote against the withdrawal of this proposal if he had no one to follow him in the lobby. None of the proposals which the Minister had brought forward could have so much commended itself to the good sense of the House and the country as that one. He agreed with the last speaker, who said that children should not be sent to school who were under the age of six years. Parents who had any sense of responsibility as to the future welfare of their children would not send their children to school at so early an age. It was only those who were desirous of getting rid of the responsibility of looking after their children who were so anxious to send them to school between the ages of five and six years. He was therefore very sorry, after the excellent reasoning which had been given to the House by the Minister of Education—and he could heartily compliment the honourable gentleman on the very clear manner in which he had put his statement to honourable members—that he should recede now from the most tenable grounds that he had for the position he had taken up. If they were to have retrenchment, if this was not an idle cry, in what better way could they retrench than by taking something from the people which was of no value to them? One argument that he admitted to be reasonable against the proposition of the Government was, that it might be injurious to the country schools; but, when the Minister of Education met that objection in the very fair manner in which he did by saying that under no circumstances should a school be closed on account of this increase of school-age, he (Mr. Fish) thought all objections to the proposition should be withdrawn. The propositions were practically of a tentative character. It was an experiment that was being made; and the experiment ought to be proceeded with, because it was worth trying, and, if in the course of a year or two it was found that it did not work well, it could very easily be abandoned. He was afraid that the Minister of Education had not had sufficient time at his disposal since accepting office to go thoroughly into the questions which related to his department; nor did he (Mr. Fish) intend to raise those questions in their broader aspect at this period of the session. He hoped that by next session the honourable gentleman would have grasped the whole question in relation not only to primary education but also to secondary education. The Minister should approach that subject with a view to seeing whether, in his opinion, a secondary system was necessary at all in this colony; and, if he found that it was, he should go still further into the matter, and see that it was conducted in a way that would lead to a great improvement in the relations between the primary and secondary systems. He should

see that there should be no such loss of teaching-power as there was at the present time, owing to the absence of relationship between the two systems. The honourable member had cursorily said that it was a scandalous thing that secondary education should cost £24 per head in New Zealand, while in New South Wales it cost only £10. There was no doubt that was a scandal, and it was a subject well worth the consideration of the Government and the House. The House had too long neglected this very important question, and it had been neglected owing to the local feeling which had been engendered in consequence of the endowments which had been made in one place and another for educational purposes. The Province of Otago had most weakly and, he was justified in saying, most shamefully wasted money derived from these reserves, mainly owing to a fear that the reserves would be wrested from them at some time or other. It was so in other parts of the colony, he had no doubt. The people in the localities where the reserves were situated would not grapple with the question for fear of losing something that they at present possessed. So things were going on from day to day, and the evil was increasing. It was time that that feeling was given up, and that the House should attempt to deal practically and seriously with the whole question of education, both from a primary and a secondary point of view. With regard to the reduction of the capitation by 4s., he thought that that ought to be carried by the House unanimously. He was not inclined to argue out the details and show how it would affect this one or that one; but he wished to say this: that, from his experience of local bodies, which had been considerable, he knew that when any reform of this sort was raised there was always an outcry that this, that, or the other would be injured, and that the local body could never get on; but, when the reform was carried out in spite of all protests, it was found that things worked very well, and that people then came to wonder how it was that they had not carried out the reform long before. So it would be in this matter. If the House said to the Boards that they must get on without this 4s., it would soon be found that the system worked very well, and that the Boards carried on very well notwithstanding the loss. Whilst on this question he should like to say he should be glad if the Minister would consider the question of doing away with Education Boards altogether. If there was one department more than another of government action in connection with which it was possible to centralise, it was this matter of education. It was a matter which essentially concerned the whole colony, and he had no doubt that, whatever Ministry came into office, no matter to which party they belonged, they would deal fairly and justly with the whole colony. He did not say for a moment that the Education Board of Otago had not done good work; but, judging by what he had seen of that Board, he had no doubt that all over the colony there was a good deal of money being wasted by these Boards; thou-

sands of pounds annually could be saved to the colony if these Boards were dispensed with. Look at the officers they employed, look at the paraphernalia employed and the expense incurred,—which could be got rid of if the whole thing were centred in the Government. In connection with this question they saw, in Otago, that the Committee of one of the largest suburban schools were anxious to retain the services of a teacher whose conduct and service they considered satisfactory, as did also a large majority of the inhabitants of the district, as expressed in a public meeting; and yet they found the Education Board arbitrarily dismissing the teacher notwithstanding these emphatic protests! Such a thing showed that there was something wrong with the machinery, and that it should be altered in some way. He was certain that, if the various district Committees had larger powers given to them, and the Boards were done away with, great good would be done to the cause of education generally. Then, there should be no hesitation in doing away with the extra capitation-grant. That strict average should be taken also appeared to him a good suggestion. That might affect the question of teachers' salaries, but the Minister should deal with that point also, and he had promised that the subject should engage his attention. The better equalisation of salaries of various teachers was desirable. In Otago the teacher who had been fortunate enough to get a large school would be receiving a salary of £550 or £560 a year, whilst other men, who were equally competent but who had small schools, would only receive £130 or £150; and this difference, he thought, was too great. He was not quite sure as to the wisdom of abolishing the training-schools. In Otago that school worked remarkably well, and it enabled the children of poor people, if they passed a certain examination, as a matter of right to become trained as school-teachers; whereas without such an institution it might be only those who could bring influence to bear that would get appointed pupil-teachers in the schools. The statement by the Minister, that the average age at which children passed the First Standard was nine years, had come upon him as a surprise. He should have thought it was nearer seven or eight years.

Mr. FISHER said the Education Report of 1887, Table F, showed—"Average age at which children pass the standards—Standard I., age 8·8"—that was eight and four-fifths.

Mr. FISH said even if that were only approximately correct it showed distinctly that there was no necessity to send children to school between the ages of five and six. He hoped the Minister would adhere to his proposal, and take a vote on the question of raising the school-age. Regarding the Seventh Standard, the Minister showed clearly, by the return produced, that there were only 1,600 children in the Seventh Standard; and these cost the country £7,000! He held that that money was thrown away. The standards, he thought, should be reduced to five, and the system of scholarships extended, so that by that means

*Mr. Fish*

bright boys and girls whose parents desired that they should go further could obtain the advantages of secondary education. He thought it was a mistaken idea that it was necessary to give the bulk of the community, nine-tenths of them, an education beyond the Fifth Standard, and that in doing so they unfitted the children for those avocations of life which they were necessarily compelled to follow. He would strongly advocate giving every boy and girl in the colony a good sound education; but he did not think it necessary to give all who would follow various trades and farming and artisan employments education beyond the Fifth Standard. Besides that, at the present time they were taking boys and girls away from useful occupations at which they would be much better employed than they were in going to school. He said this in the interest of those whom he mainly represented—the working-classes. The honourable gentleman had made a remark to the effect that, as the Roman Catholics were non-participants in the State education, we should restrict our expenditure upon it as far as possible. That argument seemed fair enough; but he should like the honourable gentleman to consider whether it was not right that the Roman Catholics should have some assistance from the State, as well as the members of other religious denominations. Why should not that body of our fellow-colonists receive some aid towards teaching their children? We saved an enormous sum owing to the fact that the Roman Catholics did not send their children to the State schools, and it would pay better to give them a capitation-allowance than to induce them to send their children to the schools, for if they attended the State schools the accommodation would have to be enlarged, and a large additional expenditure incurred. This question was perhaps not in the line of the present discussion; but it was one that must engage the attention of the House, and, on the ground of fairness, sooner or later the claim of the Roman Catholics would have to be satisfied. He hoped the Minister would take a vote upon the question of raising the school-age, and he should be happy to go with him into the lobby on that matter.

Sir J. VOGEL was at a loss to know how to deal with this subject, as it came before them in such a strange fashion. To begin with, the honourable gentleman in charge of the estimates had given a positive assurance, when being elected, that he would neither alter the standards nor the school-age until he had absorbed the endowments into the general pool. Therefore it seemed to him that this proposal to alter the school-age, and to some extent to alter the standards, by only educating up to the Sixth Standard, would be the forerunner of the absorption of the endowments. But, putting that on one side, he thought the House was placed in a most absurd position. The education system of the colony was one of its most cherished institutions—one of its most important institutions—and large changes had practically been

made by the Government without the authority of law, and the House was now asked to express an opinion on the subject by a vote of £5. Where would be the record? He was not even aware that a *Hansard* report was being taken in Committee; it was not generally done. Where would be the record of honourable members' opinions on the question, voting whether a sum should be £5 more or less? This was placing the House in a most absurd and unfair position. He contended that the Government had no right to go the length they had gone in the way of making a public announcement to the various Boards, and in that way stimulating those Boards to give notices and make changes, without having previously taken the authority of the House. He contended, further, the taking a vote in Supply as to whether or not the amount should be reduced by £5 was not giving the House a right and fair opportunity of recording its opinions. There were many opinions upon this subject, and these could not find any means of utterance on the question of simply £5 more or less. There appeared to be no doubt whatever that the changes proposed could not be legally made without the authority of an Act. He held in his hand the opinion of Sir Robert Stout upon the subject; and he did not think any one who read that opinion, so clearly and concisely expressed, could have any doubt whatever as to the meaning of the Act which was at present in force, or that it was not going beyond the law for the Minister of Education to have instituted such changes, or to institute such changes in the future without special authority of law. It was clear that the Minister of Education had not power to issue regulations altering the school-age for children, and the Minister was now asking the Committee to concur in an illegality. He now came to the various points of the proposals, and he would first take the question of the reduction of the subsidy by 4s., and the statement that the country schools would not suffer. It was clear that the honourable gentleman was somewhat mistaken as to the conditions under which these subsidies were paid. If they were given in such a manner that the amounts to the country schools as against the town schools were ear-marked, it would be possible to say that the reduction in the subsidies would not affect the country schools; but, as a matter of fact, the Boards had the whole revenue in their hands, and the result was that the country schools received the surplus after the town schools were provided for. Therefore, if the school-age were reduced, and also the amount of subsidies paid, the result would be that the country schools would be in a worse position than they were in now. There was no logical manner in which such a proposition could be carried out under the present law. No doubt it was worthy of consideration whether the scheme of capitation should not be so altered as to allow of different amounts being paid to town schools and to country schools; but the figures lately quoted by the honourable gentleman—and which he

(Sir J. Vogel) might say were compiled at his request before he left office—showing the average cost of schools of different sizes, proved the fallacy of the idea that the country schools could be kept intact while reducing the amount of capitation. He believed that at the present time, in the case of schools with an attendance of over a hundred, the average expenditure was over £3 per head; in schools with an attendance of from fifty to a hundred, it was over £4 per head; and in the case of schools under fifty it was nearly £6 per head. It was clear, therefore, that striking off children under six years of age, and taking the exact numbers attending at country schools, would not regulate the amount which those schools would receive from the Boards. The late Government proposed that the reduction should be at the rate of 1s. a year, and he could see no reason why the House should increase that rate of reduction. He was content that 1s. should be reduced for the present year, and another shilling for next year, and so on; but how he was to propose such a thing he did not know, under the proposition that there should be only a general reduction of £5. The mode in which the question was placed before the Committee was preposterous, and only showed the way in which it was sought to fetter the discretion and liberty of the House. As to the reduction in the school-age, he thought, himself, that it was not desirable that children should be sent to school before they were seven years of age; but that was only his individual opinion; and they knew that the practice obtained amongst parents of sending their children to school at as early an age as five years, and, under our boasted free system of education, we should not prevent parents carrying out their ideas in that respect. There was no doubt that a great many parents were in the position that when their children grew to a certain age they required their services, some at twelve years of age, and some at fourteen; and if the age at which those children could be sent to school was raised it would be putting it out of the power of those parents to give their children a proper education. The proposition of the Government was a retrograde step, and one that was opposed to our liberal system of education; and it was not in harmony with the condition of these institutions before the General Government absorbed them from the Provincial Governments. He was decidedly against increasing the school-age unless a very specific intimation were given by the House that it should be done. Moreover, it was a question which should be decided by Act, and not merely by resolution in Committee or even in the House. He had heard it said that some members of the Opposition and some of those who supported the Government had agreed to a compromise; but he was no party to anything of the kind, and had only heard of it when mentioned by the honourable gentleman in charge of the estimates. He would strongly urge upon those who considered themselves members of the Opposition not to be led into any arrangement whatever, even if they approved of these

alterations, because an offence would be committed against the law if any action were taken without the sanction of the House by Act. Further, he said that, even if honourable members had agreed to the proposals, they had no right to allow them to be carried out under a vote of a reduction of £5, more or less, but that they should insist upon their being given effect to in a constitutional manner. With regard to the general question, they knew what the effect would be of taking from the revenues of the Boards. The Minister of Education proposed to take some £60,000 or £70,000 from the Boards. He could not say that the honourable gentleman had not authority to do that, and he was disposed to agree with the honourable gentleman in regard to gradually doing away with the training-schools, because he did not think the State had any more right to educate persons to be schoolmasters or schoolmistresses than it had to educate persons to be doctors or lawyers. Therefore he was favourable to doing away with those schools, provided it was done in a legal manner. But let the Committee look at the effect of taking away £60,000 or £70,000 from the revenue of the Boards, and it must be seen at once that that meant a reduction in the salaries of teachers to the extent of 15 per cent. And he would ask, if it was justifiable to force upon school-teachers such a reduction, why should it not be made to apply to the Civil Service generally? As far as he could see, there was not the slightest intention on the part of the Government to do that. The late Government proposed a *pro rata* reduction; but he would not discuss that now, and would only ask, why should they, without any notice, force on school-teachers this large *pro rata* reduction? If there was any way in which an honourable member could enable him to vote in favour of 1s. reduction this year and another shilling next year, and so on, he would support such a proposition. Otherwise, he took it that, if they voted for the proposition as it now stood, to take off 4s., it would be open to the Government to propose a reduction of another shilling next year. He hoped the House would not sanction the raising of the school-age to six years; and, if it were sanctioned in this irregular manner, he trusted the question would afterwards be tried by law; and the Government would then learn that they could not override the laws of the country without taking the proper constitutional mode of doing so.

Mr. FISHER desired to take advantage of the earliest opportunity to say that the agreement to which he had referred earlier in the day, which was intended to give effect to the wishes of many members on both sides of the House, had proved unsatisfactory to both sides; and therefore he would ask the Committee to vote upon the proposals in the form in which he had submitted them that morning. He wished also to say that if the proposals as a whole were carried the Government would still adhere to the understanding that the country schools should receive full assistance.

Mr. PEACOCK, confining himself in the  
*Sir J. Vogel*

meantime to the point before the Committee, thought the position taken up by the honourable member for Christchurch North was certainly inconsistent, and could not be justified. The honourable gentleman said very decidedly that in his opinion seven years was young enough to send children to school; and yet he even objected to the age being made six years. The honourable gentleman should not refrain from carrying out his decided opinion merely for party purposes.

Sir J. VOGEL explained that what he said was in regard to his own children; but other parents had a right to their own opinions with regard to their children.

Mr. PEACOCK thought it might at all events be asserted that those who advocated the raising of the school-age to six years as a means of economy in the education system might claim to be as good friends to that system as those who objected to the change being made. The matter might be viewed from two stand-points—first, the question of precedent for the adoption of that age; and, second, considering our own circumstances in this colony, was there any valid reason against the proposed change? With regard to the question of precedent, he held in his hand the general report of the School Commissioners of Scotland, in which it was stated that practically the age was six years there. In the United States also the general school-age was six years. And the same applied to Germany. He was, of course, aware that there were some arrangements in the latter country with regard to infant instruction; but, speaking as to the primary schools, the school-age was practically six years. Then there was the other question. It was stated by those who were opposed to raising the school-age that children would be running about in the gutter, and that certain evils would befall them by so doing. He should ask the Committee what it really meant. He presumed honourable members would not dispute that, so far as bodily health was concerned, it was far better for a child at that age to be breathing the fresh air and developing itself physically than to be cooped up in the close atmosphere of a schoolroom for five hours a day. Surely there could be little difference of opinion upon that point. Very well, what was the evil to be apprehended in case the children were allowed to remain outside between the ages of five and six years? Was it moral contamination? Then, he put it whether the proposition did not refute itself. From whom would they receive evil example or learn bad language? Surely it would be from children older than themselves. But these children would be in school, and therefore he maintained that the objection had no force. There was thus a decided advantage in receiving physical outdoor exercise at an early age; and contamination from children older than themselves could not take place, because the older children would be in school at the time. He was very glad to hear the Minister of Education say that he would adhere to this point, and that the Committee



ould take a vote upon it. He thought that considerable advantage would result in the shape of economy by the adoption of the Government's proposition, especially as they were assured that precautions would be taken so that country schools would not suffer if such plan were carried out.

Mr. ORMOND was glad the Minister of Education had decided to adhere to his proposition, and for this reason: that he knew from practical experience that the amount he asked was sufficient, if it were properly administered, to provide everything that was wanted in the district schools of the colony. He (Mr. Ormond) rose for the purpose of quoting the expenditure that took place in the district he came from, and here the expenditure was kept within the amount given under the Act and the 4s. allowance; and, besides being kept within that amount for several years, a large sum had been placed to the credit of the building account after providing for the cost of education. The district he came from was called the Hawke's Bay District, and it was a very large and scattered one. It extended from the East Cape down to Woodville. It included as large and as scattered a population as there was in the colony, and had a very large proportion of small schools. Therefore it laboured under the greatest disadvantages that any district could labour under. As a rule, the salaries paid by the Board would compare with those of other districts, excepting in one particular: that the same large salaries were not paid in schools that had very small averages of attendance; and he entirely agreed with the honourable gentleman that those schools should be provided for by employing certificated female teachers instead of male teachers, and, of course, at a smaller salary. He had been looking to see how it was that in other districts they could not do as they did in Hawke's Bay—provide for their schools with the amount placed at their disposal; and the reasons were: first, that there was a great difference in the proportionate cost of administration—the Boards were more extravagant with their officers. That was one cause. The other cause was that to which he had referred—it was that they paid in the small schools in the country districts salaries out of proportion to the work to be done, and which could be done more economically. He might give the figures, showing what was done last year in the district which he wished to put as an example before the House. In that district, extending from the East Cape to Woodville, there were 4,198 attendances, which, at 4s a head, gave £16,792. The allowance for inspection was £300; consequently the total income last year was £17,092. The following was the expenditure: Salaries, including the board, inspection, and everything, £900; incidental, £200; teachers' salaries, £10,774; bonus on tuition of pupil-teachers, £330; bonus on average results, £1,000; and School Committees, £1,600. That totalled up £14,804 for the last year; so that there was left, out of the moneys allowed by Parliament, a balance of £2,288. That showed, at any rate, that educa-

tion was carried out as efficiently in his district as anywhere else; and he believed a reference to the Inspector-General would elicit from that gentleman the opinion that the schools there were as efficiently taught and as well equipped as any schools in the colony. They endeavoured to supply small country schools with female teachers, when these could be got, or by giving salaries according to the work; and where good men were wanted they paid them higher wages than were paid in any other part of the colony. He had worked out what would be the position of that district under the allowance of £3 15s., and supposing children between five and six years were excluded from the schools; and he found that then, with some 500 children deducted from the average attendance, instead of having 4,000 odd attending there would be 3,619; and that number, at £3 15s., would give a revenue of £14,116. They would be able to pay every salary exactly the same to all the principal teachers, pay the same bonuses, give the same allowance to School Committees—do everything except provide for the tuition of these 500 children, which would be a very small sum, because they did not cost, on an average, the same sum as older children. He was able to show that in that district they could provide the whole education at £3 15s. with no reduction of salaries, the same allowance to School Committees, and the same average results upon the work of the teachers, and do it for the money the Government proposed; and he saw no reason why that could not be done in other parts of the colony. The question, then, was, Could they assist the Minister in arriving throughout the colony at such a result? It appeared to him that one of the things required to be done was that there should be established one fixed scale on which all teachers should be put in proportion to the attendance at their schools. If that were done, they could at once do something which would establish an average expenditure all over the colony. No part of the colony could then complain, and the teachers would put themselves on a better basis than they were on at this moment. If that were done, they would do away with the anomaly referred to by the Minister when he opened the subject to the Committee. He (Mr. Ormond) took a liberal scale of salaries all through, and payments according to work and results. He would not have the anomaly which the honourable member for Dunedin South had pointed out, that of a man having a school for which he was getting a large salary, and a master alongside getting a much smaller salary, although they had each equal claims. If teachers were paid according to the work done, according to attendance and results, and if a proportionate limit were placed on the cost of administration, and the system assimilated all over the colony, the cost of education would be enormously reduced, and they would be able to carry out what the Minister proposed—provide education at the diminished cost he proposed. He had shown that in one district it was absolutely possible to give effect to the Minister's proposals; and

he challenged any honourable gentleman who disagreed with him to get the opinion of the Inspector-General so as to obtain that gentleman's opinion as to the condition of the schools he was referring to. He ventured to say that the Inspector-General would state that the schools of Hawke's Bay were as well provided with teaching-power and in every other respect as any other schools in the colony. If he had succeeded in showing this, he thought he had done something towards establishing the principle which the Government were contending for. A word now as to what had been said against raising the school-age to six. It was contended that, if they did this, they would injure the country schools. Those who said this did not remember that in the case of country schools, infinitely more than town schools, children between five and six were in a great number of cases unable to go to the schools. The schools were so isolated, and the children had to travel such long distances, that a large proportion of the children between five and six did not attend these schools. In fact, the number of these children as compared with those of older ages was comparatively small. It was a question open to controversy as to the benefits which children between five and six derived from attending town schools. All sorts of opinions could be got from specialists on that subject, but, as far as he had been able to read and instruct himself, the general belief was that a child under six years of age could get no real benefit from the teaching. That the child got some benefit from having a little order or regularity put into his life was the most that could be contended; but it was all that could be sought by those who were in favour of that principle. But they were obliged to do at the present time what their means enabled them to do; and parents of children of that young age must be told that the country could not provide nurseries for them. Therefore he hoped this limit of the age to five would not be insisted on, but that they would raise the age to six. He would be one of the first to raise his voice against the minimum age being raised to seven, because it would be taking away one of the years when children were beginning to benefit by education, and robbing them, in many cases, of one of the few years during which they could remain at school. He had therefore dealt with the school-age, and with the reduction of the capitation to £3 15s. With regard to the strict average, he was bound to say to the Committee that, if the other reductions were made, that could be allowed, because he had only been able to show to the House that, in the district he came from, they were able to provide everything on the present scale on the ordinary average attendance, and the Minister told them that the difference between ordinary and strict average would be a sum of £8,000 over the whole colony. Therefore he was unable to contend from his experience that that could be done without making some reductions in the scale of the salaries and the other moneys paid to the teachers. Wishing, as he

*Mr. Ormond*

did, to see the full system maintained, he did not see that they could agree to the further reduction proposed. As to disallowing capitation on those who had passed the Sixth Standard, that, he thought, was an illiberal proposal. The parents of 1,670 children, and the children themselves, chose to avail themselves of a privilege now given them of getting further education after they had passed the Sixth Standard, and he did not think they should be deprived of that privilege which the law allowed them now. He hoped that next session they would consider how the primary schools should connect and be merged with the secondary system, and, if proper proposals on that subject were made, he should agree with those who would do away with the Sixth Standard. Then, there should be a system of scholarships, which would give every child in the colony the possibility of getting higher education under the secondary system: the benefits of the secondary system should be open to all alike, even the poorest, which they certainly were not now. However, that was a large subject, which there was not now time to discuss. He agreed with those who thought the Committee was bound to take into consideration the position of that section of the community who did not derive any benefit from our education system—he meant the Roman Catholics. In considering proposals of this kind on the part of the Government it was their bounden duty to remember that section of the community; and, remembering that they did not derive any benefit from our system, it was more the duty of the House than it otherwise would be to make the charge for education press as lightly as possible on the taxpayers, so that the Catholics might feel it as lightly as possible. He went further and said that that section of the community were entitled to some assistance from the colony in the education of their own children: but the present was not the time to discuss that question. He hoped the House would agree to the proposals of the Government; and if they were passed he was sure the Boards would be able to bring down their expenditure to more reasonable limits without in any way affecting their capability of giving a good education to the children of the colony.

Mr. BARRON hoped the Committee would not agree to the proposals of the Government. He did not know who those honourable members were who had suggested a compromise to the Government, but he did not agree with any of the proposals. Here they were, with only two or three days more to consider a large amount of important business, hurrying through a discussion on such an important question as this, which merited exhaustive consideration and discussion. Early in the session the House appointed a Select Committee to inquire into the whole education question, and that Committee had taken a great deal of evidence, but found that the evidence offered was so voluminous, and the subject itself so large, that it was utterly impossible for it to come to any mature conclusion and make a report of any value during the time at its disposal; and they

had therefore recommended that the inquiry should be postponed till next session, and that in the meantime no material changes should be made. Now, he believed it would be very unwise to make now any changes such as those proposed, because they might be making some changes hurriedly that they would afterwards find there was cause to regret. He thought that honourable members would be perfectly justified in saying to the Government, "We have had a useful preliminary discussion, we know exactly the opinions of the Government, but we do not think that any material changes should be made before the subject can be fully considered, and therefore it would be well to let the whole matter stand over till next session, when we shall be able to deal with it and perhaps to dispose of it." Many honourable members had spoken of the great cost of the system. Well, whose money was it? It was the money of the great mass of the people. A glance at the list of our chief sources of revenue showed that it was the great mass of the people who provided the greatest portion of the revenue; and this was one of the most important of the few inadequate returns they got for the heavy contributions they made to the cost of the public administration. No doubt there were extravagances in our present education system, and economies might be possible without affecting the efficiency of the system; but changes should be approached in the most careful manner, and they had not sufficient evidence to warrant them now in making those changes. The Minister of Education was only new to his portfolio, and he could not be supposed to have had time to give that exhaustive consideration to the subject that he otherwise would, and therefore, for the sake of his own reputation, he should hesitate to lay a finger on the system until he was more fully possessed of information than he possibly could be now as to the direction in which reforms should go. If the Minister would make up his mind to leave the system this session as it was, and to make an exhaustive inquiry throughout the colony during the recess, it would be a very good thing. He would benefit by the general and local knowledge so acquired, and he would find that reforms were called for in one part of the colony which might be undesirable in others. For instance, there were the normal schools, which had apparently been a failure in some districts, while in Otago they had evidently been a great success. There were many differences of that kind, which the Minister should carefully consider before proposing any such radical changes as these now before the Committee. He (Mr. Barron) should not support any of the changes now proposed, although he should be very glad the next session, after getting full information, and giving the subject long and careful consideration, to consider each proposal on its merits, and possibly to support some of them.

Mr. SEDDON would remind the Minister that he had not answered a question put by him (Mr. Seddon) some time before with reference

to the legal power of the Government to raise the school-age except by amending the Education Act. It was most undesirable to give any possibility for wasting public money in litigation over such a matter. He would ask the Minister to decide that the school-age should not be raised in the country districts, and that capitation payments on working average should continue, the capitation not being decreased. He would show that the proposals of the Minister would have the effect of closing schools in the country districts, and therefore that the reductions should certainly not apply to country districts. That was the only fair way of meeting the contingencies that were bound to arise. Those who had passed the Sixth Standard should not be excluded from the schools in districts where there were no means of secondary education; because to allow them to continue at the primary schools was the only way by which they could prepare for the Civil Service examinations. It would be grossly unfair to withdraw the capitation in such cases in districts in which there were no means of secondary education. He had been connected for twenty years with the working of education in New Zealand. Before the general system was started, and when means for schools had to be obtained in the best way available, he had taken a part in it, and since the system was established in 1877 he had been closely and intimately connected with its working; and he would state to the Committee how his experience caused him to regard the present proposals. It would be less unfair to the Westland District if the Government raised the school-age and did not persist in their other proposals than *vice versa*. There were, say, seventy children under six attending school in the Westland District, and the Board would receive as capitation for them about £270, and therefore to exclude them would mean so much loss of revenue. But the effect of adopting the other three proposals of the Government would be a loss to the Board of £900 a year, the two sums together being just one-fifth of the Board's present yearly revenue. It would therefore be preferable for that district that the school-age should be raised to six, and that the Government's other proposals should be negatived. Now, to bring the expenditure of the Board within the reduced revenue, the Board would have to reduce the salaries of its teachers. The total amount paid away by the Board was £6,000, of which £4,238 was paid to teachers, so that if the revenue were reduced by one-fifth there must be a reduction of teachers' salaries. But already the teachers in Westland were paid less than they were in any other part of the colony, and if they were further reduced the result would be that the best of the teachers would be lost to the district, and a great blow would be struck at education in that part of the colony. And he might say, in reply to a remark which had been made by the Minister of Education, that in the Westland District the value of the residences was taken into account when the teachers'

salaries were fixed, and so were the payments of bonuses for teaching pupil-teachers. Then, let the House look at the figures as to the salaries paid to teachers in different education districts. In Taranaki there were forty-one teachers receiving £100 a year; in Westland there were thirty-five receiving under £100; in Taranaki there were twenty who received between £100 and £200; in Westland there were twenty receiving between £200 and £300, in Taranaki one, in Westland five. In Hawke's Bay sixty-five teachers received under £100, thirty-nine received between £100 and £200, nine between £200 and £300, two between £300 and £400, and one over £400. In Westland there were none over £300. These proved that the salaries now paid in Westland were very small; and how was it possible for the Board to further reduce them? Then, as to the attendance. Table J of the Education Report of 1886 showed that the average attendance in Hawke's Bay was 95·7 per cent., whilst in Westland it was 68·9 per cent., and in North Canterbury it was 70·4 per cent. That would show how much would be lost by Westland if the strict average were to be taken. Owing to an adverse climate, and the distances pupils had to travel in Westland, the attendance was very likely to be interfered with, and what would not be felt in Hawke's Bay would be very seriously felt in Westland. The honourable member for Napier should have remembered that when he was speaking; and it was owing to those influences that, while Westland would lose £280 or £300 if the school-age were raised, it would lose £900 if the capitation were reduced, and if the strict average were taken instead of the working average. As to the size of the schools, Westland showed very poorly by comparison with others. In Westland there were five schools where there were under 20 pupils, two in which there were less than 25, six in which there were less than 50, three in which there were less than 100, one only where there were 150, two where there were 250, and only one where there were more than 300. Whereas in Hawke's Bay there were five having 15 pupils; one from 15 to 20; two, 20 to 25; eleven, 25 to 50; four, 50 to 75; four, 75 to 100; five, 100 to 150; six, 150 to 300; seven, 300 to 500. Of course, where there were so many of these large schools, it was possible to make reductions to meet a reduced capitation-grant, and, so far as Hawke's Bay was concerned, he indorsed everything that had been said by the member for Napier in reference to the possibility of reducing expenditure; but it was not possible to do that in districts like Westland, where there were so many small schools. This all went to prove that the whole thing should be in the hands of one central department, so as to secure equality in the payment of teachers. If they looked at the cost of administration they would see that the charges in Westland were very low as compared with those in other places. The cost of inspection in Hawke's Bay stood at 3s. 9d., whilst in Westland it was only 2s. 10d.

*Mr. Seddon*

*Mr. ORMOND.*—Take the whole cost of the executive staff.

*Mr. SEDDON* said the number of schools in Hawke's Bay was 39; Westland, 22; Taranaki, 62. The average attendance was—in Taranaki, 1,611; Hawke's Bay, 3,264; Westland, 1,467. And the cost of management per head was: Taranaki, 4s. 11d.; Hawke's Bay, 2s. 3d.; Westland, 4s. 3½d.

*Mr. ORMOND.*—Hear, hear.

*Mr. SEDDON* said, if the honourable gentleman would take the average daily attendance into consideration, he would see that really the cost of management in Hawke's Bay was just three times what it was in Westland, for of course the large number of pupils reduced the rateable amount in Hawke's Bay. Taking the cost of inspection, it was—in Hawke's Bay, 3s. 9½d.; in Westland, 2s. 10½d.; while in Taranaki it was 5s. 3d. That showed that the cost of inspection in Westland was much less than in Hawke's Bay, and was only one-half of that expended by Taranaki. As to maintenance, the cost in Westland was £3 8s. 10d., and in Hawke's Bay it was £3 13s. 8d. In this matter, again, the Westland Board was managing more cheaply than that of Hawke's Bay. Now, the totals showed as follow: Hawke's Bay, £3 19s. 8½d.; Taranaki, £4 8s. 1d.; Westland, £3 16s. 1d. It could not be said that they were extravagant in regard to inspection, management, or payment of teachers. Then, coming to the current expenditure on buildings in Westland, it was only £4 11s. 2d., and in Hawke's Bay £5 11s. 4d.; so that Hawke's Bay again was favoured considerably more than other districts. He had forgotten to mention that in Taranaki the total was £4 5s. 4d., as against £3 16s. 1d. in Westland. He put this table before the Committee to show that the carrying of these proposals meant the stopping of the whole system in districts like Westland, Greymouth, and Taranaki, unless they took the profits from the more favourably situated districts, like Hawke's Bay, and applied them to the other districts. Then, as to the children attending the school after they had passed the Sixth Standard, was no credit to be given to districts like Westland and Greymouth, where, labouring under the difficulties he had pointed out, the pupils passed the standards at a very much earlier age than in other parts of the colony? He would undertake to say that that was the case, and that children going from the Auckland District to Westland were always put back a standard. What were they to do with their boys who passed the Sixth Standard at twelve years of age? Were they to be refused permission to attend the school any longer? There were no scholarships for them. It was a crying shame that in the whole Education District of Westland there were only two scholarships—he believed now only one scholarship. That being so, there was no chance for the boys to enter the professions, to become teachers, or to pass the Civil Service examination, unless they were allowed to attend school after passing the Sixth Standard, for there was neither high school nor university on the West

Coast. Why should they in one session say that the Civil Service of the colony should be open to all the people of the colony—to the child of the poor as well as to the child of the rich—and then in the next session render the law a dead-letter and say they would reduce the standards, or not grant the capitation for any child who had passed the Sixth Standard? The Minister of Education had had to admit that in Westland children passed the Sixth Standard at the age of thirteen; and if a boy passed the standard at that age, and there was no scholarship open to him and no secondary school he could attend, how was he to pass the Civil Service examination, or have a chance of becoming a teacher? This was, he thought, one of the worst proposals made by the Government. Then, to take the proposals made by the Minister. He had told them that he expected to save £26,000 by raising the school-age, £16,000 by reducing the capitation grant, £8,000 by paying on the strict average instead of the working average, and £7,000 by doing away with the subsidy upon pupils attending the school after they had passed the Sixth Standard. Taking the promise which the Minister of Education had definitely made, that no country school should be closed owing to these proposals, he thought that only one-half of that amount would be saved; that, instead of the total saving being £57,000, it would not be more than £27,000 or £28,000. If that were so, would it be worth while disturbing the existing system to effect that paltry saving? He contended that it would be far better for the Government to allow this question to stand over till next session, and then to deal with the matter in a comprehensive way, sweeping away the Boards of Education entirely, making the wealthier districts of the colony contribute to the cost of education in the more sparsely populated districts, and having a general system of inspection, so that there could be no difference in the standards, and a comparison could be instituted between the different districts. In some districts the standards were much below—a full standard below—what they were in other districts. It was also necessary that there should be greater equality in the payment of teachers. He could say unhesitatingly that teachers who were producing results that were unequalled in any other part of the colony, who were giving every satisfaction, and were performing their duties in an heroic and patriotic manner, were getting smaller salaries than others who were not doing anything like such good work; and the sooner this phase of the question was faced by the Minister of Education and dealt with the better. Then, the proposals before them plainly meant the closing of the schools to 6,500 children. What would the parents think of the Parliament, or of the representatives, who would close the schools on such a large number of children who were at present being educated in them? No provision whatever had been made, no warning given; but these 6,500 children were to be turned adrift. He thought

this would cause much bad feeling, and that the people of the colony would rebel against such a high-handed proceeding. They should bear in mind that the mass of the people paid through the Customs something like £1,500,000 per annum, and that all they got for that large amount was simply the amount recouped to them by way of education, which was less than £500,000. He could prove conclusively that in Westland they could pass the children through the six standards between the ages of five and twelve; and that those standards, as the papers would show, were higher than the standards in any other part of the colony. These children had a chance for the Civil Service, the professions, and scholarships, if they were kept at school two or three years more, between the ages of twelve and fifteen; and they should not be deprived of that chance. The children were passed through the standards without any injury to them physically, as could be seen by any one who would pay a visit to any of the State schools on the West Coast. You could go to the galleries of the schools on the West Coast and hear the children between five and six years of age singing their little ditties, learning three or four verses and singing them to music, saying their alphabet from A to Z, and showing such memory as many members of the House could not show. Then, they were brought under discipline in marching and in their classes. It was absurd to say that these things should be taken away from them because it was doing them an injury. You could not keep them away from the schools, and to compel them to stay away would be doing them an injury in after-life. The bulk of the people were paying a million and a half every year through the Customs, and all they got in return was this education. Having established the system it should not be swept away, as was proposed to be done under the Government proposals, for they meant sapping the whole system. If it were put to the people of the colony, they would rather pay this paltry £28,000 which it was proposed to save than have their education system interfered with. Before now the people of Westland had paid £1 a head, and even the miners who had no children paid it willingly rather than have the education system destroyed. What did property contribute to the revenue? A paltry £300,000. Yet property, and the Government, which represented property, were trying to prevent the education of the masses by sapping the present system of education. The Civil Service was now thrown open to competition, and the children of poor people had a chance of getting into it, and it would be grossly unfair for the House to shut that door to them. Those who were in favour of the Government proposals were those who wanted to keep the Civil Service and the professions to themselves, and to keep the poorer classes down as hewers of wood and drawers of water. He, for one, must resist any such proposal. Let the Government carry their proposals *in toto*, with a pledge that the country schools should not suffer; and he would prefer that to the compro-

mise proposed by the honourable member for St. Albans and other honourable members. He was glad to think that there were only some five or six persons who had joined in that compromise, because it was purely in the interests of the rich and against the education of the poorer classes. He would like the Minister of Education to give a distinct pledge to the Committee that during the recess he would consider the question of having the whole thing centralised, and making the wealthier parts of the colony pay for the poorer; also of equalising the payment of teachers, and making education more generally equal.

Mr. W. P. REEVES moved, That the vote be reduced by £5. He would have liked to discuss the whole question at length; but, owing to the action of the Government in putting this the most important question of the session off to so late a period, and taking it in Committee, instead of having a full discussion in the House, he felt that the Committee did not desire a long discussion, as it was anxious to bring business to a conclusion. He hoped, however, that before the discussion was over some honourable member would reply to the speech of the honourable member for Napier, which was really the only good speech in favour of the Government proposals. Of course every one knew the difference between Hawke's Bay and Canterbury, and no doubt Canterbury could run its education system as cheaply as Hawke's Bay, if it chose to reduce the salaries of its teachers; but the people in the country there thought that £120 a year was quite as little as ought to be paid to teachers, and therefore a reduction could not be made. He understood that if his motion were carried it would be taken by the Government as an indication that the school-age should be raised.

Mr. FITZHERBERT thought the remarks of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay showed that if School Committees husbanded their funds and dealt with other matters in a businesslike way there need not be the enormous expenditure which at present was incurred for education. The honourable gentleman had shown that in his district, after paying their teachers good salaries and meeting all other expenses, they could make a saving; whereas the honourable member for Kumara put an entirely different aspect on the question in regard to his district. No doubt there was a waste of money in some districts, and if they looked at the report of the Inspector-General for the year 1886-87 they would find that, although the Education Board for Hawke's Bay had made the most of their funds, that had not been the universal practice in New Zealand. By that report it would be seen that there were eighty-six buildings not belonging to the Government in which school was held, and that meant that buildings would have to be erected for those schools. Therefore some Education Boards did not spend their money on school-buildings. Then, there were 271 teachers' residences not built—not in Hawke's Bay, but in other parts of the country. Again,

Mr. Seddon

it would be found from the report that there were a number of School Committees who were over head and ears in debt, which showed that they had not made the most of the funds at their disposal. Then, they were told by the honourable member for Napier that there was plenty of school-accommodation; but that was absolutely incorrect as far as the rest of the colony was concerned. According to the report there were 46,000 children of school-age who were not attending schools, and those attending school had absolutely only six square feet allotted to each of them. Out of the 46,000 children not attending the schools, 22,000 were Roman Catholics; and, as the honourable member for Dunedin South had pointed out, if the Roman Catholics had chosen to take advantage of the State schools it would have been necessary to expend £100,000 to accommodate them. Therefore, notwithstanding what the honourable member for Napier had said on one side and the honourable member for Kumara had said on another, the fact remained that the funds at disposal were not sufficient to meet the liabilities and to give every child in the colony an opportunity of getting education. So that something must be done, and the question was, In what direction should it be done? He was glad the Government were going to make a reduction, for he had always told his constituents that there must be a reduction; and he thought it was right to leave it to Ministers to say where it could be made. In towns it was right that the minimum age should be six instead of five; but he thought in country districts the five-years age should be retained. But, with regard to the remark of the honourable member for Kumara that children, as a rule, in his district passed at an early age, he thought they would find that that all depended on the master who had charge of the school. Some masters placed children at a very early age in the First Standard; others would not put them there until they were older. He thought the test was the percentage of children who passed the different standards. If the honourable member for Kumara would look at the statistics on the subject he would see that his district was one of the last. His district showed only 10·5 per cent. of passes, whereas Auckland showed 14. The only district below the honourable member for Kumara's showed 9·6; but, so far as passing was concerned, his district was a long way behind other districts, and was only the second worst in the colony. The honourable gentleman need not tell them about the intellectual ability of the parents and children, for, apparently, their ability was not equal to that of parents and children in other parts of the colony. It was necessary that something should be done, and he (Mr. Fitzherbert) must support this reduction of 4s. of capitation. What he should have preferred to see was, that children should pay for teaching in the Fifth and Sixth Standards. According to the last statistics, if these children paid 1s. 6d. a week each the sum of £52,000 would be derived from that source. The children

in the Fifth and Sixth Standards were, generally speaking, children of well-to-do people. The children of the labouring people were generally taken away, after they had passed the Fourth Standard, to assist their fathers and mothers in their daily labour. Those who could keep their children in the Fifth and Sixth Standards should be made to pay 1s. 6d. a week, which was not a great sum for the education they would receive in those standards. Therefore he should have liked to see the Minister of Education frame his reductions in that form. He should vote for the proposed reduction of 4s., because he thought it was a step in the right direction. He should also vote for making the minimum age six instead of five years, because he thought a child of ordinary intelligence could get through the remaining standards in the time placed at its disposal. There were some children whom all the education in the world would not make clever. If they were made to pay in the Fifth and Sixth Standards, they should then give a number of good scholarships, so that the children of the poorer people should have every opportunity of getting the best education the State could give them. Such a system would be beneficial to the children and their parents, and would be a great saving to the country, because the parents would know that their children would not be kept in idleness in the schools at the cost of the colony. He should vote for the reduction, and was only sorry to say that the proposals of the Government did not go far enough.

Mr. IZARD would have great pleasure in supporting the raising of the school-age if the Government had made provision for kindergarten schools, or provided for the education of young children in some other way; but, inasmuch as no provision was made in this direction, the Committee should not agree to the proposal of the Government. He had consulted with the chief of the Education Department and with several others who had to do with schools, and the almost unanimous conclusion was that, unless children were sent early to school, they ran about the streets and contracted habits that were afterwards fatal to them. The universal opinion of those connected with education was, that this was the inevitable result of children being allowed to run about in that way. The same argument did not apply to country schools as much as it did to town schools, because in the country the children did not get into the same habits as they did in the large cities of the colony. In the towns they did not get into habits of obedience or discipline, and it was very hard indeed to keep them in order at all. There was another objection to this proposal, which was this: that the Education Act distinctly stated that the school-age should be from five to fifteen; and nothing could be plainer than that. Now the Government proposed to raise the school-age from five to six; or, in other words, they proposed to do by vote what could only be done by statute. They said they would not give capitation to

children between five and six, and the result would be that the provisions of the Act would not be complied with. This would practically repeal the clause in the Act, which was binding on the Government. Moreover, there was this further difficulty in the matter: He doubted very much whether the Government would save anything at all in the way they proposed to do it. According to the report of the Minister of Education, there were 21,025 between the ages of five and seven attending school. There were no means of finding out how many there were between five and six; but, assuming that 10,500 was the number, the 10,500 would be deprived of education, and the saving would be £3 15s. on 10,500, or about £39,000. The Government pledged themselves that no school should be allowed to stop for want of funds. There were 1,054 primary schools in the colony. How many of these were in the towns and how many were in the country he could not say. The returns did not enable one to arrive at any distinct conclusion on that point; but he would suppose there were two-thirds in the country and one-third in the towns. It amounted to saying this on the part of the Government: that, at any rate, they would undertake that two-thirds of these 1,054 schools should be practically—he would not say maintained, but—supplemented by the Government; or, in other words, that 800 schools should receive an additional payment from the Government. How much such payment amounted to they were not told. The Government did not say how much they proposed to give this or that school. But he could see it was not at all a large estimate to imagine that they would have an average to pay £50 for each school. If that were the case, the saving effected by raising the school-age vanished or almost entirely vanished; and they had 10,500 children absolutely deprived of that education which the Legislature distinctly said they were entitled to have. Although he was opposed to this first item in the Government programme, yet he thought the Committee should agree with the Government on the other items. He thought it was quite right that they should make a reduction of 4s. a head. He was perfectly well aware that in some districts there was great difficulty as to the capitation allowance. The schools in the towns might be worked very easily for less than the capitation, and the balance saved devoted to schools in the country; and this fact came in aid of his argument that the saving effected would be very little indeed. With regard to the normal schools, he should like to say that there were only four of them in the colony, and they cost £8,000 a year. The Wellington Normal or Training School was kept up last year for the sole benefit and instruction of seventeen students. In 1886 the number of students attending the Wellington Normal School was two males and fifteen females, a total of seventeen, for which the whole machinery and teaching staff of a normal school were kept in operation. They might

very well do without the normal schools at all, and other and more economical arrangements could be made in the secondary schools by which those who desired to become teachers could receive necessary instruction, while the machinery of the University might be used for examining them. He therefore agreed with the proposal of the Government to abolish the normal schools. He would express his agreement with a great deal that had fallen from the honourable member for the Hutt. He presumed that a great many honourable members, while willing to support the maintenance of the education system, would be willing that a small fee should be charged for pupils in the Fifth and Sixth Standards. He believed that idea had taken considerable root in the public mind, and he knew that during the late election it was much discussed in this part of the colony, at any rate; and he thought the opinion generally arrived at was that the parents of children in those standards should be asked to contribute a small fee towards the cost of the education system. There were 11,333 children in those standards, and a very small payment for each would very considerably reduce the cost of education to the Colonial Exchequer. He was in favour of the abolition of Education Boards. There were thirteen of those bodies in the colony, each with its separate staff, and the total cost of these Boards was £10,000 a year. He thought their functions might very well be conducted by the Minister of Education, with the assistance of a small staff; and he would very much like to see that change carried out. He believed there would be no opening for him in accordance with the forms of the House to move an amendment in that direction, and therefore he had to content himself with expressing his opinion. He should support the proposals of the Government.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member for the Hutt had stated that Westland was in the second worst position among the education districts of the colony as regarded passes. The real fact was that Westland was only lower than two other districts, that it was equal to one other, and above all the rest. This would be seen from the report of the Education Department presented to the House during the first session this year, where the relative percentages of total passes in the six standards of pupils attending the State schools in each of the education districts in the colony were shown to be—Nelson, 49·9; Wellington, 46·0; Marlborough, 45·5; Otago, 44·7; Westland, 43·7; Hawke's Bay, 43·7; Auckland, 43·1; South Canterbury, 41·1; Grey, 40·0; Southland, 39·6; North Canterbury, 38·6; Wanganui, 38·2; Taranaki, 34·3. It would thus be seen that Westland held fifth position, was equal with Hawke's Bay, and ahead of Auckland, South Canterbury, Grey, Southland, North Canterbury, Wanganui, Taranaki. In the total percentage of passes Wellington headed Westland by less than 3 per cent., and these advantages were only gained in the First and Second Standards; in the Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Standards Westland headed Wellington.

*Mr. Isaard*

The following were the relative percentages in passes in standards:—

		I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.
Wellington	..	13·2	9·4	9·9	6·5	3·6	1·7
Westland	..	9·2	9·0	10·0	8·4	4·9	2·2

— the total being, as he had said, Wellington 46·0, and Westland, 43·7. In all the standards except the two first, Westland showed an average of nearly 2 per cent. above that of Wellington. Knowing these figures were in existence, he was naturally surprised when the honourable gentleman made the assertion he made. If the honourable gentleman was not more correct in the advice he gave his clients than he had been in this matter there could be no wonder if they got into trouble. He could not let the honourable gentleman's statements go unrefuted, for they were calculated to give very little encouragement to the teachers and to the pupils in the State schools of Westland. There was also this fact: that the cost per pupil was nearly £2 a year less in Westland than in Wellington.

Mr. LOUGHREY said that in common with many other members of the House he was pledged to retrenchment; but at the same time he was also pledged to support the present education system, and to use his best endeavours to prevent the school-age as at present fixed, and the curriculum of the State schools, from being interfered with; that from one end of the colony to the other the mass of the people had stated in the plainest possible manner that the ages at which the children should be permitted to attend the State schools should not be altered, and that a large majority of the members in the House were pledged to support the present Education Act to that extent. It was one of the burning questions during the late election, whether the present education system should be preserved in its entirety, so that its efficiency should not be interfered with; and he believed there was not one candidate who, when questioned, had not replied that, though in favour of retrenchment, he would support the education system as it stood. The people generally were proud of the system and of the results it had produced, and he thought any interference with it would be most injudicious, and would be objected to throughout the colony. It was the mass of the people who contributed the cost of the system; and it was the mass of the people who had questioned candidates during the late election and made them pledge themselves to support the system in its integrity; and he was quite sure that if any candidate had ventured to say he would interfere with the efficiency of the system he would have had no chance whatever of being elected. He was surprised, seeing how strong the expression of opinion on this question had been all over the country during the election, to find so many honourable members in favour of altering the system materially. A good deal had been said



as to the physical disadvantages which would result from children under six years of age attending school. He had had considerable experience in the management and working of State schools, and he had never been able to see any physical disadvantages follow from children of that age being taught in these schools. The opinion of one medical man had been quoted to show that it was very disadvantageous indeed for children to have education forced on them at an early age; but, notwithstanding this opinion, he thought the best judges of whether attending school at an early age was physically injurious were the parents themselves, and he ventured to say that, if you travelled the country over, not a single parent would be found to say that a child had been known to suffer physical injury from attending school too young. On the contrary, the evidence of parents would be that young children attending school and being made subject to discipline and receiving the elements of education made them brighter and smarter; and the experience of teachers and Inspectors was the same. Directly these young children began to attend school, and mixed with the older scholars and with each other, they began to pick up all kinds of information unconsciously, just as they had learned to speak unconsciously from listening to those who spoke near them; while if they kept away from school till they were seven, or eight, or nine years of age before learning anything in this way, it would be much more difficult for them to begin to acquire the rudiments of knowledge. It was surprising to find how much information children could acquire before they were seven—they learned to read well, to write fairly, and got some knowledge of arithmetic; and by that time they were strong enough, mentally and physically, to continue at school, and to go on to more advanced work without any strain. There was no real strain on children up to fourteen or fifteen in going through the primary-school course. Those honourable members who could remember their own schooldays would know that they had felt no strain in those times; and that it was only when they became adults and had to face the struggles, difficulties, and problems of life that they began to feel conscious of any strain. Very few, if any, children in the State schools were strained, either mentally or physically, even those in the highest classes; and he thought it would be the greatest misfortune to raise the school-age. He entirely agreed, too, that those who had passed the Sixth Standard, and who had not reached the limit of school-age, should be allowed to remain at school if they chose. Many children passed that standard by the time they were twelve. They might not be able to get employment; and why should they be turned into the streets, where there was a great probability of their acquiring very undesirable knowledge? The law said that these children might attend school till they were fifteen, and he thought, in those circumstances, those whose parents wished them to be more thoroughly grounded in the higher parts of the subjects they had studied should

be allowed to remain at school. It was at that very time that children were likely to derive the most advantage from attending school, and, so far from excluding them, he thought they should be encouraged to remain after they had passed the Sixth Standard; but, as honourable members knew, in many cases, owing to the position of the parents, it was not possible for them to remain even till they had reached the Sixth Standard. He believed our system had been copied from the Victorian, and he knew that there the children, after reaching a certain standard—after being well grounded, in fact, in the three Rs—might leave school; but, notwithstanding such children had received a certificate showing that they had passed the standard required by the Education Act in that colony, they were not only permitted but even encouraged to remain in the schools until they had attained the age of fifteen years. Many passed the compulsory standard at eleven years of age, and they could then leave school if their parents wished; but many of these children, unfortunately, were compelled to leave school at an early age, in order to assist their parents to obtain the means of living. It was seen even in this colony that parents were often in such straitened circumstances that whatever could be earned by their children was of great assistance in helping to supply the wants of the family; and for this reason children of tender years were often found at work who should be attending the State schools. He therefore thought that every inducement should be given to encourage the children being kept at school as long as possible, and every effort made to secure that they should, while at school, be given a suitable education. It was unnecessary for him to say anything in favour of the State system of education. People of all classes who had inquired into it carefully believed that it was doing a great amount of good, that education of a most thorough character was being imparted, and that a youth who had passed through the various standards of a State school in this colony was so thoroughly grounded in the rudiments of an ordinary English education that he could, if he were studious and desirous of proceeding with his studies after leaving school, be able to obtain the highest honours that could be conferred by the universities. He believed it was a fact that those pupils who had taken the highest positions at the universities were those who had been primarily educated at the State schools. He felt very strongly on the subject, and was sure that no greater mistake could be made than to increase the school-age, or to exclude children, as had been proposed by Ministers. With reference to the next question, that of reducing the capitation by 4s., he was, as he had said at the commencement of his remarks, in favour of retrenchment, and, if the Ministry thought that they could get the children educated for £3 15s. per head with as much efficiency as at present, he would give his hearty support to their proposal. With regard to the substitution of strict average for working average, he could not agree to that. So far as

his knowledge went—and it was some time since he had anything to do with State schools—the allotment of staff was made in accordance with the average attendance at the schools, and that average was made up by dividing the total attendance by the number of days on which the school was open, after deducting the number of days on which the attendance had fallen below a certain number, and upon the result so obtained teachers were allotted to the school; but under strict average the total number would be divided by the actual number of school-days, making no allowance for the attendance having fallen owing to sickness or from any other cause. If the basis suggested by the Minister of Education were adopted it would lead to an inadequate staff being employed, and to the teachers' salaries being reduced. There might be many wet days in the year, and epidemics sometimes very materially interfered with the attendance; and he feared that evil results would follow from making the allotment of teachers to the schools on strict average instead of working average. He would therefore be unable to support that proposal. With regard to training teachers, he was wholly in favour of training-institutions being carried on by the Government; but in his opinion there were too many of these institutions in the colony. One for each Island would be quite sufficient. In Victoria the practice was that, after children had passed a certain standard or a certain examination, they received appointments as pupil-teachers, going through a course of three, or four, or five years. They were then sent to a training-institution, and remained there for two years; and while there they were taught by professors—university men—and they were also given practical experience in the State schools, receiving the salaries usually paid to assistants, to help in their support. He believed that there should be some system of that kind by which the State could train its teachers; but he thought there might be substantial reductions in the expenditure now incurred in this direction. With regard to the reduction of expenditure in the State-school system, he thought considerable retrenchment might be made without touching the school-age, without interfering with the working average, or without materially interfering with the training-institutions; and it might be made by abolishing the Boards. It would have been seen, by what had fallen from several honourable members in the course of the debate, that some Boards were not conducting their affairs upon economical principles. The honourable member for Napier had shown that some Boards were not worked cheaply, and that, in fact, where Boards were disposed to be economical, they could make considerable savings. In the honourable gentleman's own district, he understood, they had saved £2,000 out of the allotment during the past year, which had been put by for building purposes, though the honourable member did not say that it was required for that purpose. He (Mr. Loughrey) was in favour, therefore, of abolishing the Boards. Each of these bodies had a staff consisting of Inspectors,

*Mr. Loughrey*

a secretary, clerks, *et cetera*, which to a large extent might be done without if the system were worked from one centre. If the Boards were dispensed with the teachers would be appointed in a proper manner; they would be more independent, and not be at the beck-and-call of the Committees of the districts in which they might be situated, and for this reason they would do their duty better and more efficiently. The Minister had already stated that, though he proposed to increase the school-age, he would see that the country schools were not interfered with; but he should like to ask the honourable gentleman what average he intended to take on which to keep the country schools open. He believed that they were at present kept open when there was an average of twenty. If that average should be reduced in consequence of the exclusion of the children mentioned by the Minister, what advantage would be gained? The same expenses would be incurred in working the school, notwithstanding the reduced attendance; and the only advantage—if it were an advantage—would be that a number of children would be deprived of the means of being educated. It was no more trouble to teach twenty than it was to teach twelve. The teacher had a certain number of classes to instruct, and it would make no difference to him whether there were five or six children in a class, or two or three. In conclusion, he had to say that he was prepared to support the second proposal of Ministers—that was, to reduce the capitation-allowance—he had no doubt it had been carefully considered—and he could support a reduction of the grant in aid of training-colleges; but he was not prepared to support the other proposals.

Mr. WALKER felt sorry that the Ministry had not adopted the same course with this subject that they had adopted with other of their estimates—that was, to state to the House their inability to make definite proposals, and to seek from the House confidence that they would do their best to effect economy where they could. It would have been asking a good deal from the House, but he believed that the House was prepared to grant them that confidence. He was sorry that in this the most important part of our expenditure, a matter which required the most complete knowledge and the most delicate treatment, they should have been so precipitate as to rush in where angels feared to tread, and to propose to do something which might seriously affect the excellence and good working of the education system. It would have been much more wise if Ministers had been less radical in their proposals, and more cautious in the reductions which they proposed to make. Although pledged and persuaded that the present education system must be supported in its entirety, that was, so far as work was concerned, he was not averse from economy: in fact, he was prepared to follow Ministers or anybody else where it could be shown that economy could be secured without a sacrifice of efficiency. But what he felt was that it had not yet been shown that economy could safely

be effected in the direction proposed by Ministers. The fact had already been referred to by the honourable member for Caversham that a Committee was appointed at the beginning of the session to consider this matter; and he regretted that that Committee had not been trusted so far as to have effect given to its report. That Committee stated generally that it had not had time to complete its investigations, and candidly confessed its inability to bring down any report that could exhaustively and thoroughly deal with the question. Why, then, should the Minister, unless he was prepared to say that he had more information than that Committee—which he could not have after but one fortnight of office—come down and say that he saw his way to alter the whole system? It would have been infinitely more creditable to say candidly that he was unable to recommend at the present time any specific reduction, but that, if the House would leave the matter in his hands, it might safely trust him—declaring that he valued the system too much to injure it, but, at the same time, he would endeavour to effect such reductions as were possible by next session. If the honourable gentleman had said that, the House would have extended to him its confidence.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What would the Opposition have said?

Mr. WALKER said the Opposition never refused reasonable advice from any Minister, nor refused to extend to any Minister reasonable confidence. So much for the general question. He was sorry indeed that the Government had altered their tactics on this particular point of their policy, because he considered it would have been much wiser not to have done so. So far as the House had heard from the Minister, the only specific point he really brought up that required serious consideration was that which had been also dealt with by the honourable member for Napier, which was that there was a good deal of difference of administration in different districts. That was the most important point that had been laid before the House that day. And what did it prove? Not that any particular part of the system should be reduced all over the colony, but that the administration should be improved where it was faulty. The Minister, however, had not shown exactly how it was to be improved, even in districts where he thought there had been a lack of good administration. The whole circumstances only pointed to this: that more mature deliberation and consideration of the whole subject was, in the first place, necessary before the Minister could presume to guide the House in this most important matter. He trusted the Minister would take into consideration all he had heard that day upon the subject, and endeavour, next session, to lay before the House better and more matured recommendations. He ventured to doubt whether, at present, the Minister had any data upon which to found his proposals; and the fact that he was prepared to accept a compromise showed that he was acting upon insufficient data. The exact nature of the compromise he (Mr. Walker)

did not know; but the fact that the Minister was willing to accept a compromise showed that he was not quite clear himself, for if he had seriously considered the matter he would have been the last person to accept a compromise. He did not see how the Committee could arrive at any distinct issue on any one of the matters submitted to it. They were really working in the dark, and the Minister would not be fully assured as to what the real opinion of the House was upon any one of the four points. However, he trusted that before the debate closed the Ministry would gather the opinions of a good many of the members. As to the first question, the school-age, the Committee which had been appointed at the beginning of the session was able to gather some evidence, and he was not astonished that the evidence which was procurable was certainly not of a character to support the Government proposals. When the Committee was appointed some members, during the course of the light debate that took place on the question, said that they would not send their children to school before the age of seven. That was exactly a point upon which there was much misconception. It was all very well for honourable members who had nurseries and governesses not to send their children to school at the age of five years; but, then, their children were under governesses, receiving most important training and discipline, though, nominally, they were not going to school. Then, there was this point he wished to emphasize: that the younger children who went to school were receiving most valuable instruction and discipline in habits and manners. At the same time that they were not subjected to anything which could hinder their physical development, as regarded their mental development they were receiving most perfect training, which would enable them, when the proper time came, to learn the different subjects which would come before them. The evidence placed before the Committee was most conclusive on that point. The evidence of Mr. Habens certainly went to show that in his opinion it was a fallacy to suppose that the education in the lower classes in the public schools did anything more than train the children in habits of discipline and obedience: it also showed that, more than that, the training they had to undergo was absolutely pleasant and agreeable, and had all the advantages that the kindergarten system possessed. Then, as regarded the inclusion of these children in the schools, that affected in the most prodigious manner the cost of the whole system. It was by these children being included that they were enabled to support so many country schools. The education of the children in the infant schools did not cost more than £1 5s. or £1 10s. per annum, and the money that was saved by their capitulation enabled the Boards to keep up the country schools. As against that, the Minister proposed that, if these children were kept out of the schools, not a single country school should be shut up; but, as had been shown by the honourable member for Wellington Suburbs,

the saving thus proposed to be effected would be merely nominal: the money that would have to be sent to keep up the country schools would be precisely the same amount as that saved, and, in addition, the children would be turned from the other schools into the streets. He thought they should get the children into the schools as soon as possible. It would do them no harm, but good; and under the present system the country would not be a penny the better for the proposed change, while the education of the country would be a great deal worse. For these reasons, he maintained that, so far as the question of school-age was concerned, the Minister of Education had not made out a case, and he would be prepared to vote for the retention of the school-age as at present. Regarding the children who had passed the standards before they arrived at the other limit of the school-age, if clever, hard-working children did that he should be very sorry to see them excluded. At the same time, he admitted that this was one of the branches of the subject which showed the necessity for exhaustive consideration, not only with regard to primary but also with regard to secondary education. He therefore desired that the Minister, who was evidently desirous of making good the old proverb about a new broom, should look into this matter during the recess, and endeavour to show what he could do with regard to the whole system. If he could bring down to the House a system which would save all overlapping, and enable every link in the chain to be well welded and to do its work efficiently—primary education doing its work, and secondary education not overlapping, but also doing its work—he, for one, should be exceedingly glad: and he trusted the Minister would devote his energies to this during the recess. Then, with regard to the normal schools, the Minister laid a great deal of stress on the fact that two of our normal schools were not doing good work. The honourable gentleman admitted that the Otago Training-school was doing good work, and he said nothing about the North Canterbury school; therefore it was to be presumed that silence gave consent, and that it also was doing good work. He should be very sorry to see all these normal schools done away with. He admitted that, in the interests of economy, there might be only one for the South Island and one for the North Island; but it was wrong to suppose that any economy or assistance would come to education by doing away with them altogether. He therefore could not agree with that proposal. One of the arguments of the Minister of Education was that some of the districts which had no normal schools did very well without them; but what happened in those districts? Simply that they got the teachers they wanted to fill important positions from the districts which had normal schools. That certainly did not show that normal schools were not necessary to the colony. With regard to the averages, he was not sufficiently acquainted with the working of the system to say whether the proposal of the Minister was right or wrong; but he learned

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enough from the speech of the honourable member for Linwood to know that it would work very unfairly in some instances, and therefore he would urge on the Minister to hold that back for further consideration. As regards the capitation, he would not be averse from its being reduced to the statutory amount, because if they had learned one thing during the debate it was this: that there had been a great deal of difference in the administration by different Boards, and that some conducted their education system for much less than others. His own experience in Canterbury had been that the Board had for some years been managing their affairs in an exceedingly extravagant manner. They had been lavish in putting up school-buildings in places where they were not wanted, and the style of buildings they had erected was much more palatial than the circumstances of the neighbourhoods required. They had not even considered whether the district was one that was likely to be permanently settled, or one which was merely stuffed with little children for the moment and so enabled to appeal to the Education Board for a school. He therefore thought that a little enforced economy in their case and in other cases would have a salutary effect. He had listened with a great deal of pleasure to many of the remarks of the honourable member for Napier, which tended in the direction of showing that some of the Education Boards had administered their affairs with a great deal of economy, and without any bad effects to the cause of education. For these reasons, he would vote for the reduction of the capitation to the statutory amount. It had also been hinted that Boards were an expense and drag upon the system. Why that should be so he did not know. The members of those Boards were certainly gentlemen who devoted themselves to the work for no other cause than that they loved it and wished to do their best for it. The expenses of these Boards were not very great, and it would not be fair to do away with them all over the colony. That would render the central expense in Wellington at least five times as great as it was now. He would be sorry to see that change effected, because there would be nothing that would tend more to destroy the sense of self-reliance of the people than to have to apply for everything to the central office in Wellington. Properly administered, the district Boards ought to be valuable adjuncts to the cause of education, and valuable advisers to the central office in Wellington. In conclusion, he would urge upon the Minister, if only for the sake of his own reputation, to pause a little longer before he pressed these radical changes on the country. If the honourable gentleman would only take three months to consider he would probably bring down a scheme which would be more advantageous to the colony, and more conservative of the good parts of the system we now had. He believed in the prudence of this delay, because the system of education was of immense advantage to the future, and to the children of the colony; and it was one for

which every taxpayer of the colony paid, and every taxpayer had a right to get his full value from it.

Mr. ALLEN must commence by saying a few words on the general question, so that the attitude he took up might not be misunderstood. He yielded to no man in his desire to see the whole population educated in the very best possible manner, and he said that because he believed the danger of the future, the danger of competition, was not from pauper labour, but lay in the competition which would take place between us and highly-educated labour elsewhere. At the same time, knowing the position we were in, it behoved us also to see that our education, while being as efficient as it was now, was managed economically. That was a question which was prominently before the electors during the recent electioneering campaign,—and, in connection with that, he might answer one argument brought forward by the honourable member for Linwood, who said that every candidate was pledged to support the school-age at five years—

Mr. LOUGHREY had not said anything of the kind.

Mr. ALLEN understood the honourable gentleman to say that if any one had dared to propose that the school-age should be increased from five to six years he would have lost his election. As far as he himself was concerned—and honourable members knew whom he had to oppose at the election—he boldly stated to his constituents that he thought the raising of the school-age from five to six was necessary under our present difficulties. Then, they were told by the last speaker that the physical strain on children attending school at five years of age had no evil effects. The honourable gentleman was not present at the meeting of the Education Committee at which medical evidence was taken which tended to prove exactly the contrary. Dr. Brown gave evidence to this effect before the Committee:—

“If I am to give an opinion, speaking as a medical man, I think that children in the majority of cases are sent to school too early. I do not think that for the purposes of real education the majority of children derive much benefit from schooling under six or seven years of age. During the early years of childhood I think that the best use that can be made of a child's time is to help him to get as sound and healthy a bodily organism as possible.”

Then he was pressed minutely on this point, and he said he thought that under any circumstances a child would be better in the open air enjoying any healthful form of recreation, and that his opinion was based on experience and observation. That evidence came from a gentleman who was not only a medical man, but also Chairman of an Education Board, and one who took a great interest in the work; and some weight ought to attach to his opinion. What, then, was there in favour of raising the school-age? They should also take into consideration what was done in other countries which were in the van of progress in regard to education. In Switzerland, which

was in the very front rank in educational progress, the children were bound to go to school at seven years, and could go at six; in France the compulsory age was from six to thirteen; in Hamburg the children could not enter the schools before they were six; and in America the legal minimum age was six: the compulsory age was from eight to fourteen. He would admit that there were variations in the school-age in America, and that the average was from five to six years; but in nearly all of the countries of Europe the lowest age at which a child might enter a school was six years. He thought that, taken with what he had mentioned before, should also have some weight with the Committee. It would be seen, then, from what he had said that he was quite prepared to vote for the raising of the school-age from five to six years; but he should have been quite prepared to accept the report which came down from the Education Committee, not because he personally wanted much more evidence in favour of the raising of the school-age, but because he thought it wise, when a large reform was being made, to take time to consider it. If, however, a division were called for he was pledged to vote for the raising of the age to six. Then, with regard to the reduction by 4s. of the capitation-grant, he was also quite prepared to vote for that; and, as far as he could gather from the speeches in the Committee, most members were prepared to vote for the 4s. reduction. At any rate, he should vote for it himself; and he was not afraid to say that he saw no reason why the salaries of the more highly paid school-teachers should not be reduced. The late Government proposed reductions in the Civil Service, but none in the salaries of highly-paid school-teachers; and the late Colonial Treasurer based his argument for the reduction of the salaries of Civil servants on the fact, as he said, that the purchasing-power of money was far greater than it was a few years ago. If that argument had any weight with regard to Civil servants, certainly it had the same weight with regard to highly-paid school-teachers. On that ground alone he should be prepared to vote for the reduction of the 4s.

Mr. SEDDON.—What is your definition of a highly-paid school-teacher?

Mr. ALLEN.—£500 a year.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—How many of those have you in the colony? Only three or four.

Mr. ALLEN said there were several. He must candidly confess that not sufficient evidence had been adduced to enable him to make up his mind on the third proposal of the Government, relating to strict average, and he should therefore prefer that that question be left over until next session. With regard to the normal schools or training-colleges, he felt that it would be advisable to leave the question open until next session. He knew from the evidence that had been brought before the Committee that in some cases the training-colleges had proved more or less failures; but he was not prepared to accept that judgment in regard to the normal schools in the district from which he

came. He thought everybody coming from that part of the colony would admit that they had been to a very great extent a success. But it involved a very large question of policy. The training of school-teachers was a large question they could hardly make up their minds upon in one day or evening. He should prefer it to be left over until next session, when they might discuss it under more favourable conditions. An honourable member made a remark that afternoon that in Hawke's Bay they had got no training-college, and yet got on quite as well without it. Now, that might be quite true; but, from the evidence he had before him, Hawke's Bay had been drawing her teachers from the Otago training-colleges. He had before him a letter to Mr. James Fulton, M.H.R., from Dr. Stuart, a gentleman who, he supposed, was known to everybody in the House. Dr. Stuart said,—

"I have had the opinion that our Normal School does good work. Its trained men are in demand in South Canterbury, Hawke's Bay, and Taranaki, and in such demand that at this moment there is only one trained man who is not in a situation. When its students go up to the University they take a full share of the honours."

He had also before him evidence from the head-teacher of the Normal School in Dunedin very much to the same effect. He said,—

"Were the school training only for the Otago District there might be reason even in this [*i.e.*, reduced expenditure on the Normal School]; but it trains teachers for Southland and South Canterbury, for Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, and Wanganui, and for other education districts as well. The teachers of these districts would not be burdened with the cost of training. Why should the teachers of Otago?"

Well, with evidence of that kind before him, he could not make up his mind to vote for doing away with normal schools and training-colleges, and he hoped that question might be held over till next session. Of course the whole question was a large one. He supposed they all very much regretted being obliged to make any reductions whatever in the education system; but they had to admit that the time had now come when they were sorely pressed for funds, and, if it were possible to make economies in the education system without impairing its efficiency, why, then, it was their duty to do so. However, he would not go into the whole question now. He supposed that next session the question would crop up again, and they would then have the full evidence of the Education Committee before them, and perhaps those who had been unable yet to come to any conclusion would then be able to make up their minds more readily.

Dr. FITCHETT had a good deal to say on his subject, but would mercifully refrain from saying most of it, because the matter had already been pretty exhaustively argued. But he could not content himself without saying something, because he thought that, from every point of view, this was the most important matter they had had to discuss this session.

*Mr. Allen*

Now, he was a very loyal friend of the present system of education, and, as far as possible, he would allow nothing to touch it that, in his judgment, would injure it. It was because he was so loyal a friend of the system that he would cordially assist every effort to intelligently economize. There were enemies on all sides, and the friends of education could best sustain it by showing no vulnerable point of attack. Therefore he was strenuously in favour of every attempt to economize the education system. But he was not going to economize at the expense of the system, and he was very sorry to say that, so far as three out of these four proposals went, he was emphatically against them. He thought the Ministry had been altogether premature in this matter. They appointed a Committee, and voluminous evidence was taken; and yet the House was now asked to deal with this great question while honourable members generally were in a state of ignorance as to the evidence adduced and the result of the labours of the Committee! Ignoring the labours of the Committee, the Government came down with a series of isolated lines on which they proposed to pursue their retrenchment. Indeed, the interim report presented by the Committee was directly in the teeth of the Government proposals. He thought this was a mistake. It would be noticed that in the discussion, though every speaker had urged retrenchment, they were by no means in accord with the Government. One honourable gentleman declared that Boards should be abolished, another that the standards should be revised, another that the high schools should be abolished. All these things went to show that the Government were premature in endeavouring to retrench before they knew where to retrench: and therein lay the danger which the system ran at the hands of the Government. He protested against tinkering with so important a question as the education system of the colony. He thought they should have time during the recess to exhaustively analyse the whole affair, and at the beginning of next session come down with a complete and exhaustive scheme of retrenchment. In that he would assist, and he believed that not only would the loss consequent on the delay be very trifling, but he believed retrenchment to the extent of nearly £100,000 could be achieved, and that, too, without injuring the system—in fact, it might heighten the efficiency of the system. Dealing with the Government proposals, and taking first the school-age, the onus lay on the Government to establish the advisability of a change. The Government had pledged themselves to do nothing to injure the efficiency of the system. The onus rested on them to show that raising the school-age would not injure the system. That view had not been sufficiently urged on the Committee. What evidence was adduced in support of the proposed change? The Minister of Education told the Committee that, of thirty-nine reports or answers, nineteen were in favour of raising the school-age, sixteen were against it, and four were silent. He (Dr. Fitchett) took it that the four who were

silent were really in favour of the present state of things; so that, from the Minister's own figures, there were nineteen in favour of the change and twenty against it. Thus the balance of evidence was against the Minister. That, however, was perhaps a narrow way of looking at it. Honourable members had not before them the evidence given before the Committee, but he would briefly refer to one or two points that had already been touched on. The Minister of Education laid emphasis on the evidence in favour of raising the school-age given by Dr. Brown, and therein he was followed by the honourable member for Dunedin East. Now, in considering that evidence they must remember one thing: that Dr. Brown was not a specialist in education at all. He had no practical knowledge of it. He was a specialist as a medical man, but not as an educationalist. But his evidence did not support the contention of the Minister of Education, or of the honourable member for Dunedin East, who carefully omitted an answer given by Dr. Brown that put his evidence in an altogether different light. He would read the question and answer:—

"You say that you think the children are sent too early to school. Does not that depend upon the sort of instruction they get and the sort of accommodation that exists?—Yes; but, assuming the instruction to be intelligent and the accommodation fit, I consider that at the present school-age children would get no harm from attendance at school and the form of instruction they get there—supposing the hours are not too long. I lay great stress on that point. I put special emphasis on this point so far as it relates to the school-hours. I think they are at present too long for infants. I fail to see what benefit is derived from an attendance of four hours—two hours in the forenoon and two hours in the afternoon—for very young children."

There he surrendered the whole position, for if the instruction were not intelligent or the accommodation fit they should be made so. If the hours were too long, that was a matter of detail to be remedied by the department; it was not a reason for raising the school-age. Again,—

"Is the present accommodation fit?—It has been made as fit as possible—that is, as fit as we could make it in Otago."

"Do you not think that a child would be better off even if kept in premises not exactly adapted to his use than if he were running in the street?—I do not."

That was a matter on which each honourable gentleman could form a judgment. He (Dr. Fitchett) submitted that it was far better that a child should be kept in a well-regulated school than be allowed to run about in the back-lanes of a city. Then, the Minister asked, "You think that under any circumstances the child would be better in the open air enjoying any healthful form of recreation?" Dr. Brown answered, "I do." The doctor was under the delusion that if a child was not at school it would of necessity be enjoying healthy recreation out-

side. Now, had young children, particularly the children of poor people, who formed the mass of the population in cities, any opportunity of enjoying healthful recreation outside? They had not.

Mr. FISHER.—Why necessarily in the gutters?

Dr. FITCHETT said, in the cases of the poor, the fathers being away at work, and the mothers engaged in their domestic duties, the children were left to their own sweet will, and they went to the gutter naturally—it was the only place open to them. He would draw attention to the evidence of a witness of greater authority than Dr. Brown, or, indeed, probably than any other witness—the Rev. Mr. Habens, Inspector-General of Schools. In one answer he put concisely and conclusively the whole position of those who contended that the school-age should not be raised. He was asked, "What do you think is the general effect of discipline and teaching on these younger children?" and the answer was,—

"Considering the early age at which the children of the artisan and the labourer ordinarily leave school, I am of opinion that it is necessary to admit such children to school at an early age, in order that their school-course may be of reasonable length; and that, in schools which are sufficiently organized to provide instruction upon proper methods for children between five and seven years of age, such children derive a very great benefit from the discipline and instruction which they receive, and are thereby prepared for the severer methods of instruction that will follow in the more advanced classes. I think it should also be remembered that the children of the same class, if they are not at school at an early age, are likely to receive a practical education out-of-doors that, however advantageous it may be to them from a physical point of view, is perhaps very detrimental from a moral and intellectual point of view. I may add that, if we regard the example set by England in this matter, the English Government recognises the attendance of children just above three years of age as entitling the schools they attend to grants from the Treasury."

This was what Dr. Brown said about school-age and capitation:—

"At the same time, I must say that, having gone carefully into this question of capitation-allowance and its bearing on the cost of education, I fail to see how, as long as the State continues to have the control of education in its hands, this system can be maintained unless the school-age is retained pretty much as it is or the capitation-allowance is increased."

Yet the Government actually proposed to reduce the capitation-allowance. He would not appeal further to authorities, but he would appeal to the common-sense of the Committee as to whether it was not reasonable and right to let children go to school at the age of five. As it had been well put by one honourable member, raising the school-age would, paradoxical as it seemed, be imposing a

tax to keep the children out of school. The country schools would suffer from the decreased capitation, and would have to get assistance from the Government to keep open; so it would be really imposing a tax to keep children from the schools. It had been said that children between five and six were too young to undergo a steady course of instruction—that they were physically and mentally too weak, and that therefore they should not be permitted to go to school. But honourable members could see, and the evidence would show, that these young children were not instructed in the sense spoken of at all, but that they were kept at school subject to discipline, where they learned habits of order and attention, and unconsciously absorbed, through their pores, as it were, a large amount of information. They acquired a habit of noticing things, and in all these ways they fitted themselves for learning more quickly later on. The evidence went to show that children who attended school at an early age learned faster, relatively, than children who had not attended school at an early age. As to the proposed reduction of capitation, it seemed to him that it would be entirely inoperative. Under the present system the Government gave the money to the Education Boards. The Boards gave a sufficiency to the town schools, and the country schools got what was left. It was like pouring water into a cup; the cup was filled, and then what more was poured ran over. Here the money was poured into the cup of the town schools, and what was over ran to the country schools. If the quantity poured was decreased the cup would still have to be filled before any could run over, and of course it would be the overflow that would be so much less to the country schools, and the country schools would have to come to the Government for enough more to keep them alive. It was as clear as a syllogism. There would be no real saving: the towns would be first supplied, and would absorb all the funds. The country schools would come to the Government for more, and would get it; for the Government were pledged to keep open the country schools. As to the strict-average proposal, the honourable member for Linwood had put that quite out of court. By having the strict average instead of the working average an indefinite punishment would be inflicted on the teacher—it would be making his salary dependent on the weather: salaries would go up and down with the barometer. Anything more absurd could not be conceived. The Minister could not have considered what would be the effect of such a change or he would never have suggested it. The master would have to do the same amount of work at all times, for it was just as easy to teach six as four; but, as he had said, the man would get a fluctuating salary, and, literally, it would depend on the weather. Reverting for a moment to the raising of the school-age, he would like to point out that the honourable member for Napier seemed to miss the point of what had been urged in favour of the present order of things. The argument was that, as the town

schools did not cost so much per head to maintain as the country schools, if the allowances were decreased there would not be so much to go to the country schools by way of surplus from the town schools; that, therefore, the country schools would suffer most. The honourable gentleman said that in the country children under six years did not attend—that it was usually too far for them to go, and they were kept away by the weather; that therefore it would be the town schools more than the country schools that would suffer. On reflection the honourable gentleman would see that the surplus was chiefly created by the attendance in town schools of children under six. As to closing the normal schools, that was a new proposal not indicated in the Financial Statement, which gave the general lines of the proposed retrenchment. If it was intended to abolish them, direct evidence on that point should have been taken by the Education Committee. This was not done, but such evidence as there was was entirely in favour of the retention of the normal schools. All the witnesses, both those who gave their evidence orally and those who did so in writing, were asked if they could make suggestions for effecting economy, and not one had suggested abolishing the normal schools. That was really affirmative evidence in favour of retaining them. The Minister had quoted a Mr. Fidler as reflecting on the efficiency of the Auckland school; but when Mr. Fidler came to give evidence before the Committee he did not say anything on that subject. But, because one school was inefficient, that was no argument for abolishing the entire system; it only proved that one school wanted improving. In Canterbury and Otago the training-schools had done most excellent work, and had given full value to the country for its money in the teachers they had turned out.

Mr. FISHER.—Canterbury?

Dr. FITCHETT could speak from his own knowledge of the Canterbury school and of those conducting it. That school had turned out teachers worth the whole vote to the colony. Besides the actual work of training teachers, the normal schools also served a most valuable purpose as nurseries to the university. Our system of education encouraged teachers to go through the University. There was great benefit in that. Those going through the training-colleges simply would probably acquire only enough to suit their immediate purpose and enable them to pass the necessary examinations, while those passing through the University acquired a larger and broader knowledge. They knew all round the subjects they taught, and so were better teachers. The system of normal schools was a good one. They took the cream of the scholars and made them teachers. Abolish them, and the supply of trained teachers must be imported from outside. He hoped they would be allowed to remain till next session at all events, when the whole subject could receive mature consideration. Indeed, he hoped the whole of the proposals would be allowed to stand over till next

*Dr. Fitchett*



session. He knew that savings could be made in the administration of the primary system and in the cost of higher education; savings could be made in the standards, and savings could be made by lessening the number of Education Boards. There could be also large sums saved and greater efficiency attained in the system of inspection. Not one of these things was embodied in the proposals of the Government. He knew this matter had been discussed apart from party consideration, and he hoped all honourable members would be guided without prejudice in coming to a decision on the different proposals submitted. He was satisfied that, though possibly the reducing of the capitation might not do much harm, yet the raising of the school-age and the abolishing of the normal schools were organic changes of a most disastrous kind—changes that hereafter would be bitterly regretted.

Mr. PEACOCK would not say much now on the question of school-age, as he had spoken on it before; but, after what had been said and quoted by the honourable member for Dunedin Central, he could not refrain from giving a quotation bearing on this point. The honourable member had referred somewhat disparagingly to the evidence of Dr. Brown, given before the Education Committee, because it happened to be against his own views, and stated it was overridden by that of the Rev. Mr. Habens. He wished to read a few lines from the evidence of perhaps the highest expert on the subject in the world. Mr. Arnold, Inspector-General of Schools in Great Britain, when being examined before the Royal Commission on Education, referred as follows to Germany, a country in the front rank of the nations as regarded education: "In Germany they tell you that it is settled by all the medical authorities that children have no business to begin to learn before they are six years old."

Mr. DUNCAN said the Committee had heard a great deal of argument from the town point of view, and he would now say a few words on the country side of the question. There were twenty-one or twenty-two schools in his electorate, mostly small ones: in fact, in about seven of them there was attendance about enough to let the teachers be fairly paid; while, as to the rest, if the Government proposals were carried there could be no doubt that further assistance would be wanted to keep them alive. He supposed that the average for seven of those schools would be about 120, and that the average attendance at the others would be about forty, while some of them had as few as twenty-five pupils, so that it would mean that, if this plan were carried out, a number of those teachers would have to come to the Government for assistance—that they would actually have to beg for an existence. That deserved consideration; and another matter which deserved consideration was that nothing should be done which would reduce educational advantages to the children of those people who went into the remote parts of the country to carry on the work of colonisation. He did not

believe that the Minister of Education had sufficiently thought the matter out. He had no doubt that the honourable gentleman was sincere in stating that he would not allow country schools to be shut up; but there were so many of them that were at starving-point already that any reductions must have the effect of shutting them up. It had been stated that there would be a saving of £26,000 by raising the school-age. He did not know how that was arrived at; but he did not think that it would be so large. At any rate, he did not suppose that raising the age would very much affect the small country schools, because children under the age of six could not walk any distance to the schools. But reducing the capitation-allowance would affect them to a very large extent, especially where there were a good many small schools in a district. The Boards did not seem to be able to give these schools much for maintenance now, and they would then be compelled to give them less; and he feared that it would come to this: that the cost of maintenance would be thrown upon the people in the neighbourhood of these schools; and they could not afford it. As to the alteration in the average, that would have a very serious effect, because the children in wet weather, when the roads were bad and the creeks were flooded, could not attend. Many of the children had seven or eight miles to travel, and it was certain that there must be many causes to prevent regular attendance which were not to be found in connection with the schools in town. He therefore hoped that the country members would endeavour to see that this change in the average should not be made in the case of the country schools, for, to secure an average sufficient to keep the schools open, the children would have to go in weather and under circumstances that might bring on illness that would do them more harm than remaining from school for a week or two during the year. He did not agree with the proposal made by the honourable member for Napier, if he understood him aright, that female teachers should be appointed to the small country schools. There were lots of grown-up boys, say, of eight or nine or ten years old, who were sent to these schools when they knew little or nothing; and he should like to know what power a female teacher would have of controlling half a dozen boys such as those, especially if, as might often happen, they had never been to school previously, and had not learned any discipline. For another thing, it would not be easy to get females to go into these out-of-the-way places. They must necessarily have parents or some one to protect them. He thought it should be male teachers who should be sent to these out-of-the-way places. Then, it was said that there was no need to have as high-grade or highly-trained teachers for these country schools as for the town schools. But he held a different opinion. If they were to have a national system, then the outlying schools should really have better teachers than were to be found in the town schools, or, at any rate, as good. The primary

schools in the country districts were the only schools that the children brought up there would have the benefit of, whereas in the towns the children would have the high schools to go to. That led him to another point, and that was that it was not right, especially in the outlying districts, where there were no high schools, to stop the teaching after the Sixth Standard had been passed, or to call upon the parents to pay for it. There were not many of the pupils who stayed after they had passed the Fourth or the Fifth Standard; and if there were any who could stay till they could pass the Seventh or the Eighth Standard—if there was such a standard—they should be allowed to stay, especially seeing that they could be educated at the cost of £8 15s. per head, whereas in the high schools the education cost on an average £24 for each pupil. That showed the unfairness of the thing. He was unwilling to see the education system touched to any material extent. He did not say that there could be no savings effected, because he believed that there might be in some of the higher salaries, and in the reduction of the number of Inspectors, who, moreover, should be made to change districts occasionally. Referring to Otago, he knew that there were three Inspectors employed there; and he believed that they might very well take Southland as well as Otago. But, beyond that, he did not think there could be many changes, and he was quite against any interference with the standards and the school-age, or the alteration of the system of averages now in force. He had explained his views regarding these points very fully during the election, and had told his constituents that the people would be very foolish if they permitted any change in the education system: it was about the only thing that the bulk of the people got for the money they contributed towards meeting the expenditure of the colony. His opponent had expressed approval of raising the school-age to six years, and had said that he would cut down unnecessary expenditure where he could, pointing to those things which the Government had now proposed. The result was that he (Mr. Duncan) had been returned. With regard to the normal schools, that was one part of the system that should not be touched, and he would tell the House why. In his early days, in the North of Ireland, the young teachers went to a training-college in Dublin, and they went under a system that might be very well followed in this country. Every teacher commenced as a pupil-teacher, and when he had got to that stage of efficiency that he could take charge of a school he was given a small school, but he was allowed every year three months free to go to Dublin. A man was put in his place; and he was allowed three months' free education at Dublin College, and if he passed the necessary standards there he could go again for a fourth year. He thought that was a plan which might very well be followed here. Three months' tuition at the normal school would give pupil-teachers a grasp of the subject which they could not

*Mr. Duncan*

get otherwise, and make them more efficient teachers.

Mr. FISHER said experience had not proved that they were the best teachers.

Mr. DUNCAN said his experience was different. In his district they had had teachers from the normal school, and they had proved most excellent; but he believed practical training in the schools in the art of teaching and normal-school tuition were both required, and that then they would get the best teachers. The best teachers were not the M.A.s, but men who had a grasp of human nature, who could conduct a school mildly, intelligently, and strictly, without harshness. If the normal schools were done away with the clever youths of our poorer classes would be crowded out from becoming teachers, because they were not in the same position as the rich to obtain outside tuition; and the schools of the colony would be the losers. With the exceptions he had mentioned, he could not conscientiously support the proposals. Of course, all unnecessary expenditure should be done away with; and he had no doubt there was such expenditure. He hoped the present Minister of Education would find these things out during the recess, and come down with a comprehensive measure next session. It would be far better to do that, to remodel the whole Education Act, than to bring proposals down in the form of resolutions at this late period of the session. However, since economy was the order of the day, he would not be against the 4s. being taken off the capitation-grant, to see if it could not be done without, as no great injury could be done by taking that away for a year or two, at any rate.

Mr. TANNER said it was evidently the intention of members to discuss the whole of the questions mentioned by the Minister of Education. Some honourable gentlemen opposite who had spoken had said that this subject should not have been brought on at this late period of the session: but much valuable time had been wasted in useless party discussions, instead of being occupied with the consideration of the great question submitted by the Ministry; and for this he did not think the Ministers were to blame. When he heard the honourable member for Dunedin Central he could not help thinking that he must be a bachelor, for he showed such a want of knowledge of the habits of children. That honourable gentleman seemed to think that of necessity if children were not at school they were in the gutters. He ventured to think that parents would resent such an imputation. The children in New Zealand were well conducted, and when not at school were by no means necessarily in the gutters or in mischief. In proof of this, he would ask honourable members to look at children during the vacations, when there were no schools open. If they went along the streets during the holidays they would not find the children in the gutters, but would find them behaving respectably and quietly. The argument he had made use of was certainly drawn not from facts, but from

imagination. When he heard the honourable member for Kumara descanting upon the merits of the children on the West Coast he could not help thinking that they must be very precocious there—perhaps living where there was a great deal of moisture caused them to spring up more rapidly; but, still, he thought that the children who had been heard singing their little ditties must have been between six and seven years of age, and not between five and six.

Mr. SEDDON.—No.

Mr. TANNER said of course he would accept that statement; but the children in that part of the colony must be very precocious. He would like to have brought on the floor of the House a child who was between the ages of five and six to show what infants such children were. He had found one of that age; but its mother would not let it out on exhibition. He asked the child's mother if it had learnt its A, B, C, and she replied that she thought the child should not begin to learn even its A, B, C before it was six years old. The honourable member for Napier had said that the question of the school-age would not affect the country schools so much, but only the town schools—with which he (Mr. Tanner) agreed. In his own district, he might say there were a large number of country schools, but only one of them would be affected by the alteration of the school-age; for the families whose children attended the other schools were so scattered that children between the ages of five and six could not attend the schools. But they might put that question on one side, for they had the assurance of the Minister of Education that the raising of the school-age should not interfere with any of the country schools. He regarded the raising of the school-age to six as proper, and the saving that would be effected by it as a genuine saving, and in that respect different from the savings subsequently proposed. The school-age, he believed, should have been raised to seven. There were twenty thousand children between the ages of five and seven years receiving education at the present time, and it would have meant a saving of £80,000. That was a direction where the saving would have been real. Then, again, he thought the secondary-education reserves ought to be taken and used for the purposes of primary education. He would begin with the Auckland Girls' High School reserve. That reserve was originally dedicated to primary education, and was then taken for secondary education; and so he would like to make a beginning with it. He would like to see an Act brought in next session handing it back to the purpose for which it was originally dedicated. Excepting by way of scholarships—and scholarships were paid for out of primary-school funds—the children of the poorer classes could get no advantage from these secondary schools. Parents were required to pay fees amounting to £9 a year at these schools; the poorer classes could not do that, and therefore the secondary schools were not available for them. For this reason the reserves should be

taken away from the secondary schools and handed over for the benefit of the primary-school system. He did not think the capitation should be reduced by 4s., as proposed, but that the saving should be effected by raising the school-age. The average age of children who passed the First Standard was very nearly nine years; and, as he was convinced that if they went to school at seven they would be able to pass the First Standard at nine, he thought the saving should be made by raising the school-age; but the reduction of the capitation-grant by £26,000 seemed to him to be in the wrong direction, and likely to injure the system. Many who had spoken in favour of the proposed reduction of the capitation had said that, above all things, the primary-school system should be supported in its efficiency; but the reduction of the capitation-grant would certainly go in the opposite direction. The complaint throughout the whole country was want of funds; and even in Hawke's Bay, where things were so well managed, when applications were sent down to the Board for more accommodation or appliances the answer had to be, "No funds;" and yet it was proposed to reduce the vote still further, and that in face of the fact that the population of the colony was increasing! There were twenty thousand children who were receiving no education at the present time, and the School Committees could not put the compulsory clauses into force, because they had no accommodation; and yet honourable members spoke in favour of reducing the means of affording accommodation! He hoped honourable members would pause before they voted for that. In order to test the question, he would move, when the proper time came, that the vote be reduced by £5, and would press it to a division. There were some honourable members who said that they desired to see assistance given to that section of the community who carried on education at their own expense. He would ask how they proposed to give that assistance. By reducing the capitation-allowance? If assistance was to be given to that section of the community, the only way to do it was to make a saving on the general system by raising the school-age to seven, which would effect a saving of £80,000, and by appropriating the secondary-education reserves, which would give another £20,000; and then those claims could be met without increased expenditure. One word with regard to Education Boards. He was one of those who thought that a saving would be made by abolishing these Boards, and that if the business were left in the hands of the Inspectors and School Committees the work would be better done. There was no doubt that a great many Education Boards had gone to great expense in their management, and the fact that the Hawke's Bay Board had managed well was no test of the general management. The honourable member for Napier, who was Chairman of that Board, was a prudent man and a good administrator, and it had been mainly through his management that there had been no extravagance. It had

been just the same when that honourable member was Superintendent of Hawke's Bay, and that was almost the only province which, on the abolition of the provinces, showed a credit balance. He believed that savings could be made without cutting down the salaries of the teachers, and he agreed with the honourable member for Napier that the best plan would be to have a scale of salaries which would not be subject to any change. That would be the only way to get efficient teachers, because those who undertook the education of children would know that they would receive such an allowance as would warrant them in going to some expense in their own education. With regard to the Seventh Standard, which meant that those who had passed the Sixth Standard might remain at the schools afterwards, he thought they should be able to do so if their parents could spare them. Fourteen was the average age for passing the Sixth Standard, and the school-age terminated at fifteen; and he did not think it would be wise to drive these children away as long as their parents could allow them to stay.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE thought that most of the arguments of the honourable gentleman who had just sat down were scarcely worth answering; but there were one or two points he would like to touch upon. The honourable gentleman first of all deprecated the waste of time there had been this session, and blamed the Opposition for that waste: but that was scarcely fair. If they considered what had caused this subject to be kept so far back they could not help seeing that it was caused very much by the Government side of the House. The House was here for seven or eight weeks before it got the Government policy. He did not say that the Government were to blame for that, because they had a great deal to do before they could bring down their Bills, particularly as so many of them had to be so constructed that they would meet the wishes of the Government supporters. Then, again, the House was asked to do in two months work that ought to occupy Parliament for at least six months; and that was the reason why, at the last moment, honourable members were called upon to discuss such large questions as that of education without time for proper consideration. The honourable gentleman said it would be a right thing to increase the school-age to seven, and that a saving of £80,000 would be made by that. That would be a very bad way to save money. No doubt it might suit the honourable gentleman and some others to reduce the taxation by £80,000; but the people of the colony would not have that justice done to them to which they were entitled if the school-age were raised. It would mean that the children of poor people—who had to leave school at ten years of age to help to support their families—could not get proper education, and would in many cases only be able to pass the Third Standard. Then, the honourable gentleman referred to the Education Boards; but his knowledge of Education Boards must be confined to that of Hawke's Bay, which no doubt the honourable

*Mr. Tanner*

gentleman thought perfect. However, it was not necessary to follow the honourable gentleman further. Coming to the real question at issue, he believed that the proposals of the Government would seriously affect the education system of the colony; and, if there was any question on which the people at the last elections gave a decided voice, it was on the question that the system of education should not be seriously interfered with. It was a pity that the House had not a better opportunity of expressing its opinion on this question, and he thought that the Minister of Education should have brought distinct resolutions before the House, and not brought on the discussion on a question of money. He could then have tested the opinion of the House on each subject separately. A large number of honourable members objected to a reduction in the vote, and yet they were asked to vote for a reduction in order to enable the proposals to be carried out. He was sorry that the Government had not seen their way to leave the question over till next session, with the exception of the capitation-allowance. They might have asked the House to express an opinion on that point, and that would have compelled the Education Boards to review their expenses and the salaries they paid to their teachers; and then the House would be in a far better position next year to deal with the whole subject. He believed they could make a large saving in the education expenditure without doing any injury to it, and he would be prepared to vote for the reduction of the capitation-allowance. Coming to the question of raising the school-age, he might say that he was opposed to that, because he thought it would do a great injury to country schools. He was surprised to hear some honourable members talk on this subject. It appeared to him that they did not understand it. With regard to raising the school-age, it would mean that the Boards would be unable to derive the surplus funds which they now obtained from the large town schools to assist country schools, and that the country schools must suffer to a very large extent. He did not know anything which induced people to go into the country and settle upon the land more than the fact that they were aware that, as soon as a number of children were in the district, schools would be established; but if they interfered with country schools they would put an end to this inducement. Of course the Minister had told the House that he would take care that no school was closed in the country by reason of this reduction. That might be right enough so far as existing schools were concerned, but when they came to consider the establishment of new schools it must seriously interfere with them. Then, as to the normal schools, it would be a serious matter to do away with them. Any one who knew anything of the subject must have come to the conclusion that a large number of the present teachers could not possibly have been trained but for the normal schools. What was the fact when the system was first established? We

were unable to get teachers until such time as they had been trained in the normal schools, unless they were obtained from Victoria, whence the principal supply came; and it would be a poor thing to again have to depend on Victoria.

Mr. FISHER.—How does Victoria train her teachers?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said they were trained there in the same way as they were trained here. There were 323 students trained in the Normal School, Dunedin, from its establishment up to the end of 1886; of whom no less than 227 remained as teachers in the employ of the colony, and the rest had done good service to the colony before they left the service. That was clear proof that the system had been a good one. There were now sixty-seven students in the Normal School at Dunedin, and about a hundred and fifty pupil-teachers, with whom they could not carry out their engagements unless they kept up the Normal School. If the Government reduced the vote they could not keep their engagements with the pupil-teachers and students. He thought it was a very bad thing to force the Education Board to close their normal schools. He was told they could aid those pupils by giving them scholarships—by teaching them in the college; but in the college they would have no chance of being trained for teaching. No doubt they would get a very good education in the college and be able to pass a degree—they might come out with high qualifications from a degree point of view, but they would be utterly ignorant of how to teach children. He hoped the Committee would seriously consider the subject before they did away with the normal schools. This reduction meant a reduction to the Otago Board of £14,000 a year. A committee of that Board considered how far they could retrench without seriously interfering with the system, and their proposition would be to reduce the expenditure by £7,000. The proposition of the Government now was to reduce it by £14,000. This reduction, if carried out, would very seriously interfere with the education system in that part of the country. As far as raising the school-age was concerned, and doing away with the normal schools, he would oppose the proposals of the Government, believing that those proposals would injure the education system.

Mr. MCGREGOR had supported the Government up to this particular question; but now he said, "Hold! enough." The extraordinary proposals of the Government were to him quite staggering. The idea of at once cutting off £60,000 from the education vote, and still carrying on an extravagant expenditure in connection with defence and Native matters, was something which the people in his part of the country could not possibly understand. Another matter which struck him was that the Minister came down with a proposal, and was not prepared to state what would be the effect of it. They were aware that the number of children at the public schools between the ages of five and seven was 21,054. It was, of course, a question which was open to

debate how many of these were between five and six. They had no statistics to guide them on that part of the subject. He had before him the last report of the Victorian Government, which he believed was the most reliable in the colonies, and one that was looked up not only in the colonies, but by the educational authorities at Home. There were no less than 2,809 children at the public schools of Victoria between the ages of three and four; 9,708 between the ages of four and five; and 15,428 between the ages of five and six,—clearly giving an indication that in that Australian colony in which probably education was best managed they adhered to the idea of sending children to school at a much earlier age than was here proposed. The educational system of Victoria was conducted by the Minister, who had a seat in Parliament, and was supported by a secretary and staff. There were no buffers like the Boards of Education in this country, which, in his opinion, was one great fault in our system, because these Boards were frequently the cause of deadlocks and trouble. The opinions of Dr. Brown and others, who were supposed to be experts, as to the inadvisableness or otherwise of sending children to school when they were five years old differed very much on this particular question. Almost every member of that House was returned pledged, directly or indirectly, to support the present educational system. He was thoroughly and distinctly of opinion that the school-age ought to be kept exactly as it was; and he was also in favour of children being sent to school at an early age, so that they might undergo a certain amount of discipline, and be under control when they got older, and thus be more apt to profit by the system of education that was provided for them in the public schools. The passing through the schools of the elder children of a family at an early age would often enable the younger ones to go to school earlier than they otherwise would, because in some cases it was necessary to keep one or two at home. He was sure the Minister could not have thoroughly thought out the whole question, and it would be a very advisable thing for him to hold his hand now, and to devote his time and energies during the recess—to which Ministers had now become so fond of alluding—to thoroughly weighing, considering, and inquiring into the whole question. The honourable gentleman should think the whole thing thoroughly out, and in the meantime let the whole matter remain in abeyance. They knew that the honourable gentleman believed in good education—they had proof of it in the classical quotations with which he delighted the House, and which showed that the honourable gentleman sympathized with all that was great and noble in the matter of education. That being so, the honourable gentleman should during the recess devote all his leisure to education. Though great in higher education and classics, the honourable gentleman was rather weak in his decimals, as was shown that day, when he referred to children being, on an average, nearly nine before

they passed the First Standard, whereas it was really only eight and a small decimal. As bearing on the question of expelling the children from the schools as soon as they had passed the Sixth Standard, no matter what age they were, he might mention that he had that day received a telegram saying a girl of his own, aged twelve years and a half, had passed the Sixth Standard with high honours, and under this proposal she would be compelled to leave the school, however much it might be desired she should stay on. As to making the reduction of 4s. in the capitation, that was a matter for fair consideration and argument; but he thought the whole subject should be left till next session. With that delicious vagueness of which he was so consummate a master, the Premier had said in the Financial Statement that the proposals of the Government would not involve the closing of any country schools. What did that really mean? Were all the small country schools to be made dame schools at £25 a year?

Mr. FISHER.—No, no.

Mr. MCGREGOR said he should like to know distinctly what it did mean before giving his vote. He should like to see nothing at all done this session, but that next session they should give the subject exhaustive consideration, and then adopt the Victorian system. In a country like this, where the institutions were democratic, it was the duty of every citizen to see that his children were properly educated. They might well consider the benefit of the system they had in this country. Scotland was one of the poorest countries in the world, but a country in the front rank as to education. There they had a system of bursaries or scholarships which drew out the cleverest children in an admirable manner, and gave them a university education at no cost to their parents. That, he thought, was the most perfect and cheapest higher-education system devisable. As the twig was bent so did the tree incline, and he believed in children beginning to attend school young, and was against the proposal of the Government to raise the school-age. He should be compelled to vote against their other educational proposals.

Dr. NEWMAN said he was very much surprised when he found it stated in the Financial Statement that the education estimates were to be reduced by £61,000, because he had been carefully through the expenditure, and failed to see how that could be done without seriously interfering with the salaries of teachers and with the efficiency of education. He was still more astonished when the Minister came down and said he would reduce the vote by £65,000. He was satisfied that, if the reductions were made as proposed, no Education Board would be able to carry on without incurring an overdraft or taxing the school-teachers' salaries in all directions. He was prepared to vote for a large reduction of the education vote, because he believed it was absolutely necessary; but to take £65,000 off one vote at one fell swoop was too much and too serious. If the Minister would kindly look at the items that made up

the £381,000 he would see that there was plenty of room for retrenchment. He could take £2,000 off the library vote; £2,700 off the higher-education vote, which would be a great saving to the colony—

Mr. FISHER.—Take the Wellington portion?

Dr. NEWMAN.—Certainly; take it along with the rest. He did not wish to see the Wellington College exceptionally treated. The vote for higher education in this colony was an enormously large one. Then, there was the college for deaf-mutes—there was gross extravagance in connection with that. There were in the college from thirty-seven to forty pupils, and they cost £3,250, or upwards of £80 per pupil. That seemed to be extravagant. Then, if the Minister wished for reform, there was the Native Schools Department, where there was a very large expenditure. To go back to the reforms proposed by the Minister, he thought it was wise to raise the school-age to six years. To keep the children under six years out of the schools was a fair and wise proposal. If the Boards were dealt with in the ruthless fashion proposed, within six months every Board in the colony would be unable to carry on for want of funds. He would urge upon the Minister to adhere to the agreement which he had accepted in the earlier part of the day. It was said that the young children were taught in the kindergarten fashion, and that the kindergarten children were taught for £1 10s. a head; but he would call attention to the fact that the children in the infant departments of the Wellington schools were taught at £1 10s. per head, and that the difference between that and the capitation went to make up for the cost of the higher-standard education. If they took it from the lower they must put it on the higher education. With regard to the abolition of the normal schools, he might say the Wellington Board had zealously tried to do its best with the Normal School; but there was no doubt that these four schools were not wanted, and that if they tried they could train their pupil-teachers at very much less cost. He would, however, like to see this vote kept on for one season longer. He would tell the Minister how he might retrench, in addition to the items he had already mentioned. He might abolish some of the Education Boards. There was no doubt that, with the means of communication that now existed, some of the Boards—half the Boards—could be done without and half their cost saved; though he did not think that if they did away with all the Boards the saving would be so great as some honourable members seemed to imagine, because in that case the expenditure of the central department would have to be increased. The districts should be amalgamated. Then, the Minister might, with the aid of experts, revise the syllabus, and in that way make the school lives of children shorter, and thus save a good deal of money, for there were a good many things that might with advantage be left out of the curriculum. The propositions of the Government were ruthless and

Mr. McGregor

sweeping; and, though he would approve of the others if the school-age were retained, if the proposal affecting that question were carried he should feel bound to vote against all the other proposals. He spoke from a thorough knowledge of the question when he said that he was sure the Boards would not be able to carry on if these sweeping reductions were made.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN would not keep the Committee long, particularly as most of his views had been so well expressed by the honourable members for Linwood and Dunedin Central: in fact, perhaps the most effective speech he could make would be to quote those gentlemen and say he indorsed their opinions. He also approved of the suggestion of the honourable member for Thorndon for the amalgamation of education districts. There were also one or two other points he wished to take notice of. The Minister had, he thought, somewhat disingenuously quoted one particular Board in New Zealand, the name of which he had declined to give, which he said had this year a balance of over £9,000. Any person who heard that statement would naturally suppose that that Board had saved within the financial year a sum of over £9,000. If the honourable gentleman had looked at the figures he would have known that the Board he referred to—the North Canterbury Board—had commenced the year with a balance of somewhere about £9,000, and that the actual expenditure within the year had taken up the whole of the receipts. Surely it was not right for the honourable gentleman to make that statement; for it was misleading the Committee. He would not give way to the honourable gentleman, as he had been waiting to speak all the evening. He had been greatly struck with the statement the honourable gentleman had made, for he knew the figures perfectly well. In 1884 there was a balance of £9,062; in 1885, £9,741; and in 1886, £9,701. Well, it must be seen that the statement was not quite fair, and it must have been made in order to give the Committee the idea that certain Boards were putting by money.

Mr. FISHER.—I did not make any such statement.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN said that was what the Committee must have decided was the object of the statement. As to the proposal affecting the normal schools, he thought the Minister would make a mistake in endeavouring to make such a sweeping reduction. He (Mr. O'Callaghan) looked upon the normal schools as one of the most important parts of the educational system. It was not because the Wellington Normal School had been a failure that it was to be gathered that all the normal schools had been failures, for certainly that was not the case in Otago or Canterbury. In Canterbury they had a number of excellent teachers from the normal school, and the effect of these teachers passing through the Training-College was to make the system more uniform than it would be otherwise. Though the Wellington Normal School had failed, yet the number

of teachers in the State schools turned out of the normal schools of the colony was very respectable, the number being no smaller than 546 out of a total of 2,721. That proved that the system was not a failure, for the schools had been in existence only about ten or twelve years in the South and seven or eight years in the North Island. He thought it far better that this small expenditure of £8,000 should go on, and that they should obtain really well-trained teachers, than that they should revert to the old system, under which every man who had a smattering of education was foisted into the employment of the Boards.

Mr. FISHER said that, as the honourable gentleman had not had the grace to allow him to make an explanation, he wished to say that he had not referred to the North Canterbury Education Board, but to another Board, the credit-balance of which was £5,000, not £9,000.

Mr. DODSON thought it must be admitted that this discussion had been rather disappointing to any one who looked to the House for retrenchment. Honourable members had come pledged, and the Ministry had taken office, to effect retrenchment; but on no question of retrenchment that the Ministry had brought before the House had they been sufficiently backed up by the House. In no question had this been more apparent than in the present one. Throughout the discussion there had been a disinclination to do anything in the way of retrenchment. The Minister of Education had certainly received no encouragement to effect retrenchment at present, or to consider the question during the recess. The question of the school-age had been referred to, and he might say that ever since he had had a seat in the House he had always contended that the State had no right to pay for children until they were fit to acquire the education the State was willing to pay for, and he thought the age of six was quite early enough for the State to pay for children. Previous to that they were far better at home with their mothers. Any one going into any of our schools would see these little children set up on the forms like dolls on a shelf, and just about as usefully employed. He was glad the Minister was going to give the House an opportunity of recording their votes on this question, and he would certainly record his vote in favour of the age being raised to six years, for that was amply early for the State to commence paying for the education of a child. He was very much pleased to hear the honourable gentleman admit that there was one section of the community which had not been fairly dealt with, and he understood him to say that he would take the matter into consideration, and see what he could recommend next session. That section had not received anything approaching justice, and had a great claim upon the House; and he only regretted that so little reference had been made to it. However, now, whenever any reference was made to it, member after member echoed the feeling that justice had not been done; and

that gave him hope that, when the question was fairly discussed next session, that section would receive the justice due to it. The honourable member for Lincoln said that our system of education was one that we ought to be proud of; but he (Mr. Dodson) could not be proud of a system which shut out two-thirteenths of the population from sharing in the benefit of the State schools. Indeed, it was rather a scandal on this free country that we should so manage our schools as to shut out so large a number of the population from the benefits of education, while at the same time we paid for our education out of funds which were equally contributed by them. Various honourable members had referred to the Education Boards in their own districts, and he might be excused for referring to the Board of his district, which, although it was one of the smallest districts in the colony, would set an example to some of the extravagant Boards which they would do well to follow. If every Education Board in the colony managed its affairs as economically and carefully as the Marlborough Board had done there would be no necessity to do away with them. The Marlborough Board conducted its operations for some £200 a year in salaries and advertisements, and it maintained some thirty-three schools, with 1,200 pupils. And, more than that, the work done by the schools would compare favourably with the work done by any others in the colony. Its pupils were first or second in the various standards in which they could be compared with others. That being so, it was a great feather in their caps that they had been able to manage education so cheaply and well. The honourable member for Linwood had made a most interesting speech, and his sentiments were so well put that he should like to hear the honourable gentleman speak more frequently than he did. However, he must take issue with the honourable member on one or two points. The honourable gentleman said that parents were the best judges of the age at which their children should be sent to school. In that he entirely differed from the honourable member, for parents were only too anxious to press on their children and make them precocious, and these were not the children which succeeded best in life or passed through the higher standards most rapidly. Parents were not the best judges in this respect, for they always thought their own children were fit for anything, and it was well that other people should form an opinion for them. It was urged that children should be sent to school at five so that they might be able to pass the First Standard at nine; but, in his opinion, the child who was sent to school at six would pass the standard sooner, while the child who was kept at school between the ages of five and six was much more likely to have an injury done to it than any good. He could have wished that the Minister had given more particulars; but he thought each heading which the honourable member had mentioned the Committee could very well agree to without doing any injury to the system of education. He did not, himself, believe

*Mr. Dodson*

that the country schools would be injured if the school-age were raised to six, for very few schools would be closed consequent on that, and a very small sum would compensate them for the children taken away; and he supposed that was the idea which passed through the Minister's mind when saying that he would take care that they should not be injured. He did not think the colony had any right to pay for any child after it had passed the Sixth Standard. If a child were so clever as the child of the honourable member for Akaroa, and could pass that standard at thirteen years of age, of course there should be facilities for its going on to acquire higher education, for which it was so eminently fitted. But did any one imagine that the honourable member would keep his child from school because the State would not pay for that higher education? Of course not; and he would immediately send it to a higher school; and the only difference would be that he would pay for it—and would feel a pride in paying for it—instead of calling on the State to pay. If parents could not afford to pay for their children at the higher schools—children who had shown a special aptitude by passing the Sixth Standard at an early age—of course provision should be made for cases of that kind. He did not wish to deprive any child of higher education; but he wanted to see some finality in this matter, so that they might know where the State was to commence and where it was to leave off. In his opinion, when it commenced at six years of age and educated the child up to the Sixth Standard, nothing more was required of the State. So far as the normal schools were concerned, he was glad to see that they were to be stopped. That system was only partial in its operation, and, as usual, those who had these institutions near them were all in favour of their continuance. He thought this was a matter in which they might very well follow the example of Victoria and leave it to the question of demand and supply. If teachers were required they would come soon enough, and he was glad the Minister was going to do away with these institutions, and that the colony would no longer have to pay so high a sum as £3,000 a year for their maintenance. Again, the question of reserves for higher education should be dealt with, and he hoped the Minister would turn his attention to it during the recess. If these reserves were applied, as they ought to be, to primary education it would be a very great relief to the taxpayer. He trusted the Minister would bring down a Bill next session dealing with the whole question, and providing that these reserves should be for the benefit of the colony as a whole, and not be allowed to remain solely for the benefit of the provincial districts in which they had been set apart, while other parts of the colony could get no benefit from them simply because they were at a distance.

Mr. WILSON had a few figures which might be interesting to the Committee on the question of school-age. But he might say at once



that he was entirely in favour of raising the school-age to six years, and he did not think it would affect the country districts so much as some honourable members appeared to think. The following was a return of schools in the Otago Education District in charge of one teacher only, with particulars of attendance and age of pupils in October, 1887: Total number of schools having from fourteen scholars to sixty-one, 106; total children on roll, 3,797; total under six years, 183. The Education Committee sent out to the various Boards and educational institutes asking them for their opinion, as well as to the various Inspectors. Naturally, the School Boards were entirely against any reduction in their votes, and nearly every one of them sent in a reply that it did not wish the school-age to be raised. The educational institutes did the same; but the Inspectors—who were the most impartial people to deal with this question, and were best able to judge the matter—were all, apparently, in favour of raising the school-age. That was a very important thing, and should not be forgotten in considering this question. He agreed very much with what the honourable member for Kumara had said regarding Boards. He (Mr. Wilson) thought the Legislature might very well abolish them altogether; but it ought, at the same time, to set up something in their place. He did not approve of the Minister of Education taking entire charge of the system. He should like to see a Council set up for the whole of New Zealand, composed of gentlemen well educated themselves, and who had opportunities of observing the state of education in New Zealand. The Minister should be the administrator of the system, and might have under him the Inspectors, and might fix a scale of salaries applicable to the whole of New Zealand. Such a Council would not cost anything like the sum at present spent in management. With regard to the reduction of the capitation, he was certainly in favour of it. He did not understand the strict-average question, and would like a little more time to consider the subject. He should also be in favour of reducing the £8,000 for normal schools down to £4,000.

Mr. LEVESTAM said there was no doubt the country was clamouring for retrenchment; but he did not believe the country wanted retrenchment in this direction, because the education of their children was about the only thing the poorer class of people got from the country. It was said that this raising of the school-age did not affect country schools as much as was represented. Now, the Education Board received the whole of the money paid in capitation, and doled it out to the country districts. It followed that, if the number of children attending town schools decreased, the funds of the Boards would decrease correspondingly. Therefore it was no argument in favour of the change proposed that country schools would receive assistance to keep them open, because it followed the same amount would be paid to the country schools as was taken away from the town schools. With regard to Education Boards, he thought it would be far better

for the colony as a whole if these Education Boards were abolished, because teachers were now treated very unfairly. In many instances teachers with similar qualifications to those possessed by others were receiving about one quarter of the salary those others received; and so it would be as long as each Board had the entire control of its own schools. If a vacancy occurred, an able man who might happen to be in a small district would have no chance of obtaining a mastership in a large district, because he had no friends who would assist him into that position, no matter how good his qualifications might be. As to the raising of the school-age, there was more embodied in the proposition than appeared at first sight. The proposal of the Government not only entailed the raising of the school-age, but also the withdrawal of the capitation-grant from every child who had passed the Sixth Standard, irrespective of age. When children passed the Sixth Standard at twelve, as many did, they would not be entitled to attend a public school any longer. That would be an injustice, to which he, for one, would never consent. It was said that some children were better at home with their mammas: but that depended upon the kind of mammas they had, and he was sure that in many cases it was far better that they should be at school. They were told that in other countries children were not admitted into public schools before they were six years old. That was true. But he knew that in those countries most of the children before they were that age were sent to private schools. Here, where that was not the case, the children should be admitted as soon as they were fit to go to school. It was a well-known fact that children sent to school at five passed the Sixth Standard much earlier than children who were sent later to school. The next proposal of the Government was to do away with the 4s. He should not oppose that; but he thought it was hardly fair to say that it would not inconvenience the various Boards, because it must be remembered that, in addition to the £26,000, there would be taken away the capitation for those who had passed the Sixth Standard. The present system of education, being purely secular, could be participated in by persons of all denominations. No one had a right to complain, as one might have if religion were taught in the public schools. The moment a grant in aid of one denomination was made, another could claim the same consideration with equal right, and therefore it would never do to interfere with the system in that direction. He thought the normal schools could be done away with altogether. He did not exactly know what was meant by the "strict average," but his chief objection to the proposals of the Government was to the taking-away of the capitation from children who had passed the Sixth Standard, irrespective of age. They were told that scholarships were open to them: but these scholarships would have to be obtained in the year following that in which they had passed the Sixth Standard. If the capitation were

taken away as soon as the child had passed the Sixth Standard, he would not be able to go in for the scholarships. A child of twelve, though he might have passed the Sixth Standard, was generally quite unfit to go out and earn a living; and it was absolutely necessary they should be allowed to remain a few years longer—till they were fifteen. In that part of the Continent of Europe from which he came, boys were compelled to remain at school till they were fifteen and a half; and girls till they were fourteen and a half years old; and it was enforced in this way: Employers were not allowed to engage children till they were of that age, nor parents to employ them; so the inducement to parents to remove their children from school unduly early was removed entirely. There was no such thing as remaining stationary in this world—we must either go forward or go backward; and he regarded these proposals as going backward. He particularly protested against taking away capitulation from children as soon as they passed the Sixth Standard, if they were within the limit of the school-age. If the Minister would assure him that that should not be done he would vote with him, but without such an assurance he must vote against the proposals of the Government; and he was sure the majority of the people of the country were not in favour of such retrenchment as was foreshadowed in these proposals.

Mr. GRIMMOND thought the proposals of the Government inopportune, coming at a time when the whole question had been submitted to a Committee, and inapplicable, because the Government were attempting to deal with questions which had been submitted for the consideration of that Committee, which, in the circumstances, could not report till next session. It had been stated that the raising of the school-age would not affect the status of education in the colony; but, if that were so, how was it that the school-age in other countries was less than here? He would give the following figures to show the school-ages in different countries: Great Britain, three to eighteen; New Zealand, five to fifteen; Victoria, three to sixteen; Queensland, five to fourteen; New South Wales, four to fourteen. So, in none of these countries did the grant-earning age start later than five.

Mr. FISHER.—What is the cost of different ages?

Mr. GRIMMOND said it was about £1 5s. for the lower ages: but, take them right through, the average in these colonies was: New South Wales, £6 4s.; Victoria, £5 9s. 5½d.; Queensland, £6; South Australia, £5 5s. 3½d.; New Zealand, £5 2s. 4½d. We were therefore lower in average cost than the other colonies, and our minimum age was higher—in only one case was it as high as five besides here. The Minister had read some evidence in support of his proposals, but none against them, and had therefore placed a one-sided statement before the House. He would read briefly from the opinions of some gentlemen of as much authority probably as those quoted by the Minis-

*Mr. Leveslam*

ter. Mr. Aitken, the Chairman of the South Canterbury Educational Institute, wrote enclosing the following resolutions passed by that body:—

“That this institute is of opinion that the proposed raising of the school-age to six years is undesirable for the following reasons, viz.: (1.) Because such a course cannot fail to result in serious injury to small and country schools, unless the allowances to larger schools be curtailed to a degree which will injure education in the centres of population. (2.) Because, although raising the school-age from five to six may seem to be cutting off only a year at the beginning of a child's school-career, it is in reality the last and best year of which the child is deprived by such a course, seeing that children are in most cases removed from school at a given age, and not on passing a given standard. (3.) Because under nearly all great educational systems school life begins at five years of age or earlier; and, if New Zealand interferes with her system in this respect, she will place herself in the rear of contemporary civilisation. (4.) Because a child entering school at six years of age will not pass a given standard as early or as well as one who enters at five years of age. A very sharp child who enters at six may surpass an ordinary or a dull child who enters at five; but sharp children must by no means be taken as types. (5.) Because the idea is a mistaken one that, as regards physical health and mental vigour, children up to the age of six or seven years are better away from school, and that they learn nothing till that age is reached. Children are always learning; and if they are not at school they are learning elsewhere many things which were better not learned at all, and which will have to be unlearned when school is entered. But in the year from five to six children at school learn the important lessons of obedience, order, and reverence for law, and these, too, at a time when they are not likely soon to be forgotten. (6.) Because it is only the best home-circumstances that can make up to the pupil for the want of school discipline and restraint; and here, as elsewhere, it is wrong to take the best as types.”

The Rev. Mr. Habens, the Inspector-General of Schools, and probably the highest authority on the subject, was asked before the Committee the following question: “What do you think is the general effect of discipline and teaching on these younger children?” to which he replied,—

“Considering the early age at which the children of the artisan and the labourer ordinarily leave school, I am of opinion that it is necessary to admit such children to school at an early age in order that their school-course may be of reasonable length; and that, in schools which are sufficiently organized to provide instruction upon proper methods for children between five and seven years of age, such children derive a very great benefit from the discipline and instruction which they receive, and are thereby prepared for the severer methods of instruction that will follow in the

more advanced classes. I think it should also be remembered that the children of the same class, if they are not at school at an early age, are likely to receive a practical education out-of-doors that, however advantageous it may be to them from a physical point of view, is perhaps very detrimental from a moral and intellectual point of view. I may add that, if we regard the example set by England in this matter, the English Government recognises the attendance of children just above three years of age as entitling the schools they attend to grants from the Treasury."

He knew from his own practical experience that attending school at an early age had no injurious effect on children physically or mentally. There was a member of this House who matriculated at thirteen and took his B.A. degree at eighteen, and in physique he was quite equal to the Minister of Education. The Educational Institute of Otago had given the following reasons against raising the school-age:—

"(a.) That in almost every country where there is a State system of education the Government encourages attendance at an earlier age than in New Zealand.

"(b.) Raising the age will materially affect small schools in outlying districts, where they are least able to bear retrenchment.

"(c.) To raise the age practically means depriving large numbers of a year's schooling, as they are usually withdrawn to work, to assist in maintaining the family at a given age, irrespective of their educational acquirements.

"(d.) As practical educationists we are decidedly of opinion that, as a rule, pupils entering school at six would not pass Standard IV. at the same time as those entering at five; and this applies with still greater force to the proposal to raise the age to seven.

"(e.) It is quite a common mistake to suppose that children are as well out of school as in it until they are six or seven. Where the home-influences are good, where there are facilities for learning in the home-circle, the disadvantages are not so obvious; but, where these do not exist, if the school-age be postponed till six or seven the children will undoubtedly be acquiring habits not in the least degree conducive to sound conduct and character.

"(f.) The work in the initiatory department of the schools is often misrepresented: on the one hand it is said to be mere nursery-work, and on the other it is said to be work injurious to young pupils. Neither of these statements is correct.

"(g.) The educational work of the first two years has a most beneficial influence both on the physical and mental condition and health of the pupils, and gives pleasurable and systematic training in habits of regularity, punctuality, obedience, and a liking for school, at an age when these things are of great disciplinary value. Rational methods of instruction, well-ventilated schools, an excellent climate, and the good physique of the children, are all in the highest degree favourable to beginning school life at the age fixed as at present."

Mr. Mowbray wrote on the question thus to the Committee:—

"I do not think the school-age can be raised without disaster both to children and teachers. The children will suffer, because they will be deprived of a large portion of that early training which every experienced teacher recognises as invaluable. The difference in intelligence and progress in standard work of a child from a kindergarten or good infant school, as compared with that of a child without such training, is immense.

"The teachers will suffer, because not only must a large number be dismissed, but those who remain must undergo a cruel diminution of income. The number of children under six years of age in the schools is, as nearly as I can ascertain, over 12,000, which, at the late rate of capitation, represents a revenue to the Boards of £48,000 per annum. These children are taught by 800 pupil-teachers, whose joint salaries will not amount to £10,000; and the difference between that sum and £48,000 represents the loss to the Education Boards by raising the school-age one year. Take the Thorndon Infant School as an example. There are 190 children, under a mistress and four pupil-teachers. A third of the children are under six years. Supposing that they be debarred from the school, one, or at most two, of the pupil-teachers could be dispensed with, the other expenses continuing as before. The Board would thus save £50 per annum, and lose £250 on this school alone."

Enough had been said by other honourable members to show that raising the school-age would have a bad effect on the educational status of the colony. As to reducing the capitation, it had been contended by some honourable members that the Boards would be able to carry on with the reduced sum, for they had got on fairly well with the present capitation; but he knew—speaking from some experience—that in Westland the Board had had very great difficulty in maintaining a high standard under the present capitation. The district was a very large and sparsely-settled one, and was as long in one direction as the distance from Christchurch to Invercargill. If it was argued that, under the present capitation, some Boards had had more than enough money, that was an argument for the abolition of the Boards. He thought that was a right thing to do, because the excessive money now given to the Boards of thickly-populated districts would then be available for poor districts which wanted it badly—some Boards now had to endeavour to get through their money by going in for luxuries, while others could not provide the barest educational necessities. In his district, even with the present capitation, the people in the outlying districts had often to supplement it to pay the teachers decent wages, and had even to subscribe for the erection of school-buildings. The settlers in the outlying districts in that part of the colony already had to help to build school-houses by sawing the timber, &c.; and if the means at the disposal of the Board were still

further reduced they would be able to get no schools at all. It was very unjust, too, to class the Boards on an equal footing, and such action showed that the time had come for the abolition of the Boards. No doubt they had done good service in the past in establishing schools, but they had now become very expensive distributing bodies, and the work which they did could be centralised with great advantage and cheapness to the colony. He said that as one who had been connected with Education Boards and Education Committees for a number of years. As to training schools, there were none in his part of the country, and he could say nothing about them; but he would say the non-payment of capitation for children above a certain age would also act very badly in the part of the colony he came from, where there were no high schools, because it would result in the children getting no higher education at all unless their parents were rich enough to send them away to places where there were high schools. A child might pass the Sixth Standard at ten years old. What were the parents to do with it then? There was one other point which he wished to bring out, that had been omitted by the honourable member for Kumara—namely, that the percentage of passes was very high in Westland, the second highest in the colony. Marlborough came first, with 92·5 per cent. general average of passes; Westland came next, with 86 per cent.; Nelson came next, with 83 per cent.; and then came North Canterbury, with 73 per cent. With reference to strict average being substituted for working average, that also would be very injurious to the part of the colony he came from. The children had very long distances to travel, and the climate was not always good, and when it rained it did rain, and children could not attend school, so that the proposed alteration would weigh very heavily on the Board there. He might say that the Grey-mouth Board was so affected by the proposed reduction that it had, on receipt of intimation of the intention of the Government, given all its teachers three months' notice of dismissal, for it could not see its way to pay them. As to paying fees, that would raise an unpleasant line of demarcation between classes as to parents and children. For the reasons he had given, he should vote against the proposals of the Government.

Mr. JONES said he was of opinion that very large reductions could be made in the general management of education; but it should not be done in the manner shown by the proposals brought down by the Government. He entirely disagreed with the proposal to raise the school-age. In the first place he did not believe that the children suffered any injury from being sent to school at an early age; and, despite the opinions of doctors who had been largely quoted, he preferred to be guided by his own experience and observation. Any one who had specially visited the schools as he had done, would have seen the children looking rosy and healthy and happy, especially those who ranged from five to seven years of age. He

also disputed that they cost anything like £3 15s. or £4 to educate as had been alleged, although, as the accounts were made up, they appeared to cost this amount. They really did not cost more than £1 5s. per annum; and for saying that he had an excellent authority, namely, the experienced author of "Retrenchment in Primary Education"—"C. S. H."—who, writing on this point, stated,—

"These children below seven do not cost nearly as much per head as those who are between seven and twelve. Except in very small schools they are taught in an infant-room, where the classes are larger than in the upper department. As an example, take the case of a school in the immediate neighbourhood of Christchurch. In the infant department there is an average of 160. The teachers in this department are paid about £200—that equals £1 5s. per head. If another 5s. is added for incidentals—which is certainly a very liberal allowance—the total cost per head is only £1 10s."

Other equally good authorities stated the cost to be from £1 to £1 5s. per head. He therefore thought it was wrong to deprive these little ones of the benefits of education when they only cost 6d. or 7d. per week. That point was worthy of the consideration of the Minister of Education. He thought the item of capitation might be reduced; but reduction ought to be made gradually. In reference to the next item he agreed with the honourable members for Linwood and Dunedin Central that it would be a very unjust thing to some of the schools that a saving should be made by taking the strict average instead of the working average. As to the fourth item, the evidence to his mind clearly showed that we should continue to maintain normal schools; but certainly we did not require so many of them. On the whole, the conclusion he had arrived at was that the Minister had not had sufficient time to thoroughly digest his proposals, and he hoped that next session the honourable gentleman would come down with a better plan. He (Mr. Grimmond) should not be able to support the proposals as they stood; but he more especially objected to the one affecting the welfare of the little people and the interests of the poorer classes, who were chiefly benefited by the Act as it now stood.

Major STEWARD said that, as every honourable member was speaking, he felt it necessary to say in what direction he should vote. He regretted very much the shape in which the proposals had come before the Committee, and thought it would have been far better if the honourable gentleman at the head of this department had seen his way to bring down to the House—not to the Committee—four distinct propositions upon which members could have voted. With regard to the general proposal to reduce the cost of the education system, he took leave to say that those were the wisest friends of the system who would take care to see that its cost did not increase to an amount that would raise an outcry which might lead to an endeavour to pull it

*Mr. Grimmond*

down altogether. In addressing his constituents he had placed that phase of the question before them, and he had found a very general response. He believed that in the district which he represented the education system was as much valued as it was anywhere in the colony; but the people had very fully appreciated the fact that the cost of the system must be kept within such limits that there should not be a cry raised that the system was too expensive to be maintained. The proposal to reduce the capitation allowance was not new. It had previously been reduced by a shilling, and it was proposed that its reduction should be gradual. The reduction now proposed was sharper, but, in view of the circumstances of the colony, he could not think that the Minister was at all to blame for asking that the additional allowance should be at once discontinued. He regretted that the Minister had not at once proposed to abolish the Education Boards. Although he had been for some years a member of an Education Board, he must agree that it was quite possible to dispense with those bodies altogether; and, if that were done, it would be something towards making up for the deficiency now caused. For these reasons he should vote to reduce the capitation allowance to £3 15s. With regard to the school-age, there had been a proposal to raise the age to seven, and he thought the present proposal was a reasonable one under the circumstances, always provided—and he took it as a distinct pledge from the head of the department—that some special allowance should be made to the smaller schools that would enable them to carry on, so that they would not unduly suffer by this arrangement. On this point they had a distinct pledge, and he thought the House had a right to exact a literal fulfilment of it. With regard to the proposal to take the strict average instead of the working average, he did not see his way to vote with the Government, because he thought it unreasonable to enforce a reduction in that way. Again, he did not see his way at present to vote to abolish the normal schools. These training institutions were a necessary part of our education system, and, though he admitted it might be possible to reduce their number, he did not think they should all be abolished. With regard to the children who had passed the Sixth Standard also, he thought the proposal was reasonable, and that capitation should not be paid beyond the Sixth Standard. He believed, further, that the time would come when it would be necessary to charge a small school-fee in the Fifth and Sixth Standards, at the same time providing abundant scholarships or other facilities for those children whose parents were unable to pay the fees, and who were yet qualified for education in the higher standards, so that the door of education should not be shut against any child however poor. Speaking from experience in his own district, he might say that he felt sure that the parents of children who remained to the Fifth or Sixth Standard, certainly the majority of the parents, were able and would be willing to pay school-fees. In this

way he thought it quite possible to provide, year after year, for the necessarily-increasing cost of education owing to the growing number of children attending the schools. That being so, probably this would be the largest reduction that would have to be made. He should support the Government's proposals with regard to capitation and school-age, on condition that a special allowance was made to smaller schools, so that they would not be injuriously affected. He should, however, not vote for the substitution of strict average for working average, nor for the total abolition of the normal schools.

Mr. HUTCHISON had waited all day and all night for some good reason to enable him to support the Government on this vote; but he was sorry to say that, though he had waited so long, he had waited in vain. He was sorry that the Government had afforded its supporters, and those who might have been its supporters on this occasion, so little ground for inclining to their side. The Government had backed and filled in a way that rather inclined to shake conviction, even where conviction was more rooted than it was in his case. The reduction of £26,000 was arrived at in some haphazard way by calculating it at one-eighth of the whole sum; but why it was an eighth instead of a seventh or a sixth they did not know. Then, in connection with that amount, they were told that the country schools were not to be closed. Now, he would like to ask the Minister how he proposed to preserve the country schools. As he understood it, the capitation allowance was calculated upon a certain attendance for the preceding period, and was paid to the Education Boards in the various districts, to be distributed by them as they thought proper. He was not aware that the Minister had any control over the administration of these funds, so as to say what schools should be kept open and what should not; and, consequently, it seemed to him that this was a mere delusion, a snare, and a mockery, and that the House had really no control whatever, in accepting such a proposal as this, over the money it was asked to grant. That ill-favoured parliamentary property known as the red-herring was disagreeably high in connection with the false trail which was sought to be brought over this question; for it was really, after all, an attempt to legislate by resolution now, after first of all having been attempted by Order in Council; and it was just as vain for a Minister, by way of resolution, to attempt to alter the Act as it had been for him to attempt to do it by Order in Council. He thought the Minister was probably convinced now that he made a very great mistake in advising His Excellency to put his name to what must admittedly be withdrawn now as a mistake. He was not sure that the House was doing its duty in passing over in silence that attempt at legislation by Order in Council. The words ought to be remembered by members, for it was not, as the Premier and the Minister of Education had said, merely an intimation to the Boards as to the amount of funds that would be available for the future, for that could

have been done by circular, but this was an Order in Council: the words were, "It shall not be lawful for any teacher to retain or place on any roll any child of a less age than six years." That was a distinct assumption of legislative power, and no explanation could get rid of it. The position taken up under the Order in Council by the Minister was untenable, and he must retire from it in the same way that he would have to retire from the position in reference to this resolution. He had said he would not have the country schools closed: but he could not keep them open. The vote must be at so much per head, and the administration of it must rest with the Education Boards. There was no safety, therefore, except in voting against the proposal of the Government.

Mr. BLAKE had listened to the various speakers, but it seemed to him that a great many had simply dealt with details. There was a foundation to be considered, and it required far more consideration than had been given to it—namely, the yearly increase in the expenditure which was continually kept up. In 1877 we had 41,700 children at the schools, and nine years later, in 1887, we had 83,500 or something over. The number of scholars increased from three to four thousand every year, and that meant a yearly increase in expenditure of from £16,000 to £20,000. That was the amount with which they ought to deal, and by doing that they would be much nearer doing good than by merely dealing with the question in this small detail manner. Even supposing that they succeeded in saving £50,000 now, the colony would be in just the same position again in three or four years' time. Therefore consideration must be given to something deeper than was now proposed to the House. Another proposition which was made was that payment should only be made to the Fourth Standard, and one honourable gentleman suggested that the parents should pay a fee of 1s. 6d a week for every child above that standard. He thought it would be better to pay for it through the Customs at the rate of seven-twelfths of a penny. If the Government could see their way to postpone this question till next session, it would be more satisfactory to the greater proportion of honourable members, and certainly it would be more satisfactory to the country. He could not shut his eyes to the necessity for retrenchment, and he was afraid that if they went on borrowing, as it was proposed to do, for the next two or three years, they would then have to put a sum on the estimates to pay for finding some of those persons who were going about the world lecturing on the lost ten tribes, for by that time we should have borrowed all the money that the known tribes would lend us, and if we could not find another tribe we should have to go to the wall. We should not be in any better position at the end of the three years, and we should have to pay another £150,000 a year for interest on our national debt. These small propositions with regard to education were simply playing with the question, and if something better could not be done it would be

*Mr. Hutchison*

better to leave things as they were until next session.

Mr. MOAT would not have risen to speak but for the statement of the Minister of Education, and which was repeated by other honourable members, that the Auckland Training College was a failure. From that he entirely dissented. The honourable gentleman seemed to have taken, as his ground for making that statement, certain remarks of Mr. Inspector Fidler in his report. No doubt that gentleman thought that if he had been elected Principal of the Training College he would have obtained better results. However, that was not the question. It must be remembered that the students of that college were not always allowed to remain there for two years before being sent to country schools. Some of them only remained for a few months, and those who had only been there for a short time were not likely to turn out as good teachers as those who had had the benefit of the full course. There was no doubt, also, that better results might have been obtained if there had been proper supervision over the Training College; but it must be borne in mind that members of Education Boards were not, as a rule, qualified to supervise institutions of that kind, and it would be better if greater supervision were exercised over them by the central department in Wellington. There was no doubt that sufficient time was not devoted in these training colleges to training students to teach, and it was rather spent in imparting higher education to them, the consequence being that they acted as feeders to the colleges, and very successful they were in that respect. But the operations of the Auckland Training College were not confined to training the twenty pupils of that college to whom reference had been made. For three days in the week the pupil-teachers within reach attended classes at the Training College and were instructed in their duties, and on Saturdays all the uncertificated teachers within reach attended it, and no less than 170 pupils attended those classes. Therefore he thought it would be very hard for any one to say that it had not done satisfactory work. And not only that, but through all the country schools where there were uncertificated teachers working up to pass their examinations they were obliged to correspond with the Principal of the Training College, and he corresponded with them and returned the papers they forwarded to him, after having examined and corrected them. That had been very beneficial in its results. If that college were done away with, where were they to get their teachers from? There were no less than 450 teachers who had not passed their examination at present employed in the schools of the colony, and, of these, no fewer than ninety were in the Auckland District; and unless there was some mode of training them he did not know what they should do for teachers. The Minister said the Government would take care that no country schools were closed, but that uncertificated old women would be sent to teach in these schools;

and to that he, as representing a country district, most strongly objected. Instead of doing away with the colleges, they should try and assimilate the instruction with that given at the Training College in Dunedin. That would be a much better course to adopt than to abolish them altogether. The general question had been pretty well threshed out; but, as to the school-age part of it, it was interesting to find that the question engaged the attention of the ancient Greeks as many as two thousand years ago, and opinions on the subject differed then as much as they do now. As Professor Mahaffey justly said in his work on "Old Greek Education,"—

"The disputants never seem to take into consideration the fact that all children are not equally apt, and, while there are many whose education might with advantage commence at five, there are others whom it would be advisable to keep from school till they were a year or two older."

He believed it would be cruel to keep children from school who were in a position to receive education when they were five years old, particularly in country districts, where their services would be required by their parents as soon as they were able to work. He therefore could not consent to the Government proposal to raise the age from five to six. With reference to the strict-average question, he thought it would act very adversely indeed to the country districts, because wet weather and long distances prevented children from attending the country schools regularly. He could not support that proposal, but he could see his way to support the Government in reducing the capitation grant by 4s.

Mr. GOLDIE thought the Auckland people desired their members to come to Wellington pledged to reduce the vote for education by £100,000. He was asked to pledge himself to that reduction, but he could not see his way clear to so large a reduction being made. In connection with this subject he would read the following extract from an address delivered by Sir Hercules Robinson at the opening of the Wellington Normal School seven years ago:—

"I must confess that, when I contemplate the expenditure which primary education will entail on the general revenue so soon as the scheme at present established by law is brought into full operation, the prospect appears to me to be appalling. If the present system be maintained the colony will soon find itself face to face with an annual expenditure from the Public Treasury of from £400,000 to £500,000 upon primary education alone, exclusive of the cost of the Department of Education, and of the sums appropriated annually for higher and secondary education. This appears to me to be really a very serious consideration. The expenditure on primary education will soon amount to nearly £1 per head of the whole population, and the consolidated revenue alone will be quite unable to bear such a charge without considerable additions to the general public burdens. Of course, if the people of New Zealand desire education of this expensive

class free, and are prepared to submit to the necessary taxation, there is an end of the matter; but I doubt whether the position we are drifting into in this respect has as yet been generally realised."

That was seven years ago; and to-day they found themselves face to face with the serious difficulty which Sir Hercules Robinson at that time prophesied. It was a very easy matter to talk of economy in the abstract, but it was very difficult to apply it. The Minister of Education had suggested four means by which this could be applied to some extent. On the question of school-age he would read the opinion of Dr. Macarthur, late Principal of the Auckland Training College, who, at a meeting of the Educational Institute held in Auckland on the 26th November last, spoke as follows:—

"Coming to the first question—that of raising the school-age on which capitation was paid—it was well to look to the example of other States. In England and Scotland children over the age of three were allowed to be considered in the returns. This would have been an argument against raising the school-age if the character of the work done excelled that with us; but the work of the New Zealand schools had been pronounced by those who had seen both to be far superior to that of the English primary schools. This showed that the earlier the age the worse the work done; so, on the principle of utility, they should not lower the school-age. In Germany, Belgium, and the United States the age of admission was six years, and in Switzerland six and a quarter; and yet the intelligence of these nations compared favourably with that of any other. If as good and probably better work could be done by those States whose limit of age was six years as by those with a lower limit, then surely the latter were paying for that which profited them not. Taking the last report of the Minister of Education they would find that 20 per cent. of the pupils in our primary schools were between the ages of five and seven years, and over 27 per cent. were in the preparatory classes. The age at which those preparatory children passed the First Standard was close upon nine years: that was, children admitted at five did not, on an average, pass till nine. Knowing the small quantity of work required for the First Standard, and the arduous nature of the teachers' work in these classes, it was plain that something was wrong. Either many did not come at the age of five, or, if they did, they were too young to profit by the tuition imparted. Considering, then, the inferior nature of the work done by those States which admitted at a low age, next the higher character of the work done by those whose limit of age was higher, and lastly the very long period between the age of five years (our admission-age) and nine years (the passing of the First Standard), he could not but come to the conclusion that, from the standpoint of utility and the greatest good to the pupils, the age for admission should be raised to six years."

That statement was verified by the fact that thirty-five teachers out of fifty voted with it.

even although they knew that voting that way meant to them a pecuniary loss. He found that there were 17,800 children between the ages of five and six, and 17,089 between the ages of six and seven, and certainly a considerable saving would be effected if those of the 17,800 who were attending the primary schools were kept out of them; but he thought their first duty was to reduce everywhere but in education, and as soon as reductions had been made to the fullest extent in other directions, but not till then, would he be willing to reduce the education vote. He was not prepared to go with the Minister, and those who were favourable to raising the school-age, and would therefore vote against it. As to the reduction of the capitation, he felt satisfied that £3 15s. would answer all purposes. Then, as to the abolition of Education Boards, he thought those who advocated that made a very serious mistake. If they abolished the Boards they could not do away with the clerks and others employed in that department, because correspondence would have to be answered, and other office-work attended to. If they abolished Boards, they must increase the work in Wellington, and they could not do it as effectively as it was at present performed. There was always a cry for decentralisation and local self-government; and the administration by Education Boards was local self-government of the best kind, because it was administration without local taxation—in all our other local government there was local taxation with it. It would be a very serious mistake to do away with Education Boards, because if they did their work properly they did very good work, and it would be no saving to abolish them. The work was done well, because a number of the School Committees came in contact with members of the Board with their grievances, and had them immediately redressed, whereas if they had to do everything by correspondence with Wellington they would not get their business done or their grievances remedied nearly so quickly or so effectually as at present. The idea that there would be a saving by abolition was a great mistake. He thought it would be wrong to take away capitation as soon as children had passed the Sixth Standard, because many who passed that standard were still very young, and he did not think they could be shut out from the schools legally till they were fifteen. In Auckland, however, there were far more pupil-teachers offering than were wanted—there were sometimes nearly a hundred waiting for engagements; and, to prevent themselves from rusting while waiting, they continued to attend the schools, so that they might be quite fresh for their work when employment came. He did not support the payment of capitation on that class: if they had passed both the Sixth Standard and the age of fifteen, and still wished to attend school, they should pay for themselves. It had been said by some honourable members that one-seventh of the community were suffering great hardship under the present system because their children could not

attend our schools, and that an effort should be made to give them some assistance. But he believed that, as a matter of fact, that evil was less by a half than it was said to be, for he was convinced that about ten thousand children of Roman Catholic parents were attending the State schools. He arrived at that in this way: Of the rest of the community the children attending school were 22·73 per cent., while of the Roman Catholics only 10·45 per cent. were attending their own schools; so that, assuming that the proportion of children to adults was the same with Catholics as with Protestants, the rest attended the State schools, and that would be at least ten thousand. He knew a school in the Auckland District in which nearly all the children belonged to Roman Catholic parents, and therefore it could not be truly said that Catholic children were being kept out of our schools. If the Roman Catholics were given capitation allowance they would not be satisfied with that; for the *New Zealand Tablet* of the 11th November, 1887, says,—

“Mr. Pyke’s Bill does not propose to do us full justice, or place us on a footing of equality with the other taxpayers of the country. The Bill does not propose to give us building-grants or to allow our children to hold scholarships whilst attending Catholic schools. These are serious defects.”

This fact, and the fact that at least half the Catholic children were now attending Government schools, should not be lost sight of in considering this question. He would abolish the training-colleges, and thought it a great mistake that they had ever been established. In Auckland the Board had been receiving £2,000 a year for the college; and last week the Board had decided to ask the Government no longer to pay the £2,000 a year, but to pay £750 instead, to be used in another way. It had been said that these colleges offered facilities for the children of poor parents to get more education; but that was not the experience in Auckland. Dr. Macarthur, the Principal, had stated that during six years he had not received one young lady-pupil who had not passed the E examination and who was not therefore already qualified to be a teacher. Most of the pupils in the college were young ladies, and the college drew to it some of the best of the young teachers who were already teaching, and gave them an amount of theoretical teaching which did not prove of much practical value. He had lately met in Wellington a lady who had passed through the Auckland Training College, who told him that after being there a year, and going back to the school she had been at before, the headmaster told her she was very much worse than before leaving. It was all nonsense to say that the college took the children of poor parents and did them a great benefit: it simply took a number of young ladies and others who had passed the E examination, and gave them further training, at a cost to the State of £40 a year each, in addition to the actual cost of the instruction imparted. As he had said, they were nearly all ladies who passed through

Mr. Goldie



the college, and if they received any advantage from attending the college the State got very little benefit from it, for they usually married in a year or two after leaving the college, and left the service. The colleges should certainly be abolished, and, as an argument for this, he might mention that it had been found that those sent from the Auckland College to take charge of schools had worse results than those who had simply been educated in the country schools. Although he believed in raising the school-age, he could not support it at present, because he had pledged himself to support retrenchment in every other direction before this; but as to the other proposals of the Government he should support them.

Mr. MOSS said the real question before the Committee was, whether they should, under the pretext of altering the school-age, make some reduction in the amount voted for the education of the people. Though the Minister of Education had made a clear and interesting statement, going fully into the subject, it was manifest the honourable gentleman would have been more pleased if, instead of asking for authority to make a possibly small saving of a few thousand pounds in the education vote, he could have devoted himself to showing how the system could be improved—that would have been much more congenial to the honourable gentleman. It was unfortunate that at the end of the session they should be hurriedly discussing the education system, not with the view of improving it and putting it on a more solid foundation, but merely with the view of finding a pretext whereby to cut £15,000 off the vote—that was all that would be saved during the remainder of this year. It would be much better to say at once that this sum must be cut off than to waste time in seeking for a pretext under which to do it. He should not vote for the reduction, and he considered the question too large to touch in this way. There were those who had hoped that our education system would one day embrace free tuition not only in the primary schools but in the secondary schools. That was the object many had kept before them in the past, and it was with that object that the secondary-education reserves had been made. They wanted free education for all classes—there should be no talk of rich and poor in this House—first in the common schools, and afterwards in the secondary schools and the universities. Now that idea was going to be abandoned, not because the system of education was too expensive, not because it had proved to be inefficient, but because they had wasted the resources of the colony in other directions, and therefore they were called on to curtail on this pretext the work in which the colony was engaged.

Mr. FISHER.—Last session you said £100,000 or £150,000 could be saved on education.

Mr. MOSS said, to the General Treasury, yes; but not so long as the House takes on itself the education of the whole colony. If they would continue that responsibility, they

must find the money to do it properly, and if they found the money they should take control of the whole affair, and abolish the Boards. The present hybrid system was wholly wrong; but the present was not the time to go into that question. As to raising the school-age, some children could very well attend school at five—it depended on the constitution and temperament of the child. In the United States the commencing school-age was in some States four—from four to twenty, starting with the kindergarten and ending at the university—free secondary schools and free universities. There the system was truly national, and that was what we should aim at. It was our first duty to educate the people, and it was shameful to say that we could not afford to educate our people—the first duty of a free State—when we could afford to borrow money for all kinds of luxuries. The training-schools had been said to be useless. If so, it was because we made an improper use of them. The use of these institutions was to train teachers to habits of patience, and to methods of teaching, rather than to impart knowledge. Training-schools were a necessity if we were to have good teaching. As to stopping at the Sixth Standard, he disagreed with that, for if we were to have a truly national system we must look forward to the secondary schools and universities being a continuation of the district schools. With much that the honourable member for Linwood had said he agreed—it was an excellent speech; but, when the honourable gentleman spoke of teachers appointed by the Government being free and independent of the School Committees, he made a mistake. A teacher who did not work with the School Committee would be so worried that he could not retain his position. The School Committees were an essential part of the system. They were the only real element of local government in the whole system. The Boards he had not the same regard for; and if there was to be a central system they were altogether out of place. If consideration of the question were left over until next session, the Minister would have time to go into it fully, and be able to come down with some proposals of a larger character, making, he hoped, the system a really local system, and relieving the General Government of much of the responsibility which now rested upon them; making the School Committees a great fact, and the Education Boards living powers, instead of mere surplusage as they were in present arrangements. The real object of this debate was to enable the General Government to spend less money; and how much did they expect to save this year? £10,000 or £15,000. Was it worth while to derange the whole system for the sake of that sum? Was it worth while to take action which would injure the one great institution upon which the whole future of the country depended? Surely it was better to let the matter stand over till next session, when the Minister would, no doubt, be prepared to come down and make it a matter of larger local responsibility and control.

Mr. MARCHANT said that the general feeling of the country, as expressed at the last election, was that the cost of education was heavier than it could afford, and that the country did not get value for its money; and he contended that the evidence taken by the Committee which had sat on the subject bore out the impression which people generally had formed. He thought that the thanks of the country were due to the Minister of Education for the proposals he had brought down. He could not say that he agreed with every one of the proposals, but he did approve of the economical spirit in which the proposals were framed. He was thoroughly in accord with the proposal to raise the school-age, especially in view of the pledge of the Minister that no country school should be closed. It was nothing but the dread of the country schools being closed that prevented the people from demanding that the school-age should be raised to seven years. As to reducing the capitation allowance by 4s., he had a little doubt as to whether it would be wise to make the reduction all at once. He should prefer to see it made in two instalments, believing that they could avoid embarrassing the Education Boards' finance in that way. He should be well pleased if the Minister of Education could see his way to modify his proposals in that matter. As to normal schools, he could not see why the teacher should be educated and trained at the expense of the State, any more than doctors, dentists, lawyers, or shoemakers. Therefore he was in accord with the proposal. But, as to the proposal to substitute strict average for working average, he must confess that he had some doubts as to its desirableness. He was afraid that in country districts where bad weather and bad roads formed a large factor in regulating the attendance it would have a very prejudicial effect upon the finances of the Board, especially where the Boards had but one borough within their boundaries, and many small schools—such a district as Taranaki, for instance. It would certainly lead to difficulty, and he should feel it to be his duty to vote against that proposal. With that exception he was thoroughly in accord with the proposals of the Minister. He did not think that there was the least fear that the cause of education would suffer by adopting them, and he maintained it was the real friends of education who were in favour of these reductions. He believed the time was not far distant when the Consolidated Fund would not be able to bear the whole of the charges that were cast upon it. Year by year they found the Government trying to relieve the Consolidated Fund. They saw the late Government relieving it of the charge of hospitals and charitable aid; and he found this year that the subsidies to local bodies were to be reduced, while other charges were also to be reduced, making a total reduction of £87,000—all at the expense of the road-making bodies. If the cost of education were not kept within moderate bounds, there would be soon an outcry against the system all over the country,

which would imperil its existence. But it was not in regard to primary schools alone that he would like to see a reduction effected, but also in regard to the higher schools. He maintained that these schools were nothing but class schools, and they ought not to be kept up at the expense of the country. He hoped the Minister would during the recess devote his attention to this matter of secondary schools, and see whether he could not devise some plan for nationalising the reserves that were devoted to that purpose and putting the proceeds into a common fund; also for altering the system in such a way that children living in the country should be placed on the same footing as children living in the towns—that was to say, that entrance to these schools should be by scholarships.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES agreed with the honourable member who had just sat down, more particularly in reference to what he had said on the subject of secondary education. He thought that, if they educated children up to the Sixth Standard, that was all that was required to be done by the State. Children who showed an aptitude for the higher classes should receive extra tuition if their parents were able to afford it. He regretted that the honourable gentleman in charge of these estimates could not see his way to withdraw the vote under this head. It seemed to him a farce to attempt to take off £60,000, when at the same time they heard of a sum being proposed for defence amounting to £178,000, which was wholly unnecessary. He should content himself by simply stating that he should be compelled—and he much regretted it—to give his vote against the proposal.

Mr. ROSS said this question had been pretty well threshed out now, and he had been waiting for the last six hours to hear the division-bell. During the late election contest he had occasion to address several meetings, at which there was an expression of opinion by the electors with regard to this subject. The whole of the electors he met were in favour of a reduction in the school-allowance, but that the schools should be kept as they were. Many teachers with whom he had come in contact were quite in favour of reducing the capitation-allowance. He had read all the evidence taken on this subject by the Education Committee, and he had also read several publications on the subject. There was one, which had been published by the Educational Institute of Otago, which was well worthy the attention of every member of the House; but he would not detain the Committee by making any extracts from that work. He suggested the Minister should agree to allow the matter to stand over till next session.

Mr. FISHER said that, late as was the hour and long as had been the discussion, he felt it incumbent upon him to offer a few remarks upon the speeches which had been delivered in the course of the discussion. Many honourable members had been good enough to give their views upon what they believed to be the meaning of the Education Act and the intentions of

its framers. It had been his advantage to have had a good deal of communication with those who framed the Education Act, and with those who composed the Ministry that passed it. He was in a position to say, from what they told him, that the original intention was that the State should pay only upon the compulsory ages—namely, from seven to thirteen years. There was a further point he wished to mention, and that was this: that a great deal of credit was given to a gentleman in this colony who was very justly regarded as an educational enthusiast, but who was regarded as the champion of the common-school system of this colony. He thought this an appropriate occasion upon which to mention that the author and champion of our present education system was Mr. Charles Christopher Bowen, the introducer of the Education Act, who had to encounter a good deal of opposition from Mr. Stout, who was a member of the House when the Bill was introduced in 1877. He (Mr. Fisher) claimed, himself, to rank as one of the strongest friends to the common-school system. The honourable member for Dunedin Central said it was premature to propose anything this session. It was open to any one to say that of any proposal. Some honourable members were as tenacious of their own opinions in regard to the particular mode to be adopted as were certain theologians in regard to their particular tenets. They would never recede one step in the attitude they took up. The honourable member for Dunedin Central said it was possible to reduce the cost of the education system by £100,000; but he was careful not to mention how this could be done. That honourable member also made some disparaging remarks in regard to Dr. Brown, who, in addition to being a medical man, was Chairman of the Education Board of Otago. He was bound to say that that gentleman was one of the keenest, ablest, and most powerful reasoners upon this question that he ever had the pleasure of listening to. One honourable member went so far as to say that Dr. Brown was a medical man, it was true, but that he was not an educational expert, and therefore was not a reliable authority. He was a University man, and was Chairman of the Otago Education Board, and, if these two qualifications did not entitle him to express an authoritative opinion upon this question, it was hard to say what would entitle any man to express an opinion. Now, the honourable member for Hawke's Bay had given them a great deal of valuable information in regard to this question, and had shown clearly how the system could be improved there. The only weakness in his whole argument was the statement that he hoped the Seventh Standard would not be done away with. He (Mr. Fisher) would undertake to say that not one man in a thousand in the colony knew anything of the existence of a Seventh Standard. He was the more surprised at the statement of the honourable member for Napier when he remembered that in the Hawke's Bay District, when the return for 1886 was made up, there were only twelve pupils who were in the Seventh

Standard; while under the Otago Education Board there were some 221 pupils in the Seventh Standard. He undertook to say that, if the great mass of the people of the colony who had to pay for the maintenance of this system were aware of the fact, strong as they were for the maintenance of the Fifth and Sixth Standards, they would have a very strong objection to pay for the maintenance of the Seventh Standard; for the common impression of the mass of the people was that the State went far enough when it educated children as far as the Sixth Standard. He wished only to touch upon one or two points, notably those raised by the honourable members for Caversham and Dunedin East—of course the remark had been made by other honourable members, but he referred to those honourable gentlemen especially because they were aware of the evidence that had been given before the Committee. Both these honourable gentlemen said that the matter ought to be allowed to stand over till the next session. Now, he asked whether it was fair to the country that a matter like this, in which it was possible to effect great saving, should be allowed to stand over until next session, when three-fourths of the colony had spontaneously said that in this department it was possible for very considerable retrenchment to be made. The Provincial Districts of Auckland, Hawke's Bay, and Otago had said it was possible to carry on the education system, without impairing its efficiency, at a considerable reduction. The Education Board of Otago, before the proposals of the Government had assumed any definite shape, sent to the Government to say that they were prepared to effect reductions to the extent of £8,500 or £9,000. Were they to send back to these three Boards and say that they did not want the Boards to effect these reductions? He thought that to do that would be to put the Parliament, the Government, and the Education Department in a very ridiculous position. He should not reply to the remarks of the honourable member for Kumara. He was not surprised at a ripe and rare old Tory, such as the honourable gentleman was, making the remarks he had made with regard to the Seventh Standard, and the Civil Service being closed against the people. He did not think the Civil Service was a great goal to strive for, and he would take care that none of his boys, at all events, entered the Civil Service. The objection that if the children were not in school they would necessarily be in the gutters was a very strong and unwarrantable reflection upon the parents of the colony. He would not follow the discussion, but would say that, although it had been long, it had been legitimate and profitable. By "profitable," he meant that honourable members who had spoken had spoken with the legitimate object of contributing so far as they could to the stock of information upon the subject.

Mr. TAIWHANGA meant to speak on this question if he stayed a month to do it, as it was a great and important question. He had been concerned over the education question since

1876, when he gave a Bill to amend the Native School Act to Mr. Sheehan, who had probably put it under the table. He had even pleaded with the Governor himself about this question of education, which was the most important thing in the world, the foundation of all nations; but nothing had been done. The education of the Maoris was as nothing; but they should have the administration of their own land, and educate their own children. He did not blame the white people, but he blamed the Maoris themselves, for they had the matter in their own hands. They had the land, but if they let that slip they could do nothing. The Maoris did not get fair-play in this matter of education, and he would like to know what the result must be in fifty years. All the money that was being spent on Maori education was simply wasted. For twenty years money had been expended under the Native Schools Act, but no good had been done; the Maoris had not been educated—not so much as he had been—and he had only learned what he could himself.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote be reduced by £5."

AYES, 35.

Blake	Jones	Ross
Brown	Joyce	Seddon
Buchanan	Kerr	Smith
Buxton	Lawry	Stewart, W. D.
Cadman	Levestam	S.-Menteath
Feldwick	Macarthur	Taylor
Fraser	McGregor	Thompson, T.
Goldie	Moat	Turnbull
Grimmond	Newman	Walker.
Guinness	O'Callaghan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison	Perceval	Duncan
Izard	Reeves, W. P.	Fitchett.

NOES, 29.

Allen	Kelly	Taipua
Anderson	Lance	Taiwhanga
Atkinson	Mackenzie, T.	Tanner
Bruce	Mitchelson	Thompson, R.
Dodson	Monk	Whyte
Fergus	Ormond	Wilson
Fisher	Pearson	Withy.
Fitzherbert	Richardson, G.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Samuel	Fish
Jackson	Steward, W. J.	Marchant.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Barron	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Grey	Hobbs
Loughrey	Mills
McKenzie, J.	Peacock
Moss	Carroll
Reeves, R. H. J.	Hodgkinson
Rhodes	Larnach
Richardson, E.	Beetham
Seymour	Pyke
Vogel	Valentine
Ward.	Hall.

Majority for, 6.

Motion agreed to. Therefore school-age not to be raised to six years.

*Mr. Taiwhanga*

The Committee divided on the question, "That the sum be further reduced by £5."

AYES, 15.

Blake	Kerr	Tanner
Brown	Levestam	Taylor.
Grimmond	Macarthur	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	O'Callaghan	Fitchett
Jones	Perceval	Seddon.
Joyce		

NOES, 51.

Allen	Hutchison	Richardson, G.
Anderson	Izard	Ross
Atkinson	Jackson	Samuel
Beetham	Kelly	Seymour
Bruce	Lance	Steward, W. J.
Buchanan	Lawry	Stewart, W. D.
Cadman	Mackenzie, T.	S.-Menteath
Carroll	McGregor	Taipua
Dodson	McKenzie, J.	Taiwhanga
Duncan	Mitchelson	Thompson, R.
Feldwick	Moat	Thompson, T.
Fergus	Monk	Turnbull
Fisher	Newman	Walker
Fish	Ormond	Withy.
Fitzherbert	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	Pearson	Marchant
Goldie	Reeves, W. P.	Wilson.
Hislop		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Barron	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Buxton	Richardson, E.
Loughrey	Peacock
Reeves, R. H. J.	Hodgkinson
Smith	Whyte
Vogel	Valentine
Ward.	Mills.

Majority against, 36.

Motion negatived. Therefore capitation allowance of 4s. per head to be abolished.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote be further reduced by £4."

AYES, 30.

Blake	Hutchison	Parata
Brown	Jones	Perceval
Buxton	Joyce	Reeves, W. P.
Cadman	Kelly	Seddon
Duncan	Kerr	Steward, W. J.
Feldwick	Levestam	Tanner
Fitzherbert	Macarthur	Taylor.
Fraser	McGregor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Goldie	Moat	Fitchett
Grimmond	O'Callaghan	Walker.
Guinness		

NOES, 33.

Atkinson	Lawry	Stewart, W. D.
Beetham	Mackenzie, T.	S.-Menteath
Bruce	Mitchelson	Taiwhanga
Buchanan	Monk	Thompson, R.
Dodson	Newman	Thompson, T.
Fergus	Ormond	Turnbull
Fisher	Pearson	Wilson
Fish	Richardson, G.	Withy.
Hislop	Ross	<i>Tellers.</i>
Izard	Samuel	Anderson
Jackson	Seymour	Marchant.
Lance		

## PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Barron	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
McKenzie, J.	Peacock
Moss	Carroll
Reeves, R. H. J.	Hodgkinson
Smith	Whyte
Ward.	Mills.

Majority against, 3.

Motion negatived. Therefore "strict average" to be substituted for "working average."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote be further reduced by £3."

## AYES, 19.

Barron	Moat	Taylor
Blake	Parata	Walker
Buxton	Perceval	Wilson.
Duncan	Reeves, W. P.	
Jones	Seddon	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	Stewart, W. J.	Fitchett
Kelly	Stewart, W. D.	O'Callaghan.

## NOES, 48.

Anderson	Hislop	Richardson, G.
Atkinson	Hutchison	Ross
Beetham	Izard	Samuel
Bruce	Kerr	Seymour
Buchanan	Lawry	S.-Menteath
Cadman	Levestam	Taiwhanga
Dodson	Macarthur	Tanner
Feldwick	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson, R.
Fergus	Marchant	Thompson, T.
Fisher	McGregor	Turnbull
Fish	Mitchelson	Withy.
Fitzherbert	Monk	
Goldie	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grimmond	Ormond	Fraser
Guinness	Pearson	Jackson.

## PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Carroll	Moss
Hodgkinson	Reeves, R. H. J.
Peacock	McKenzie, J.
Valentine	Vogel
Ward.	Mills.

Majority against, 24.

Motion negatived. Therefore training colleges to be abolished.

Mr. GUINNESS moved a reduction of £2, as an indication that no more sums were to be placed on the estimates for higher education.

Mr. BRUCE regarded this as the most important motion that had been made that evening. It meant, if carried, that the colony was not prepared to continue this higher education of which so much had been heard. He felt strongly on this question, and he had given expression to that feeling on several occasions during last Parliament, and he was entirely in accord with the motion moved by the honourable member for Greymouth. The honourable member for Parnell, who, he was sorry to notice, was not in his place, had referred to the question of higher education in America. Probably he (Mr. Bruce) knew about as much of the United States as any honourable member in the House, and he knew that American opinion

was strongly in favour of primary education, and not of higher education; and the most thoughtful men in America were in favour of abolishing higher education. The honourable member for Dunedin West said "No;" but he would point to a very much higher authority than even his honourable friend—Professor Smith, who thought it necessary to call the attention of the British Association to the American opinion of higher education. He believed the value of education was very much overrated. He believed if they gave children an opportunity of being educated up to the Sixth Standard they placed the key of knowledge in their hands, and any position in the colony was open to them. Some honourable members in Committee had given their own experiences. Let him cite his experience. He was nine years of age when his English education was completed. That was most of the education he had had; and, still, one of the most important constituencies of the colony had thought he was sufficiently educated to represent them in that Chamber. He thought that if they educated their children up to the Sixth Standard they had done all they ought to do.

Dr. FITCHETT asked that the question of higher education should be tested on its merits, which could not be done then, for they must have full information, and a reasonable time to consider it.

Mr. LEVESTAM was surprised at the Minister of Education, who wanted to reduce the expenditure on education, but wished to take it from the poorer classes. If the reduction were to begin with higher education, he would have supported him. He should vote against State support of higher education, as he had always done.

Mr. MCGREGOR moved to reduce the vote by £500.

Mr. ALLEN thought the Committee should pause before striking out this vote. He had been consistent in wishing for the reduction of expenditure; but, if they wished this colony to succeed, they must maintain the higher education. He was perfectly sure that the primary education would be perfectly useless in fitting the people of this colony for competition with the people of other nations, unless they had also the higher education. The tendency of public opinion in other countries was to make the higher as well as the primary education free; and, if we could afford it, he would be glad to see it free in this country also.

Mr. DUNCAN considered the honourable member for Dunedin East had been inconsistent in the votes he had given, because he had voted to reduce the primary education.

Mr. TANNER maintained that the education in the secondary schools, which consisted of instruction in the dead languages, statics, and hydrostatics, was not necessary to a boy who had to earn his livelihood by manual labour.

Mr. LEVESTAM also thought the honourable member for Dunedin East very inconsistent. If they made higher education free to all, he would agree with him; but, as it was at

present administered, the system was simply a means of helping the rich at the expense of the poor.

Mr. ALLEN said he had voted in the manner he had done with respect to two of the questions affecting primary education in order to preserve the system, being afraid that public opinion would turn against the system and destroy it if it were too costly. He would be glad to see all education free, so that every child who had sufficient ability could obtain the higher education. It was by the education of the children of the poor—not pauper education, but a thorough education—that we should be enabled to maintain our position as a nation.

Major STEWARD said there would not be a single objection to this vote if the Minister proposed to devote it to scholarships obtainable by competition; and then the reproach, which now had a good deal of force, that money was voted to assist those who did not require it would be taken away.

Mr. DUNCAN thought that the honourable member for Dunedin East should endeavour to save higher education by reducing the expenditure upon it in the way he claimed to be defending the primary system from assault. The expenditure on secondary education was grossly extravagant, and would drag it down.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said there was the High School at Akaroa with ten children attending it, which cost £373 a year, or at the rate of £37 a head, although there was an excellent primary school in the neighbourhood. That was sufficient indication that they should put a stop to this system.

Mr. MARCHANT hoped that every Liberal member would vote for the reduction, not because there was any objection to higher education, but because of the way in which it was administered. These schools were simply class schools, and it was to that that the House and the country objected. If admission to them were by means of scholarships from the primary schools they would be welcome to everybody. If an opportunity were given of voting against the University system, he would vote in the same way as on this question, to show his disapproval of the administration.

Mr. HISLOP could not allow any person to say that he would lower the range of public education, primary or otherwise. The vote on primary education was beside this question, because no person voted on that to take away the advantages of the system from any child. It would have been a sufficient objection to the reduction in the vote had it been proved that it would impair the system; but everybody knew very well that nothing had been raised so much as the cost of primary education above what it was years ago. With regard to secondary education, he could not agree with the honourable member for Rangitikei that the popular opinion was against it in America. Every thoughtful mind there was in favour of it, and the fact of such a number of schools being opened there showed that the people were alive to the advantages of education. Honourable

gentlemen quoted Goldwin Smith; but it was not to him they should go, but to the leaders of public opinion, who were advocating a liberal movement in education. If they read the books of Fisk and others of the same class, they would find that the chief way in which the system had grown up was through the idea that higher education should be spread more thoroughly among the people. As to the administration of the high schools, he could only suppose that, if honourable members were not satisfied with the administration, they might with reason change that system, but not take it away altogether. An honourable gentleman gave as one reason for objecting to these schools that they were class schools. Even if they were, he would support them, because there could be nothing worse growing up in the colony than an uneducated wealthy class.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Let them pay for it.

Mr. HISLOP said they were the very persons who would not pay for it; but it was an absurdity to say that secondary-school education was class education. The fees paid in this colony were about one-third of those paid at Home; and honourable members must see that by reducing the fees to a minimum they were opening the system to all classes, besides having a scholarship system which was largely used. Let any one take the list of those who obtained scholarships, and he would find that three out of four of those who were receiving secondary education were those who could not receive it if they had to pay heavily for it. He hoped the Committee would not strike out the vote.

Mr. LEVESTAM was surprised at the speech just delivered. Did the honourable gentleman call any one a Liberal who would tax the many for the benefit of the few, particularly when the many were poor and the few rich? The honourable gentleman said the cost of primary education was higher than it was years ago; but of course it would increase as the number of children increased. As to the cost of secondary education being only one-third of that which it was at Home, that was just what they complained of, inasmuch as those who sent their children to those schools only paid a small amount of the cost, and the poor people had to pay the rest. Although the honourable member for Dunedin East said that the colony could not afford the cost of education, he was ready to vote for higher education and against primary education. And then he said his district did not benefit by this vote as much as others! He was surprised at the honourable gentleman.

Mr. R. THOMPSON thought that this was the most sensible amendment proposed that night, and was surprised at the Colonial Secretary saying that the wealthy people of the colony would not pay for the education of their children. He thought better of them; but he felt satisfied, from the way in which higher schools were conducted, that the primary education was injured by those schools. The colony was not in a position to carry on high schools at present, and therefore he would vote for the amendment.

*Mr. Levestam*

Mr. SEDDON said he found from the return that there were eighty-three children attending high schools under ten years of age, and 1,191 between the age of ten and fifteen, making 1,274 children under the present school-age attending the secondary schools, which were costing the colony something like £90,000 a year.

Mr. BRUCE did not want to be misunderstood on this question. The colony could not afford to educate children in the way many would wish, and he believed that higher education was given almost entirely to the children of the wealthy classes, and it was given in the towns. To what extent could children of the poor in the country take advantage of these high schools in the towns? He thought that not more than one child in seven ever came to the towns for this education, and they were not the children of poor parents. The consequence was that they were giving the children of the wealthy high education, and the poor were paying for it.

Mr. DUNCAN said on every platform of the colony it had been stated that the higher-education system had been mismanaged. The district he came from furnished a good sample of the mismanagement of the system. The expense of higher education in that district was a shame to them. There was no doubt whatever that the whole thing would be swept away were some alteration not made.

Dr. FITCHETT recognised a great deal of force in the charges levelled against the high schools. They were in a great measure class schools, and children attended them who ought not to be there, but who should be in the primary schools. Did the Committee recognise this: that if it took away this grant it would absolutely shut out higher education from poor children? Let the system be looked into and reformed, but let it not be killed.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote, £360,624, be reduced by £2."

#### AYES, 42.

Anderson	Hutchison	Seddon
Beetham	Jones	Seymour
Blake	Kelly	Steward, W. J.
Brown	Kerr	S. Menteth
Bruce	Lawry	Tanner
Buchanan	Macarthur	Taylor
Buxton	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson, R.
Cadman	Marchant	Thompson, T.
Dodson	McKenzie, J.	Turnbull
Duncan	Newman	Wilson
Feldwick	O'Callaghan	Withy.
Fish	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fitzherbert	Pearson	Guinness
Fraser	Samuel	Levestam.
Grimmond		

#### NOES, 14.

Atkinson	Joyce	Stewart, W. D.
Fergus	McGregor	Walker.
Fisher	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Moat	Allen
Izard	Richardson, G.	Fitchett.

#### PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Goldie	Reeves, W. P.
Ward.	Hall.

Majority for, 28.

Motion agreed to, as indicating the wish of the Committee that the cost of higher education should be reduced.

Mr. FITZHERBERT moved, That the vote for Native schools be reduced by £1, to indicate the desire of the House that the children of both races should be put on an equal footing with regard to education. At present the cost of education in the case of a European child was £4, while a Maori child cost £10.

Major ATKINSON said if these Native schools were to be swept away the Maori children would be deprived of education.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE thought that economy might be exercised in the Native schools. In his own district it had cost £182 to educate six children at the Native school, of whom four had passed. There was a school at Riverton where the education of a child had cost £100.

Mr. KELLY hoped the motion would be withdrawn, and that it would be left to the Government to effect whatever economy they could in this department.

Mr. BUCHANAN said there were three Native schools carried on very successfully in his district, and the children of both races received instruction at these establishments. He hoped the motion would be withdrawn, and that the discussion would be accepted by the Government as an indication that economy should be effected in this and other directions.

Mr. FISH thought it would be quite impossible to put Maori and European children on exactly the same level in the matter of education.

Mr. MOAT would support the vote, because a great deal of good was being done by these schools. The honourable member for the Northern Maori District said the money was being thrown away; but possibly he might have been thinking of past times. At one time that honourable member was a teacher in a Native school at Kaikohe; and in 1879 the report of the Inspector of Schools on that school was as follows:—

"For all practical purposes this school has no existence. I found the teacher absent, and he had been absent for weeks. The school, during his absence, was supposed to be carried on by his wife; but school had not been held for some time. This teacher is in receipt of an allowance for boarders. At present they number only ten, half of whom are his own children. These ten, of whom one was a European boy, mustered, and I found that not one of them could read such words as 'dog,' 'cat,' &c.; nor could they do the simplest sum in addition. The building in which the school is supposed to be held is little better than a ruined shanty, originally belonging to the teacher, since sold. It is now occupied as a schoolhouse only on sufferance. There is a large Native population at Kaikohe, which is a flourishing settlement; and were a school built here, and a competent

teacher appointed, the attendance would be numerous. The Natives here, as elsewhere, recognise the necessity of a school, and are willing to grant land for that purpose. In the event of a new school being built, and another teacher being appointed, I should judge the attendance would not be less than forty."

If the money was spent now as it was then, the honourable member might be justified in saying that it was thrown away; but he (Mr. Moat) thought the system had been entirely changed, and knew it was producing good results.

Mr. R. THOMPSON thought these Native schools should be placed under the Education Boards, and then the abuses would soon be got rid of, the abuses now being due to the central management.

Mr. BRUCE would protest in the strongest manner possible against reducing the vote. All the reasons given for educating the youth of the European population applied with even greater force to the Natives. If the Native children were educated, in a few years they would be able to transact their own business, and not be in the future, as unfortunately they had been in the past, at the mercy of a few pakeha-Maoris, who had a monopoly of communication with them. However possible it might be theoretically to place both races on the same footing as to education, it was premature to do so now; but keeping on this vote would hasten the time. He looked forward to the day when all of both races would be placed on the same level; but in many districts now it was impossible to educate both races together, because there were no Europeans there, and therefore it was a matter of necessity to have purely Native schools. He hoped the vote would not be reduced by a penny.

Mr. FITZHERBERT said his object was to give the Maoris a better education. The honourable member for the Eastern Maori District had told them that he had been working for it for years—that he wanted the Maoris to be placed on the same footing and to have as good an education as the Europeans, their present education being very bad. As it was now, the money was nearly all wasted. What he (Mr. Fitzherbert) wished was that the House should convey an intimation to the Government that the Maori children should get a better education at less cost, and that, as far as possible, the Maoris should be placed on the same footing in regard to education as the Europeans. Even in purely Native districts Maori schools could be worked on the same system as the schools for white children. He objected to the waste of money on the present system, and wished the House to show the Government that it desired the matter should be taken into consideration during the recess, and prudently revised.

Major ATKINSON said the honourable gentleman might have known from the promises of the Government that they would carefully deal with this department as with all others. At first the honourable gentleman told

*Mr. Moat*

them he wanted to strike off the whole vote, but now he said he only wanted to convey an intimation to the Government as to what should be done hereafter.

Mr. CARROLL hoped the proposal for reduction would not be carried. His reason for wishing that was the same as that of the proposer for wishing that it should be carried. That honourable gentleman said the Maoris should be put on the same footing as Europeans. The only way to attain that was by educating the Maoris. There were several districts in the North Island in which there were no European schools or European children, and in such districts schools must be provided for the Native children. Of course the honourable gentleman was perfectly right in speaking about the Hutt or Wellington, or any place where the European population was in excess of the Native population. In all such places the Native children would be much better educated by going to the European schools, which they did in many cases; and he knew also many cases of European children going to Native schools, because there were localities in which there were very few European children and a large number of Natives, and there that was the only means the European children had of being educated. He did not think the proposed reduction would bring about any difference at all, but he would say that it was the duty of the House to let the Maoris have as much education as they possibly could have, considering that the Natives had been very unselfish in the past in the matter of providing for education. In nearly every district in the North Island there were large and valuable reserves given years ago by the Maoris. How they had been administered since was another question, but the Maoris gave them solely for the purpose of education, and now the House should act in the same spirit. He hoped the honourable gentleman would not press his amendment, but that the Government would consider the matter during the recess, as the Premier had promised.

Mr. FITZHERBERT said that, at the request of the representatives of the Native race, in whose interests he had brought this matter forward, he would withdraw the motion, and be content with the assurance that the Government would consider it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. FITZHERBERT would like to draw the attention of the Committee to the industrial schools. They cost the country a great deal of money, and were not conducted in a proper manner. The sentiment was that young criminals should not be sent to gaol, because they would herd with older criminals and learn things which would make them worse instead of better. But, judging by the Kohimarama institution, the schools were not working well. The children there were entirely neglected, received little education and no technical education whatever, and no control was exercised over them. The elder boys went without leave about the streets of Auckland, picked up all kinds of wickedness, and then went back and



made the younger children as bad as themselves. The last report of the Inspector showed that twenty-seven boys had been absent without leave, and no doubt they were in the worst dens in Auckland that could be found. The other day, when in Court here, he heard the Resident Magistrate send a couple of little girls and a boy to the industrial school. The children had been brought up respectably, and it struck him what a pity it was to send them to such a place. At these schools the children learned nothing, and when they came out they were worth nothing to society.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—No.

Mr. FITZHERBERT said he was speaking specially with reference to Kohimarama. The children there did not make their own beds or wash out their own things. They were kept in perfect idleness. It would be much better to devote a wing of the Central Prison to the purposes of a reformatory, and teach the boys trades. He moved, That the vote be reduced by £1.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN said the honourable member for the Hutt was altogether unacquainted with the position of affairs. When he stated that the industrial schools were a failure he stated what everybody who had studied the subject knew to be thoroughly incorrect. Being well acquainted with the Burnham School and the school in Otago, he could say that no better work could be done than was done there. The children were restrained from vice, and were taught to be useful members of society. The honourable member was wholly misrepresenting the industrial schools.

Mr. FITZHERBERT said he had been talking of the Kohimarama School, where he was two years ago.

Mr. BUCHANAN said that any honourable members who were acquainted with the facts of the case as regards these schools would be aware that the statements of the honourable member were very wide of the mark.

Mr. MARCHANT said that he had been told that destitute children, even if they were not criminals, were sent to these schools to mix with those who had been sent there for their crimes or vice. If this was so he hoped the Government would look into the matter, and apply a remedy to such an undesirable state of affairs.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Education whether, now that the general average had been reduced to strict average for the purpose of computing capitation, the Government would carry out their pledge that no country school should be closed in consequence of the change. He said that the Premier gave them an assurance that if the proposals were carried there should not be a country school closed.

Mr. FISHER said the position was perfectly clear. The representation was that in consequence of raising the school-age there was a risk of some of the country schools being closed. The school-age had not been raised, and therefore the Government was relieved of

all responsibility in connection with the assurance.

Mr. GRAHAM very much regretted the statement of the honourable gentleman. It was distinctly understood that if the proposals of the Government were carried *in globo* no country schools should be closed, and on the strength of that promise he had voted in a direction which he would not otherwise have voted.

Mr. MARCHANT thought there would not be much risk of any country school being closed.

Mr. SEDDON left it to the Committee to say whether the Minister of Education was keeping faith with them. The Minister gave the Committee the assurance that, no matter what might occur, no country school should be closed.

Mr. FISHER said he had stated nothing of the sort. What he had said was, that if the proposal of the Government were assented to by the Committee they would undertake that no country school should be closed. That proposal had been rejected, and of course that arrangement had been upset.

Mr. FITZHERBERT said, after the first division on the four questions the Minister of Education in the lobby gave him an assurance that the country schools would not suffer.

Mr. FISHER hoped the House would not hold him responsible for the honourable member's romances.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he was as much interested in the question of country schools as anybody, and he was quite satisfied that the Government would not see the country schools suffer. The whole point was as to the management of the Education Boards, for the matter would be in the hands of the Boards; and, as a member of an Education Board, he could say that the Boards were in the hands of the country School Committees, for if they chose to exert their power they had the voting-power as against the towns, and in that case could enforce an equal division of the funds at the disposal of the Boards. This being the case, the argument that had been brought forward seemed to entirely fall to the ground.

Mr. DUNCAN said that the honourable member for the Wairapa had just missed the point. In a district like the West Coast they might call all the schools country schools. It was quite different where there were big towns, like Wellington and Christchurch. A district like the West Coast would be very seriously affected by only having strict average, whereas it would not make much difference to the other districts.

Mr. FISHER was very sorry to find that the honourable member had voted under a misapprehension; but he would say this to the honourable gentleman: that in future divisions, if he wanted to understand what effect his vote would have, he should go to the Government and ask them that question.

Mr. ANDERSON thought it was the duty of

the Minister in charge to inform him. It was not his place to run after such information.

Mr. SEDDON said he could take the opportunity of reviewing the vote by moving an amendment now, but he did not think that was the proper course. He would rely upon the Ministers considering the situation, and the manner in which the votes had been given. The understanding, even though it might have been a misunderstanding, upon which the votes had been given ought to be considered by the Ministers, and a promise ought to be given that country schools should not suffer.

Mr. FISHER said the Government had given up the reduction which would have affected the country schools.

Dr. FITCHETT was very much surprised to hear this. He understood a pledge had been given to the Committee, and that that pledge was not now to be carried out. Was that so? It seemed to him a most extraordinary thing. When the Minister of Education brought down four specific proposals, he understood the Minister to state that, whatever the result might be, he gave an assurance that the country schools should not suffer.

Mr. FISHER.—The principal one has been defeated.

Dr. FITCHETT said the Minister of Education gave no indication that No. 1 proposal was to be the principal one, or that the country schools depended on No. 1. Each stood on its own bottom.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said the Minister of Education was perfectly free to carry out what he had indicated. He proposed that £26,000 should be saved by raising the school-age from five to six years. A number of honourable members had voted against that proposal, and now they seemed to be most solicitous that the country schools should not suffer. How could they expect that they would not suffer when the proposal to save that amount had been negatived? He understood the promise that they should not suffer to apply to this proposal, and that the understanding was that no schools should be closed in consequence of the raising of the school-age.

Mr. R. THOMPSON understood that, when the Minister of Education gave the pledge that the schools should not suffer, that pledge had reference to the raising of the school-age; and before voting on the question he had taken the precaution of asking the Minister whether, if he voted to increase the school-age, the Minister would undertake that the country schools should not suffer; and a distinct pledge was given on that.

Mr. FERGUS said that all the reduction the Committee had made amounted to £34,000, and the Otago Education Board in a communication had shown that they would, without closing a single school or reducing the salary of a teacher, be able to strike off one-fourth of that amount.

Mr. LEVESTAM quite understood that in large centres that could be done, but the case was different in the smaller districts.

Mr. KELLY thought they might leave this

*Mr. Anderson*

question to the Minister of Education. He would not be anxious to see the schools closed, and they might vote at once on the question.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN would agree to that, if the Minister would assure them that he would endeavour to prevent any school being closed.

Major ATKINSON thought they might take it for granted that the School Boards would do their duty, as they had always done hitherto. He took it that, if they did not do their duty, the Government would have to come to the House and provide some remedy. He believed the Committees had given the Boards ample means to carry on all the services in connection with education; and, as he had said, he believed that the Boards would do their duty. Honourable members should recollect that the Government were quite as much interested in the education system as were any members of the House. They had made provision which experience told them would be ample, and he thought they might very well close the debate on the clear understanding that the Boards would do their duty. If they did not, it would, of course, be for the Government to step in.

Dr. FITCHETT could not understand the attitude taken up by the Government; and, for one, he must protest against it. During the debate he had raised this objection to each of the proposals of the Government: that, so long as human nature was human nature, so long would the Boards supply the town schools with everything that was requisite, leaving the country schools unprovided for, because the latter could rely on the Government. He ventured to say that few members of the Committee understood, when voting on the second or third amendment, that the country schools were imperilled in any way. He, for his part, fully understood that the Government were pledged that country schools should be maintained. To say now that it was to be left to the Education Boards was little better than a breach of faith.

Major ATKINSON said it was generally agreed that the Boards could effectually carry on their duties with the votes which had been passed, the only exception being the honourable member for Kumara, who thought that it would be better to reduce the school-age than to make an alteration in the average, as this would affect his district most. There was no misunderstanding about the matter at all; but he would point out that, when these resolutions were reported to the House, there would be another opportunity of dealing with them. The Government were of opinion that the capitation given to the Boards was ample to maintain the schools; but, if it should turn out that it was not so, it would be necessary to take some other measures. And honourable members should consider the difference between the position now and that when the resolution was first brought before the Committee. If they had reduced the school-age the country schools no doubt would have lost, and the Government would have had to make up the difference. But now the Education Boards had all they required to carry on their duties, and the House

would take care that they managed their affairs properly.

Vote, £360,617, agreed to.

#### CLASS X.—DEFENCE.

Vote, £178,095.

Mr. SEDDON would ask the Minister of Defence to look very carefully for the torpedoes which had been lost; and it would be well also for him to have an examination made of the fort at Ngauranga. He was given to understand that every time a gun was fired there it was necessary to shut the magazine-door, and there was great danger of the whole fort being shaken to the ground. He had heard also that there had been the greatest mismanagement with regard to the hydraulic gun, and that its range was only about one-third of a circle, so that a shot from it could not hit a vessel coming in from the Heads. Again, he understood that in making the tramway to the magazine the rails were put down at a certain distance apart, but when the carriages came out it was found that the wheels were much wider apart.

Mr. FERGUS said he would look carefully into the whole matter.

Mr. KELLY thought that very large reductions might be made in this vote. The reductions he would suggest were these: There was a sum of £33,533 down for Permanent Militia, and £10,000 might very well come off that; then there was £44,191 for Volunteers, and £10,000 might very well come off that; then there was £101,303 for police, and that might very well be reduced by £20,000. He would therefore move, That the vote be reduced by £40,000.

Mr. FERGUS said the honourable member could not reduce the vote by anything like that amount. Ten months of the year had passed already, and these estimates represented the pay of the police and the Permanent Militia and the capitation to Volunteers, all of which money was absolutely pledged. If the honourable gentleman looked at the first page of the estimates he would see that the Government proposed a reduction of £46,000 in this vote from the previous estimates; and that, surely, was as much as he could expect.

Mr. DUNCAN asked if the Minister would explain in what direction this reduction was to be made.

Mr. FERGUS said the intention was to reduce as gradually as he possibly could the permanent force employed and the older officers in the department. He would also have to reduce the capitation to Volunteers, which vote had doubled itself during the last few years. While recognising the efficiency of the Volunteers, the Government could not close their eyes to the fact that they could not keep up this large expenditure at the present time; and it was also intended to make some change in the police without impairing their efficiency in any shape.

Major STEWARD called attention to a sum for a Rifle Branch of the permanent force. He

would like to know whether that was the same thing as the Armed Constabulary.

Mr. FERGUS said it practically was so.

Major STEWARD thought that all the colony needed in the shape of a rifle corps could be supplied by the Volunteers. He could understand the Permanent Artillery and Engineer corps being maintained, but not a permanent rifle corps.

Mr. LEVESTAM would like to know whether it was the intention of the honourable gentleman to keep up the charge of £700 a year for the commanding officer, General Whitmore. Then, there was an Assistant Surgeon to the Permanent Militia. No doubt this gentleman was in private practice, and he would ask whether it would not be cheaper to pay him fees than to keep him on a permanent salary.

Mr. HUTCHISON asked the Minister if he would give a little more information with reference to his intention regarding the Volunteers. Was the proposed reduction in the capitation allowance to be a reduction of amount, or was a distinction to be made in favour of corps in the centres of population?

Mr. FERGUS said it was the intention of the Government to reorganize the service. He could not be expected to state what was the intention with reference to one individual officer. In answer to the honourable member for Waitotara, he might say that the whole question of the reorganization of the Volunteer Force was before the Government at the present time, and, while they wished to get rid of all corps so far removed from the centres of population as to be practically valueless, nothing would be done that would impair the efficiency of the Force.

Mr. FITZHERBERT asked if it was the intention to do away with the Rifle Branch of the Force. Really the only useful men in the service were the Permanent Artillery and the Torpedo Corps. The office of Assistant Surgeon at Auckland struck him as being an extravagance.

Mr. WALKER hoped the Minister would not revive the invidious distinction between town and country corps. He trusted, however, the Government would reorganize the service.

Mr. KELLY asked leave to withdraw his amendment. He begged to move in place of that amendment a motion, That the vote be reduced by £5,—as an indication of the wish of the House and the country that a reduction should be made in the large vote for Permanent Militia, Volunteers, and Police.

Mr. FERGUS hoped the honourable gentleman would not press his amendment. The Government had pledged themselves to make reductions, and it was their intention to reduce expenditure largely in this department.

Mr. Kelly's amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Dr. FITCHETT was not satisfied with the assurance of the Minister. He particularly objected to the item, "Assistant Surgeon, £225." That was a purely honorary position. He moved, That the vote be reduced by £225.

Mr. FERGUS said that most of the salary

of this officer for the year had been paid. He submitted that the Committee ought to accept the assurance of the Government that they would make reductions in this department.

Dr. Fitchett's amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Vote, £178,095, agreed to.

#### CLASS VI.—NATIVE AFFAIRS.

Vote, £16,878.

Mr. DUNCAN hoped the Government intended to do away with the Native Affairs Department altogether.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the Government would gradually work it right out.

Vote, £16,878, agreed to.

#### CLASS IX.—PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND DOMAINS.

Vote, £28,109, agreed to.

#### CLASS XIII.—STATE FORESTS AND AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT.

Vote, £5,611.

Mr. MONK was very glad that the Government had abolished the department in the form in which it previously existed, and he thought the Government had acted very wisely in doing so. Under the new order of things he trusted that the forests of the colony would be preserved in a more satisfactory and efficient manner than had been the case in the past.

Mr. BRUCE thought they ought to look on this question in the first place from a conservation point of view, and that there should also be appointed in connection with it a department that would point out what trees could be introduced from other countries with advantage. Large tracts in the colony were now lying waste, which might be utilised by planting them with trees.

Major ATKINSON said the Government hoped to provide a better plan than the present one for the conservation of forests. The work would be under the Lands and Mines Department, and would not only be better conducted, but would also save expense.

Mr. ANDERSON thought it would be a mistake to abolish the Forest Department wholly, and leave all that was to be done in the matter of forest-planting and -conservation to the local bodies. He knew that in the South many thousands had been spent uselessly owing to want of knowledge in regard to tree-planting. Then, the utmost care was needed to preserve forests from accidental destruction and losing by fire in a few hours what it had taken centuries to produce. In the Wakatipu district last year, for instance, no less than two thousand acres of valuable bush had been destroyed by one fire. It was necessary that those who undertook the work of forest-planting should have the necessary knowledge and proper guidance; and much knowledge was required for proper forest-conservation. He thought that the Government, in the interest of the colony, should be responsible for the requisite measures for forest-conservation, and, though it might not be necessary to continue the Forest Department as it was at present, still he

*Mr. Fergus*

thought the services of a specialist should be continually retained.

Mr. MONK thought the statements of the last speaker were the best evidence of the need for change. That the forests were being destroyed while there was such an expensive Forest Department in existence was sufficient proof that that department was inefficient. As a matter of fact more valuable forests had been destroyed by fire during the last two years, while the Forest Department had been existent, than could be replaced in the next hundred years at the rate we were now going on. Was it not folly to use public money, as was stated in the forestry report, for the purpose of "fadding" over young kauri? Surely they know nothing of kauri-growth who could thus write of a "kauri nursery," thinking it worthy of a place in the national forestry report. Then, there had been great and useless expense gone to over wattle-planting; but if wattle-growing needed to be developed it should be done by encouraging private people to do it. Some preventive measures were required to keep such valuable forests as we possessed from being wantonly or carelessly destroyed, and for replacing such as were destroyed, and he hoped the Government would try to adopt some means by which the forests now growing, the beautiful forests of the country, should be protected from the devastation which was continually wasting them.

Vote, £5,611, agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at six o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Tuesday, 20th December, 1887.*

First Readings—Third Readings—Land Bill—Standing Orders—T. K. Tairāroa—Government Railways Bill—Otago Central Railway Extension and Construction Bill—Pukekohe Borough Bill—Wairarapa North County Council Empowering Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### FIRST READINGS.

Fisheries Conservation Bill, Public Reserves Sale Bill, Tamaki West Licensing District Bill.

### THIRD READINGS.

Otago Harbour Board Bill, Wairarapa North County Council Empowering Bill.

### LAND BILL.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS brought up the following report of the Free Conference on the Land Bill:—

"The Managers of the Free Conference on the Land Act Amendment Bill have the honour to report that they have come to the following agreement: That original clause 33 be erased; that original clause 34 stand part of the Bill; that new clause 34 be erased; that the follow-

ing new clause be added to the Bill: 'Sections thirty-six to forty-one, both inclusive, of the said Act shall remain in force until the termination of the next session of Parliament, and no longer.'

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I move, *That the Council agree with the report.* In doing so, I wish to explain that the arrangement come to is this: that the elective clause has been struck out; that clause 34 of the original Bill, limiting travelling-expenses, has been restored; and the Conference also came to the determination to recommend that the existence of the present Boards should be limited to the end of next session of Parliament. I may say that this is a compromise, of course. The House desired the elective principle; but the Council did not. The Council desired to have no Boards at all; and it is considered that, under all the circumstances, the proposals of the Managers are a fair arrangement to come to, and of course they leave the matter in this position: that it is necessary that the subject shall be dealt with before the end of next session. I trust the Council will accede to my motion, and be satisfied with the arrangement made.

Motion agreed to.

#### STANDING ORDERS.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he did not know when the Standing Orders under which the business of the Council was conducted were determined upon, but it must have been many years ago, for in the course of time a great many inconsistencies had cropped up in them; and, in fact, in one or two instances some of the Standing Orders themselves had become dead-letters. He need not remark on the fact that the Standing Orders ought never to be allowed to become dead-letters; and that when this was the case they should be removed from the book of Standing Orders. He referred to the Standing Order which related to honourable gentlemen sitting with their hats on. Since the time of Sir John Richardson this had been departed from. This was an illustration of the fact that some alteration of the Standing Orders was absolutely called for. He might also refer to the confusion which existed among the Standing Orders themselves. Any honourable members who were not in the habit of consulting the Standing Orders had no idea of the extent of this confusion. The Hon. the Speaker had himself referred, in a recent ruling, to the confusion which existed in the Standing Orders, and which made a ruling on his part very difficult. It was evident that the Standing Orders should be as clear as possible, and in unison with each other; and it was with that object he brought forward this motion. If the Standing Orders were not clear the matters brought before Parliament for its deliberation could not be properly considered.

Motion made, and question put, "*That the Hon. the Speaker be requested, with the assistance of the Clerk of the Council, to pre-*

*pare during the recess such a revision of the Standing Orders as he may deem necessary, with a view to submitting the same for the consideration of the Standing Orders Committee early next session.*"—(Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.)

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. the SPEAKER supposed that he might be allowed to rely on the assistance of the honourable the mover of this resolution in performing the duties which had been placed upon him.

T. K. TAIAROA.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA, in moving the resolution standing in his name, said he need not say very much on the subject, because the report of the Committee spoke for itself.

Motion made, and question proposed, "*That the report of the Native Affairs Committee upon Petition No. 92, of Tini Kerei Taiaroa, be agreed to.*"—(Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.)

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER moved, *That the debate on the motion be adjourned till next day.* He had been very busily engaged, and had not had time to read the report in question.

Debate adjourned.

#### GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—When we were discussing this question yesterday the Hon. Mr. Reynolds made a proposition that members of the Legislature should be secured free passes on the railways, and that they should not be asked to trust to the Commissioners to grant them free passes. I was not prepared to accept this proposition, but I said I was content to take the decision of the Committee on the voices, and the Committee decided in favour of the proposition. That being decided, I then promised to draw a proviso to be added to the Bill securing that provision. In pursuance of that promise, I have done so, and I propose now to add a proviso to section 36, providing that every member of the General Assembly shall be entitled to receive from the Commissioners and hold for his own use, so long as he continues a member of the Legislature, a free pass authorising him, but no other person, to travel free on all the railways vested in the Commissioners. I propose, therefore, to move, *That the Bill be recommitted, with a view to reconsidering clause 36 and adding a proviso.*

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN.—I would remind honourable gentlemen that hitherto it has also been customary to allow members of the Legislatures of the neighbouring colonies free passes.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER was understood to say that the Commissioners would have power to deal with that matter.

Bill recommitted, reported with amendments, and read a third time.

#### OTAGO CENTRAL RAILWAY EXTENSION AND CONSTRUCTION BILL.

##### ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER moved, *That this order of the day be discharged from the Order Paper.*

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I think it would be interesting to the Council to know

the object of the Hon. the Attorney-General in pursuing this course. As we know, there are generally three classes of engineers to whom the construction of railways is intrusted. There is the working engineer, who undertakes the construction of railways; the financial engineer, who undertakes the finances of the railway; and the legislative engineer, who undertakes the legislative conduct of the business. Some of the remarks of the honourable gentleman would probably lead us to believe that my honourable friend had undertaken to discharge the functions of the legislative engineer in connection with this matter. Some understanding, I see, has been arrived at, according to the newspapers, between my honourable friend and the promoters of this work; and I think we are entitled to expect the honourable gentleman to inform us on what grounds it is now intended to withdraw this Bill. We should like to know whether the Hon. Mr. Oliver, who takes such a deep interest in this matter, is supporting the Government in the action they are taking. I hope my honourable friend will accede to my request for some information with respect to the course that has been proposed.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—All the information I possess I shall be happy to give the honourable gentleman. As for the Government, it was an open question with us, and it was understood that Ministers should be at liberty to act on their own opinions. The consequence was that in the other House the Bill was supported by two or three Ministers, and opposed by others; and when it came up here I reserved to myself the right to act as I thought fit, without binding the Government. Therefore it was that I gave notice, on the second reading, to move certain resolutions. No arrangement on the part of the Government has been come to with the promoters of this Bill. All I promised was that, if it was not proceeded with further this session, I would sketch out what my view was of the subject; and I said that, so far as I was concerned, I would support that view, assuming that it was satisfactory to those who were promoting the railway. The Government are not committed in any way whatever to the passing of any measure, and no arrangement has been made between the Government and the promoters.

The Hon. Mr. HART.—The honourable gentleman who moved the second reading of this Bill having made a statement to the effect that the Manawatu Railway Company, at a very small cost, effected the reclamation of very valuable property in the neighbourhood of this city, I thought it desirable to ascertain the facts of the matter, because I am sure my honourable friend would not like an erroneous impression to go abroad. The secretary of the company has furnished me with a statement showing that the company paid for the land over which the railway passes £16,000; they have reclaimed eighteen acres of land, at an expense of £1,400 per acre, or £39,200 in all; so that, in point of fact, the land was not obtained at a nominal price.

Bill discharged.

*Hon. Mr. Waterhouse*

#### PUKEKOHE BOROUGH BILL.

The Hon. Mr. DIGNAN moved, *That the Hon. the Speaker do leave the chair in order that the Council may go into Committee on the Pukekohe Borough Bill.*

The Hon. Mr. BONAR said he should be glad if the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill would give the Council some reason why the Municipal Corporations Act should be departed from in this instance. On the motion for the second reading of the Bill he did not hear what the special reason was for departing from the principle laid down in the Municipal Corporations Act. He thought the Council ought to be careful before taking such a step as was proposed in this Bill. If the law were departed from in this instance the Legislature would have next session a large number of applications from small towns for the power to form themselves into boroughs, and he thought that the effect of that might be disastrous to the country. Parliament had given boroughs large powers of borrowing, and by multiplying the number of these small boroughs they would be running great risks. He thought the honourable member should show some exceptionally good reason why the Council should depart from the principles laid down in the Municipal Corporations Act.

The Hon. Mr. DIGNAN asked that the report of the Local Bills Committee should be read.

The CLERK read the report of the Local Bills Committee on this Bill. The Committee reported that the Standing Orders had been complied with, and recommended that the Bill be allowed to proceed, with certain amendments.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said that naturally the Committee would allow the Bill to go on, and leave the question of policy to be decided by the Council. In the Municipal Corporations Act Parliament did away with town districts, and when the last amendment of the Counties Act was before the Legislature they took away the power of one portion of a county dividing itself from another. In fact, the Legislature had been going exactly in an opposite direction to that in which this Bill sought to go. If they allowed this Bill to pass they would have a sheaf of Bills next session such as would alarm honourable members; and, if they allowed this Bill to pass, how could they refuse other Bills? He hoped the honourable member would withdraw the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE might state that the Local Bills Committee left—as the Hon. Mr. McLean remarked—the principle of this measure to be decided upon by the Council. They only arrived at the conclusion that, if the principle laid down in the Municipal Corporations Act was to be departed from at all, this was a case in which it might properly be departed from. The village of Pukekohe adjoined a little railway-station on the Waikato Railway-line, and the station was surrounded by a swamp, so that in wet weather it was almost unapproachable, and the inhabitants there felt that, in the interests of travellers, as well as their own interests, it was

desirable that they should have the means of improving this part of the township: hence the proposal that this Bill should be introduced. The Local Bills Committee had not authorised such a departure from the Municipal Corporations Act as the Bill contemplated. They had maintained the existing provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act, with the exception of the provision that the number of ratepayers whose adhesion was necessary to the project should be diminished. As regarded the revenue, they proposed that the revenue clauses should remain as they were—that it should be established to the satisfaction of the authorities that there was an average income of at least £250 per annum. The Committee were told by one witness that the income of Pukekohe would be between £400 and £500 per annum—much in excess of what was required by the Act. Honourable members would see that there was a peculiarity about this case which was not likely to occur again for many years. There was a swamp round the railway-station which made it almost unapproachable, and the local body desired to improve that part of the township.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN said he had never noticed any particular swamp there. Could the honourable gentleman inform him what was the width of the swamp?

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE could only state what he had been informed. He had been through that locality in the summer-time. He should imagine that the place was liable to swamp in the winter.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN said that if this Bill were passed the Council would probably, in future sessions, learn that many other places found that they were in swamps during the winter. He thought the Council should stand on the sound principle laid down in the Municipal Corporations Act, and not pass this Bill.

The Council divided on the question, "That the Bill be committed."

#### AYES, 12.

Baillie	Johnson	Stevens
Barnicoat	Martin	Wahawaha
Buckley	Menzies	Whitaker
Dignan	Shephard	Williams.

#### NOES, 11.

Bonar	McLean	Pharazyn
Chamberlin	Miller	Richmond
Hart	Peacock	Swanson.
Lahmann	Peter	

Majority for, 1.

Bill committed.

The Council divided on the question, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

#### AYES, 18.

Baillie	Johnson	Shephard
Barnicoat	Lahmann	Stevens
Bonar	Martin	Wahawaha
Buckley	Menzies	Waterhouse
Dignan	Peacock	Whitaker
Hart	Reynolds	Williams.

#### NOES, 7.

Chamberlin	Peter	Richmond
McLean	Pharazyn	Swanson.
Miller		

Majority for, 11.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

### WAIRARAPA NORTH COUNTY COUNCIL EMPOWERING BILL.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON moved the committal of this Bill, and in doing so wished to make a statement to the Council. When this Bill was under discussion on the second reading, there seemed to be an impression amongst honourable members that there was something very objectionable in the Bill inasmuch as it was a Bill that would affect one person only. How such an idea could have got about he could not possibly understand. He undertook then to make inquiries into the matter, and he had ascertained the circumstances, which he would state to the Council. In the first place, he would read a telegram which had been received from the secretary of the County Council. [Telegram read.] This telegram seemed to establish the fact that there were thirty-five freeholders affected by the provisions of the Bill. The circumstances which led to the introduction of the measure were these: In May a public meeting was held at Eketahuna for the purpose of discussing this question. The meeting was presided over by the representative of the riding in the Council, and resolutions were passed providing for making alterations in the width of the road, and for the price to be given for the land. There were eight persons present who voted for the proposals, and one person who voted against them. Since then, however, the person who had voted against the resolutions had signed a petition to the other branch of the Legislature in favour of this Bill. There was also a petition against the Bill signed by three leaseholders. These were leaseholders whose leases had only a short time to run, and therefore they did not wish to be compelled to move their houses and buildings, while, at the same time, they were afraid that the owner of the land might lease the frontage that he obtained from the road and thereby shut them out entirely. Therefore, as far as they were concerned, they thought that they should be protected. Both of these petitions had been presented to the other branch of the Legislature, and no petition either one way or the other had been presented to the Council. The only part taken in the matter by the person in whose interest it was insinuated that the Bill was promoted related to the price to be paid for the land. He maintained that it should be sold at its present value.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE thought it desirable that, in the interests of the people of Eketahuna, this Bill should not be allowed to pass. In country towns there was an absence of reserves; but, through an accident, the Town of Eketahuna was placed in an exceptional position. It had a fine reserve running through the very heart of the town, capable of

being planted out and made a promenade of. Let them imagine what an advantage it would be to the City of Wellington if they had a promenade running through it such as the only one they had—at Fitzherbert Terrace. It would be a source of gratification to the inhabitants for all time to come. He had travelled a good deal in foreign parts, and one of the great attractions of Continental cities and villages was that open places were set apart where the inhabitants could gather together of an evening and amuse themselves. It was very pleasant to see them gather in those open areas and amuse themselves. By a fortunate accident the inhabitants of Eketahuna had been placed in possession of a strip of land running through the town of three chains width. This would be eligible for a promenade or other place of amusement. It was now proposed to deprive the people of Eketahuna of that privilege. The township had been laid out by some private person; and generally private persons, in laying out townships, did not make adequate provision for public reserves. The land was sold under the Land Regulations of the time, and he did not know whether it was sold for 10s. or £1 per acre. The place was laid out as a town, and would soon become a railway town; and it was proposed that the persons whose land abutted on the railway reserve should be entitled to increase their holdings to the extent of 44ft. at the cost of 10s. or 20s. per acre. The price fixed was simply absurd. If anything, the land was worth £50 per acre; and he asked why these persons should be allowed to increase their holdings at the maximum price mentioned. He did not think the Council could for one moment sanction such a proceeding, and he hoped, in the interests of Eketahuna, the Bill would not be passed.

The Hon. Mr. HART, as a member of the Local Bills Committee to which the Bill had been referred, said that these lands were of no value, but at present were a great nuisance to the owners of land adjoining, because weeds grew there abundantly; and, unless the owners of adjoining land went to the expense of constantly clearing the weeds, the nuisance would continue and spread to the surrounding property.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT thought that if the people of Wellington could have a reserve three chains wide running right through the town it would be a great boon indeed; but in the case of Eketahuna this would be a nuisance. The reserve would be a nest for all sorts of weeds and briars, thorns and thistles, and would become a nuisance. He thought there was reason to accede to the desire of the Eketahuna people, and he supported the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN said the arguments of the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse had quite convinced him as to the propriety of opposing the Bill. It appeared to him that wide streets were most desirable in a climate like this; and, as to their being a nuisance owing to weeds growing in them, that objection would just as well apply to narrow streets as to broad

*Hon. Mr. Waterhouse*

streets. There could be no doubt that wide streets were an advantage, and, instead of their being unhealthy, they had a sanitary effect. The waste ground absorbed the odours that emanated from bad drainage, and in other ways they were most desirable to have for the comfort of the people and for sanitary purposes. He thought it would be a very great mistake to prevent the future inhabitants or the unborn millions from having the advantage which had been conferred upon them, and he voted in favour of retaining the land, so that there should be a wide street which might in time be called a "boulevard." He would certainly oppose the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPARD said the question seemed to him to affect the preservation of this large open space. What he would like to know was, Who was to keep this in order, and where was the money to come from to keep it in order? It did not appear to him that there was any power given to the local body to keep it in order. The road was three chains wide, and nothing could be worse than to have such an enormous width, because it would be impossible to keep it in repair and order. The inhabitants of the district would be glad to get rid of what would undoubtedly be a serious burden to them. It was proposed to omit the proviso with regard to the price, and leave the County Council to arrange the price.

The Hon. Mr. JOHNSON said it must not be forgotten that the great width of road was reserved for the purpose of carrying the railway there. The sections of land, he understood, were taken up on the understanding that the railway was to go there. The railway, however, had been diverted. If it had not been intended that the railway should go there the road would not have been laid off to such a great width.

Bill committed, read a third time, and passed.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to eight o'clock p.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

*Tuesday, 20th December, 1887.*

Second Readings—Third Readings—Crown and Native Lands Rating Act Repeal Bill—Land Bill—West Coast Settlement Reserves Bill—South Island (Westland and Nelson) Native Reserves Bill—Government Railways Bill—Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill—Naval and Military Settlers' and Volunteers' Land Bill—Public Works Bill—Public Bodies' Powers Bill—Mining Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### SECOND READINGS.

Building Societies Bill, Tamaki West Licensing District Bill, Sounds County Hospital Representation Bill, Public Reserves Sale Bill, Municipal Corporations Bill (No. 2).



## THIRD READINGS.

Building Societies Bill, Tamaki West Licensing District Bill, Sounds County Hospital Representation Bill, Public Reserves Sale Bill, Municipal Corporations Bill (No. 2).

## CROWN AND NATIVE LANDS RATING ACT REPEAL BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, as honourable members are probably anxious to know what business remains to be done, with a view to making arrangements for leaving, I may say that, though there are apparently a good many Bills on the Order Paper that the Government consider necessary, still the majority of them are Bills which I think the House will assist the Government to pass. There is only one Bill that would cause a great deal of discussion—though, of course, there may be differences of opinion about others, such as the Loan Bill—and that is the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act Repeal Bill, to which there is a great deal of opposition. The Government think the Act must be repealed; but, looking at the late period of the session, and knowing that some honourable gentlemen feel strongly about it, we are prepared for this session to abandon it, only on the distinct understanding that the Government consider any obligations under it must not extend beyond the beginning of next session; and they will ask the House at the beginning of next session to repeal the Act. We wish the local bodies to distinctly understand that, so far as the Government can say so, no obligations will be incurred under it next year. I hope, that Bill being removed, we may be able to set to work on the others, and if there is only a reasonable amount of fair discussion on them I can see no reason why we should not get through them by to-morrow evening. As to the Municipal Corporations Bill, we propose to pass only such clauses of it as are absolutely necessary to put matters right, and I think with that understanding we shall be able to pass that Bill. We propose to pass the three Bills from the other House relating to Native lands.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—Will the Premier promise to bring in the substituting measure to replace the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act next session, its operation to begin from the repeal of the Act? That measure was promised in the Financial Statement.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; I shall do that, undoubtedly. One reason why I do not propose to go on with the repeal of the Act this year is that it would be impossible to bring in and pass the substituting measure, though I have got it prepared.

## LAND BILL.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON brought up the report of the Free Conference on the Land Bill, to the effect that Land Boards were to be retained as at present until the end of next session; but payment to be at the reduced fees recommended by the Government. He moved, That the report be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## WEST COAST SETTLEMENT RESERVES BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—I beg to move the second reading of this Bill. The Bill has already been three times before the House, and every honourable member, I venture to suggest, knows about it. Last year a compromise was come to with the Natives; but the clause was very clumsy, very unsatisfactory, and very expensive, and I hope to be able, when the Bill is committed presently, to amend it so as to remove these objections. If I cannot do that, I shall be willing to accept the Bill as it is in order to get it, so as to do justice to a very considerable number of settlers on the West Coast.

Mr. TAIPUA.—I should like to speak upon this Bill before its committal. There was a great deal of discussion upon it when it was last before the House, on account of the Premier's opposition to the Bill. On the last occasion some amendments were made in the direction of improving it, and it was then referred to the Upper House. Further amendments were there made in it, and the result was that it was not passed. I objected to the Bill when it was last before the House. It was brought up by the late Government, and the present Government revived it. Now, this is a measure which requires deeper consideration on the part of the Maori people, and I regret that the Native people have not had an opportunity of studying its provisions. This is a very important measure, and I regret very much that there is so little time for the House to consider it fully. There are a great number of Native chiefs in Wellington who had something to say upon this measure; but, owing to the press of business, the Premier was unable to meet the Natives and discuss it. I had hoped, from the statement made by the Premier at the commencement of this session, that legislation beneficial to the Natives would be introduced during the present session, but I am now become aware that there is no amendment likely to result in benefit to the Natives. As honourable members know, a number of petitions have been received from Natives resident on the West Coast. The petitioners take the strongest objection to the appointment of Assessors as valuers, and also ask that at the expiration of the leases the land should revert to the Native owners. These petitions were very carefully considered by both the European and Native members of the Native Affairs Committee. Full evidence was taken. Some of the petitioners appeared before the Committee; and the Committee considered the advisability or otherwise of returning the land to the Natives at the expiration of the present leases. The question, also, of appointing Native Assessors was considered by them in all its bearings. Mr. Ballance, the late Native Minister, supported the petitioners in the statements he made, and expressed his desire to grant their wish. The Public Trustee was requested to attend the Committee, and did so, and gave evidence with respect to these lands. The question was put

to him, "In your opinion, what should be done with these lands when the present leases fall in?" He answered at once, "In my opinion they should revert to the Native owners. It is the best thing to let the Natives have the land back." I was in hope, from what took place at that Committee, and from the report adopted, that the prayer of the petitioners would be granted. Now, however, I find it is not proposed to give the Natives any relief in the direction indicated by the Committee. Last evening I met the Premier, and we had a long consultation respecting this Bill. I could not see my way to support it, and I said the responsibility for this measure must rest with the House: if I was unable to prevent its being adopted by the House, I could not help it. We considered this matter, and it was proposed to postpone it until to-day, to have another opportunity of considering what could be done. What I have to complain of is this: that legislation affecting the Native people is postponed until the last days of the session, and then brought in with a rush. How is it that legislation affecting Europeans is dealt with at the commencement of the session, whilst matters relating to the Native people are put off to the very end? The same course was adopted last session. This Bill was brought in just at the close, and I then prayed the House to postpone it until this session, thinking that it would be introduced at the beginning of the session, and that full consideration would be given to it. However, the same course is now pursued. The matter which causes me the greatest regret is this: Native petitioners have come before the Native Affairs Committee, and we have adopted reports which, if carried out, would give them relief. This Bill goes in an entirely opposite direction, so that the work we have done in the Native Affairs Committee is labour in vain. If this Bill passes in its present state those petitioners who have been before the Native Affairs Committee will say that they have been deceived. I regret that I am unable to approve of this measure. I know the reason this Bill is being brought in: it is being brought in in the interests of the European constituents on the West Coast. It may be that the European members of this House, during the late electioneering canvass, had this matter brought before them by their constituents, and I suppose that is the reason why this Bill has been introduced. The Europeans on the West Coast have asked that this Bill be passed. On the other hand, my Native constituents in the district have asked me to oppose it and prevent its being passed. The objectionable features in this Bill are these: First, the proposal to give power to Natives to sign leases on behalf of other Natives. When I visited the Natives in one district they made a strong point of this—they objected to this proposal. They asked me if such a plan as this was in conformity with English law—to delegate to one man the power of disposing of land belonging to another. I told them it was not; that I had never heard of such a proposal before. I told them that the only paral-

*Mr. Taiqua*

lel cases were the cases of minors or persons under disability, where trustees were appointed to administer for them.

Mr. CARROLL.—I quite agree with all the arguments used by the honourable gentleman who has just sat down. I am rather in favour of this Bill being postponed until next session. I think the question involved is a very large one, and, as the recess will probably be a short one, there would not be much harm done by the postponement of this measure until next session. It will also give time to the honourable member who last spoke to see his constituents residing in that particular district, and who will be affected by this measure. I suggest this because I do really wish that legislation affecting Native matters should be carried on harmoniously between the two races. It should not be altogether one-sided. I am afraid this goes in the direction of one-sidedness, from what I can see of it. It is true the European lessees in that district are labouring under a hardship, certain promises of renewals having been made to them by the Public Trustee or the Commissioner—I do not know which. They have been building their hope upon these promises of renewal, and no doubt have gone into extensive improvements. I would propose in any case that the Natives should be prepared to protect the improvements of these European lessees, no matter how or in what form this measure goes through. I believe the Natives are always willing to protect the Europeans so far as their improvements are concerned. But the great point is, whether those lands should revert to the Natives to deal with as they like, or continue to be managed for them by the Public Trustee. That is the great point involved, in my idea. We have had petitions before the Native Affairs Committee from Natives owning this land, asking that this land, as soon as the leases are expired, should be returned to them, that they should be allowed to re-lease to Europeans or occupy and utilise the properties as they will. As owners, and considering that they leased the land to Europeans, I think their request should receive some consideration; and I hope the Premier will consider their petitions in some way or other. I ask him to postpone this measure until next session, so that every opportunity may be given for something fair being done between the two races. Hasty legislation, as a rule, has very bad effects, and no doubt the faulty legislation we have complained of in connection with Native matters in the past has been owing to the haste with which Native measures have been passed through this House; and I think the Premier is aware of that. And not only that: a Bill has just been discharged from the Order Paper—the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act Repeal Bill. It is a Bill in which the Natives have a considerable interest, every bit as much as in this—even more so; but by the discharging of that, and attempting to force this one through, the Natives will get an idea that the Government are one-sided altogether. There was no occasion for that, unless pressure had been brought to bear on the Pre-

mier from his European friends. He need not have dropped the Crown and Native Lands Rating Bill. However, I wish to say nothing more about it. But I ask the Premier to pause and reconsider the matter, and to think whether it is advisable to go on now with this Bill or leave it alone till next session. I can assure him that, if he leaves it over, we, representing the Maoris in this House, will give him every assistance to pass such a measure as will suit both sides. This measure may suit both sides, but I cannot say whether that is the case or not, having had no time to consider that. The clauses to which I have referred particularly are those dealing with what are called the confirmed leases. There are two classes of land under the operation of this Act. The confirmed leases are those which the Natives themselves made to Europeans before "The West Coast Settlements Act, 1884," was passed. The terms were arranged between the Maoris and the Europeans, and they entered into contracts and signed the deeds. Then, after a time, the West Coast Settlements Act came into force, and these leases were brought under the operation of that Act and were confirmed by it, and therefore were called confirmed leases. The other leases relate to lands dealt with directly under the Act, and leased by the Public Trustee. I do not want to refer to them at all. I think that it is advisable at the present time that these leases should still remain under the administration of the Public Trustee, because they are owned more or less by Te-Whitiites, who are fanatics. But in the case of confirmed leases there is no reason whatever for taking them away from the control of the Natives, because they were leased by themselves to the Europeans, and when the leases fall in they only wish to have the releasing of them again, or the occupation for themselves. These lands lie between Pateta and Waitotara, within a certain district there; and I think it would be holding out very strong inducements to these Natives living near Pateta to sever themselves from Te Whiti and to come in more closely with Europeans, and act as Europeans. But what effect will this Bill have upon these people? It will have a most discouraging effect upon the Natives, for it will make them think that you will not allow them to have the control of their lands or the power to lease those lands, for you do not allow them to act as Europeans, which is what they ask for. There was a Native sent in a petition, which was referred to the Native Affairs Committee the other day, in regard to this matter, and there was some important evidence taken before the Committee. The Public Trustee, who is the head of the department through which these lands are administered, gave evidence before the Committee; and this is the way in which he describes the difference between the two classes of land:—

"I should state that there are two distinct systems as regards the reserves: one, a very large area, has been leased by the Public Trustee; the other is a large area, but much smaller, and was originally leased by the Natives, but

under the Act of 1884 the rents under the leases are payable to the Public Trustee."

Now, the smaller area is the area of which I am speaking; and the Natives expect that when the leases fall in the land will be returned to them, so that they can deal with the Europeans themselves. Then, again, we ascertained from the Public Trustee that the cost of management of these lands was something very great. First of all, the Natives were charged  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for the administration of the land, and then, he said, the whole thing was unprofitable. Everything was thrown into a state of confusion. There was a difficulty in collecting the rents which were not paid, and in entertaining a number of applications and requests which were sent in; and he finished up by saying that he thought it would be far better if the control of these lands were taken away from him and given back to the Natives. Those are the opinions of the Public Trustee, the gentleman who has the administration of these lands; and surely he ought to know more about it than anybody else. Then we come to the promise of the Premier. The Public Trustee was asked whether any promise had been made to the tenants of a renewal of their leases, and he said,—

"I think there is an implied promise. I should explain that when the Act of 1884 passed there was a provision in it that these confirmed leases should come under the Act and be renewed. I think, if the Act is referred to, you will find some such provision. In accordance with that Act Mr. Thomas Mackay, who was then on the West Coast acting for the Trustee, held a meeting of these confirmed-lease holders. I believe it will be found that he made a promise to them that their leases, having come under the Act, would be renewed for thirty years at a rental to be determined by valuation."

Then he was asked whether Mr. Mackay was acting for the Natives, and he replied, "No, not for the Natives." You can see, therefore, that the Natives were not represented at all, and that there was only one side considered right through, and that was the European side, the Natives being totally ignored. That may be right; I do not say it is wrong. I only wish to do what is fair to both sides, because, although I represent the Natives in this House, I also represent the country and the Europeans just as much, and anything I can do to benefit both sides without injuring one I shall be most happy to do. I only ask for a little time, to see if we cannot in some way put in a provision or impose a condition to satisfy the Natives that at some time or other they will have these leases given back into their own hands. The principle I would adopt with all these lands would be to individualise them. So long as you have people holding lands as tenants in common there will be difficulty. But I would make each of them individualise his property, and place him in the position of a European. I will say no more. I only ask the Premier to consider the remarks of the honourable member for the West Coast, whose district this measure

more affects than it does mine, although I could not help saying these few words on the subject.

Major ATKINSON.—There is no hasty legislation in this matter. This Bill is simply intended to fulfil certain engagements which were entered into in 1881, again dealt with in 1884, and again in two successive sessions. The Natives know of this Bill, and I venture to say that a large majority of them approve of it, because they know that a great injustice will be done to the Europeans if it is not passed. I can understand the honourable member for the district being in doubt as to the meaning of the Bill, not seeing how unfair it would be not to pass it, and that he should therefore ask for time; but I can assure him that it would be doing the greatest injustice to a large number of people not to pass it. One word with regard to the disappointment expressed by the honourable member for the East Coast. It should not cause the Natives any disappointment at all, because this Bill does not in any way deal with their lands. It is only intended to fulfil engagements entered into long ago, and which the Government have always said that they would fulfil before handing the lands back to the Natives. I believe it ought to be handed back to them, and nothing but the lateness of the session has prevented the Government from bringing in a measure to deal with that matter. We shall, however, after the session is over, have time to consult the Natives; and I have no doubt that when they have carefully considered the matter they will entirely approve of our proposals. I hope the honourable member for the East Coast will let us get the Bill through, as it will be just both to Natives and to Europeans.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

On the motion, That the Bill be read a third time,

Mr. TAIPUA said,—Before the Bill is passed I wish to say this: The reason why I withdrew my opposition to the Bill was because the Premier made a statement to the Native members assuring them that next session he will introduce a Bill giving the Natives full power to deal with their lands. Owing to that promise, and in the hope that some measure beneficial to the Natives may be introduced, I did not on this occasion oppose the Bill.

Mr. TAIWHANGA.—I have had a Bill before the House this session which the Native chiefs of the Auckland District wished to see passed. They asked the Government to pass it, and the Government refused. That was the only Bill which they thought would, if passed, relieve the minds of the Maoris, because it would have given them the control of their property. That is the only Bill really for the benefit of the Maoris which has been introduced this session, and it has not been passed. In bringing in that Bill I was acting in the interests of the whole Native population in New Zealand. I sincerely hope, however, that the Government will keep their promise and give us a law which will give us the management of our own lands in the future.

Bill read a third time.

*Mr. Carroll*

# SOUTH ISLAND (WESTLAND AND NELSON) NATIVE RESERVES BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—I beg to move the second reading of this Bill, which is somewhat of the same nature as the last, and is intended to do justice to the tenants of these reserves. The Bill passed through this House last session. I may say that I have seen the Natives most interested — one an honourable member of another place, and the other the honourable member for the Southern Maori District—who have gone carefully through the Bill and agree with the principle, suggesting that some slight amendments be made in Committee. Under these circumstances I do not think I need detain the House further by explaining the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. PARATA.—When this measure was before the House last session there was very strong opposition to it on the part of the Native members, because it was attempted to be forced through at a late period of the session. I am happy to say it will not be necessary for me to offer any factious opposition to it now, because, with certain amendments which have been suggested to the Premier, and which he has accepted, I think it may be a desirable measure. I shall carefully examine the Bill at the third reading, and if those amendments are made there will be no reason for me to oppose it. Many of the Natives interested in the reserves in the South Island have petitioned the House, and have sent letters to me, asking that the lands shall revert to them at the expiration of the present leases. I wish to say a word or two in regard to that. In the proposal as to compensation for improvements, the objection I have to the proposed arrangement about the valuations is this: Under the old Act the Europeans will have the whole benefit of their improvements; no benefit whatever will result to the Natives—all they will get will be their rent. There is another objection I have, which is this: The trustees, those administering the lands in the past, took upon themselves, without any authority in law, to make a promise that the present tenants should have renewals of their leases. That was an illegal proceeding of theirs, and it has been a fruitful source of trouble. Had they taken the Natives into their confidence before making these rash promises it would have been different; but, as it was, they acted without the cognisance of the Natives, and quite without their consent. These promises were made in the interests of the European settlers, and the Natives were not consulted, and had no voice in it at all. I will not go into the question of the reserves at Arowhenua, Mawhera, and Greymouth, because there is an honourable gentleman in Wellington who knows all about these reserves, and no doubt he will take advantage of the opportunity and, if necessary, he will improve the measure so far as it relates to these reserves, and, if any necessary amendments are needed, will see they are inserted. I hope the House will not consider that I wish to act prejudicially to the interests of the Europeans. I wish to see justice meted

out equally both to the Europeans and to the Natives, and I say that the Natives should have a voice in the settlement of this matter. But what I do insist upon is this: that before any fresh leases are granted the consent of the Maoris should be obtained, and I do not think any renewals of leases should be granted without their knowledge or consent. The Natives are on friendly terms with the European lessees; and it is only fair to the Maoris, seeing that they are the owners of the land, that they should know if renewals are to be granted, and what the price and other arrangements are to be. I will not allude further to these lands, but I will speak now, briefly, about the reserves in Motueka, in the Nelson Provincial District. Petitions have been sent to the House by the Natives interested in these lands, in which they ask that those lands which have not houses upon them or any valuable improvements should be given back to them at the expiration of the present leases, in order that they may cultivate them themselves, because they at present have not sufficient lands for their own sustenance. The Natives are actuated by a very praiseworthy object: they wish to emulate their European neighbours, and show that they are capable of following their example and cultivating these lands, and acting in every respect like Europeans. I think it would be a very good method of encouraging local industry to let the Natives have the lands back for that purpose. I would not ask that lands should be given back that have houses or other valuable improvements on them; but I think it only reasonable to give them for their support a small portion of the reserves adjoining their present holdings. I have interested myself in this matter, and I know it is their earnest wish to get back some of these lands, so as to be placed on the same footing as the Europeans. I do hope the Premier will give me an assurance that he will insert a clause giving the Public Trustee power, if it prove desirable, in the interests of both the Natives and the Europeans, to give back certain portions of these lands to the Natives at the expiration of the present leases—that is, unless it could be shown that it would inflict any injustice on the Europeans or the Natives. I think the honourable member for Motueka will bear me out in what I have said, because he is acquainted with the Natives there, and he is able to say that they are actuated by a desire to cultivate the land themselves. I hope the House and the Government will agree with me that this is only a reasonable request to make, and I trust it will be given effect to. I ask the Premier to strike out from the Bill the references to the Wakamui lands in the South Island, so that it may be quite clear that this measure will apply to reserves on the west coast of the South Island. That would distinguish the land to which it is to apply from the other part. While asking for this amendment, I support the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said he had been communicated with on this matter by persons

who pointed out that the time had arrived when the Natives of the South Island should have an independent power over their reserves. That power had been given to Mr. Taiaroa; and there was a general desire among Natives of the South Island that a similar power should be given to them. He mentioned the matter now so that the Premier might consider it before the Bill should come into Committee.

Major ATKINSON.—I shall be glad to consider the question raised by the honourable member for the Southern Maori District, and, if his wish can be given effect to without injustice being done to any one, I shall be happy to comply with it. I will therefore introduce a clause giving the Governor in Council power to deal with the matter if he is satisfied that no injustice will be done. With regard to what fell from the honourable member for Dunedin West, I do not think it would be desirable to introduce such a clause into this Bill; but I hope next session to bring down a Bill which will give the Natives such a right as he speaks of wherever they are fit to exercise the power.

Bill read a second and a third time.

#### GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

On the question, That the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill be agreed to,

Mr. GOLDIE said he observed that the Council had struck out the provision which made the granting of licenses to sell liquor at railway-stations subject to the consent of the Licensing Committee of the district. That was an important amendment, which he did not agree with.

Amendments agreed to.

#### LOCAL BODIES' FINANCE AND POWERS BILL.

Major ATKINSON moved, That this Bill be read a second time. Its object was simply to reduce the subsidies, as laid down in the Financial Statement.

Sir J. VOGEL was understood to say that the figures in the Financial Statement and in the Public Works Statement on this subject did not tally; and the intentions of the Government appeared rather vague. The late Government proposed to pay half subsidies for this year. The present Government proposed to do likewise for this year, but he was not clear as to their intentions next year. Part I. of the Public Works Fund would be exhausted about May next—there would be only £60,000 or £70,000 at the end of March next; and if it was intended to find the subsidies out of the Public Works Fund he did not see where the money was to come from as soon as that Fund was exhausted, for there was no provision made for subsidies in the new loan. He merely pointed these matters out so that the honourable gentleman should look into them if necessary; but perhaps the honourable gentleman would give an indication of the intentions of the Government. He was not quite clear on the point. Was it intended that the subsidies should be the same as pro-

posed by the late Government for this year, and the same next year, or half that?

Major ATKINSON said it was proposed to give the same this year and next. It was left open to the Government to make other provision to carry on at the same rate next year. The Government thought it a bad plan to pay subsidies out of loans, and they hoped next year to make other provision. It was the intention of the Government to pay next year on the same amount.

Mr. WARD asked if it was the intention of the Government to withdraw these subsidies absolutely from the local bodies without making other provision.

Major ATKINSON replied that the Government had no intention of doing that. Certainly some provision must be made. They did not see their way now to make any other proposal, but they would make a proposal next year.

Bill read a second and a third time.

#### NAVAL AND MILITARY SETTLERS' AND VOLUNTEERS' LAND BILL.

On the question, That this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. T. THOMPSON said there was a matter in connection with this Bill that he wished to draw attention to. He would ask the Premier if he considered it desirable to introduce a clause so that men who were entitled to certificates for land should have the alternative of taking a money payment. His reason for suggesting that course was this: that many of these men had now grown old, before their claims were recognised, and they were not in a position to settle on land. If such a clause as the one suggested was not introduced into the Bill the consequence would be that their scrip would get into the hands of persons who dealt in land, and would probably be bought for £4 or £5, as had been done in the past, so that they would receive very little benefit.

Major ATKINSON would be very happy to consider such a clause in Committee. He had thought over the matter, and he saw considerable difficulty in the way. What the honourable gentleman had said was quite true; but he was afraid there was no way of avoiding that difficulty. The Provincial Government of Taranaki had issued certificates of land for Militia and Volunteers' services; but land which was confiscated could not be taken up under these certificates, and, as the whole of the province was confiscated territory, the Provincial Government bought up these certificates for 10s. in the pound. It would therefore be rather hard to give other claimants a higher money-compensation for land than this. These men were entitled to land valued at £30, and for their certificates they received £15.

Mr. T. THOMPSON would be satisfied if that course could be adopted in the present case.

Dr. NEWMAN would like to know, on behalf of a great number of persons, whether this Bill would meet the vast majority of cases where claimants had been shut out through

legal technicalities. Some who had not legal claims had equitable claims, and he wished to know if this Bill would meet their cases.

Major ATKINSON said he had endeavoured to give to the Commissioners full power to deal with cases on an equitable basis, and, further, intended that, if a man had left the province for which the grant could be issued, but had remained in New Zealand, his claim should still be good. It seemed to him that, as the General Government had taken over the land, and as the colony had had the benefit of these men's services somewhere, they should not lose their claim because they had left the province in which they were entitled to the land. He had also given soldiers who were discharged abroad one year to learn of the existence of the Act; and he hoped that the Bill would cover all equitable claims.

Mr. BUCHANAN would strongly urge the Government to accede to the request of the honourable member for Auckland North. He knew of several cases in his own district where men had grown old, and were exactly in the position that the honourable member had described; and he was satisfied it would only be fair justice that the suggestion the honourable member had made should be given effect to.

Mr. BRUCE would like to ask if the Premier intended appointing these Commissioners during the recess; and, if so, if he would advertise the fact: because when the last Commissioners sat there were numbers of men who lived away in the back-country who never heard of the sittings at all, and had never preferred their claims. There was a strong feeling among the old soldiers in the back-districts that they had scarcely received sufficient notice with respect to this matter.

Mr. ANDERSON asked if he was to understand from the Colonial Treasurer that the claims of persons whose names did not appear on this schedule would receive consideration from the Government. Some time ago he presented a petition from a person whose name he did not see on either schedule; therefore he asked the question.

Major ATKINSON said that, as to advertising, he should propose to give considerable notice. He would keep the Commission sitting for a considerable time, so that everybody should have an opportunity of being heard. The schedule to the Bill only contained the names of persons who had already been reported as persons entitled to grants. He had no doubt there were many hundreds who would come in under the new Commission.

Mr. GUINNESS hoped the Premier would also direct the Commission to sit in different parts of the colony, because the last Commission only sat in certain portions of the colony, and did not visit other portions. On the West Coast there were a number of those old military settlers who were claimants for land, and their cases had never been heard. He trusted the Commissioners would visit each district, or the centre of each district.

Major ATKINSON said letters had been received from all parts of the colony complaining

of the writers' cases not being heard. He would endeavour to give every facility and sufficient time for the hearing of all cases.

Major STEWARD wished to state that the last Commission did not sit at Waimate, where there were several of these cases; and he hoped the new Commission would hold a sitting there.

Mr. SAMUEL said this Bill would give a great deal of satisfaction throughout the country; and he had no doubt the Commissioners would give the fullest opportunity for all cases to be brought forward in different parts of the colony.

Bill read a second and a third time.

#### PUBLIC WORKS BILL.

This Bill was read a second time, and committed.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 7.—Cost of exercising powers to be paid by local authority.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON moved, That the clause be erased.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be retained."

#### AYES, 35.

Allen	Mackenzie, T.	S.-Mententh
Anderson	Mills	Taipua
Atkinson	Mitchelson	Taiwhanga
Beetham	Monk	Tanner
Fergus	Moss	Thompson, T.
Graham	Newman	Walker
Hislop	Parata	Whyte
Jackson	Peacock	Wilson
Jones	Richardson, G.	Withy.
Lawry	Ross	Tellers.
Macarthur	Samuel	Barron
Mackenzie, M.	Seymour	Buchanan.

#### NOES, 21.

Blake	Kelly	Richardson, E.
Cadman	Larnach	Smith
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Feldwick	O'Connor	Turnbull.
Fraser	Ormond	Tellers.
Goldie	Reeves, R. H. J.	Kerr
Hutchison	Reeves, W. P.	Seddon.
Joyce		

#### PAIR.

For.	Against.
Ward.	Fisher.

#### Majority for, 14.

Clause retained.

Mr. WITHY proposed a new clause providing that the Railway Commissioners shall not have power to grant licenses without the consent of the Road Board, County Council, or Borough, given annually, in writing.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be added to the Bill."

#### AYES, 35.

Allen	Carroll	Guinness
Barron	Feldwick	Joyce
Beetham	Fitchett	Lawry
Bruce	Fraser	Macarthur
Buxton	Goldie	Mackenzie, M.
Cadman	Grey	Mackenzie, T.

Marchant	Reeves, R. H. J.	Turnbull
Monk	Ross	Walker
Moss	Steward, W. J.	Ward.
Newman	Tanner	Tellers.
Parata	Taylor	Smith
Peacock	Thompson, T.	Withy.

#### NOES, 36.

Atkinson	Jones	Richardson, E.
Blake	Kelly	Richardson, G.
Buchanan	Kerr	Samuel
Dodson	Levestam	Seymour
Duncan	Loughrey	Taipua
Fergus	McKenzie, J.	Taiwhanga
Fitzherbert	Mills	Vogel
Graham	Mitchelson	White
Grimmond	O'Callaghan	Wilson.
Hislop	O'Connor	Tellers.
Hutchison	Ormond	Perceval
Izard	Pearson	Valentine.
Jackson		

#### Majority against, 1.

Clause negatived.

#### PUBLIC BODIES' POWERS BILL.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. HISLOP moved the addition of a new clause providing that Boards may borrow money by bank overdraft; shall have reasonable time to pay the same, as appointed by the Governor; and shall have the same allowed in the accounts for the time appointed.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

#### AYES, 45.

Allen	Hodgkinson	Reeves, W. P.
Anderson	Jackson	Richardson, E.
Atkinson	Levestam	Richardson, G.
Barron	Loughrey	Ross
Beetham	Macarthur	Seddon
Bruce	Marchant	Seymour
Buchanan	McGregor	Stewart, W. D.
Dodson	Mitchelson	S.-Mententh
Duncan	Moat	Taiwhanga
Feldwick	Monk	Tanner
Fisher	Moss	Thompson, T.
Fish	Newman	Whyte.
Goldie	O'Connor	Tellers.
Graham	Peacock	Steward, W. J.
Grimmond	Pearson	Valentine.
Hislop		

#### NOES, 16.

Blake	Mackenzie, M.	Taylor
Buxton	Ormond	Turnbull.
Cadman	Parata	
Fraser	Pyke	Tellers.
Joyce	Smith	Hutchison
Kelly	Taipua	Perceval.

#### Majority for, 29.

Clause read a second time, and added to the Bill.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

#### MINING BILL.

On the motion for the committal of this Bill,

Mr. PEACOCK said it appeared to him that this Bill interfered with private rights in a very

undesirable manner—that rights were being taken away from private individuals without anything of that being apparent in the Bill itself. He referred particularly to clause 2, which provided that “the taking of land for the deposit of tailings or for the construction of sludge-channels or tailing-channels” should be “deemed to be taking of land for a public work within the meaning of ‘The Public Works Act, 1882;’ and the Governor may accordingly take land under such Act for the aforesaid purposes.” Now, in “The Resumption of Land for Mining Purposes Act, 1873,” and also in the 40th section of “The Mining Act, 1886,” it was set forth that “mining purposes” conferred the right “to resume land which may be required for or intended to be used as a site for a tail-race, water-race, dam, reservoir, sludge-channel, machine-site, or for any other purpose connected with mining for gold or silver.” In the same section it was distinctly laid down that “all lands which, since the twenty-ninth day of September, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-three, have been or may be alienated or agreed to be alienated from the Crown, whether by way of absolute sale or lease or for any lesser interest, and all lands which had been so alienated at any time previous to the above-mentioned date, with the consent of the owners thereof respectively, shall be liable to be resumed for mining purposes” on payment of compensation, &c. That was the point to which he wished to direct attention. Those who had obtained land prior to the passing of the Act of 1873 were not liable to have it taken, and under the Act of 1886 the consent of the owners was necessary for taking lands for sludge-channels, tail-races, &c.; but in this Bill it was provided that the land might be taken on payment of compensation granted, but still without requiring the consent of the owner, as provided for in the Act of 1886. He thought it improper that they should in this way pass legislation retrospectively affecting private rights. He should like to hear what the Minister had to say on the subject.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON would like the honourable gentleman to observe that this was not taking land for mining purposes. It was only taking land for two specific purposes—the making of sludge-channels and tailing-races—and compensation must be paid.

Mr. PEACOCK admitted that; but it did not touch the point he had raised, for these works were included in the general definition of “mining purposes,” which were subject to the restriction he had mentioned.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said it was very desirable this alteration should be made in the law, but he had no objection to making the clause permissive. There were cases in which it was desirable that there should be a power to take land on full compensation being paid.

Mr. PEACOCK said that the rights of the people who had obtained land prior to 1873 should certainly be conserved.

Bill committed.

Mr. Peacock

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 15.—Depasturing and timber and other licenses within mining districts to be granted by Wardens only.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the word “depasturing” be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, “That the word proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause.”

#### AYES, 9.

Fisher	McGregor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	Pearson	Jackson
Hamlin	Richardson, G.	Peacock.
Hislop		

#### NOES, 13.

Anderson	Grimmond	Thompson, T.
Blake	Larnach	
Bruce	Lawry	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fergus	Mackenzie, M.	Guinness
Fraser	Parata	Seddon.

Majority against, 4.

Word struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, “That the clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill.”

#### AYES, 11.

Anderson	Grimmond	Parata.
Blake	Larnach	<i>Tellers.</i>
Bruce	Lawry	Guinness
Fraser	Mackenzie, M.	Seddon.

#### NOES, 12.

Carroll	Peacock	Thompson, T.
Fisher	Pearson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	Richardson, G.	McGregor
Hislop	Taylor	Monk.
Jackson		

Majority against, 1.

Clause struck out.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to three o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 21st December, 1887.

First Readings—Second Readings—Third Readings—State's Property in Running Water—Municipal Corporations Bill—Fisheries Conservation Bill—Public Reserves Sale Bill—T. K. Taiaoroa—Parliamentary Honorarium and Privileges Act—Public Bodies' Powers Bill—South Island (Westland and Nelson) Native Reserves Bill—Naval and Military Settlers' and Volunteers' Land Bill

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past ten o'clock a.m.

PRAYERS.

#### FIRST READINGS.

Public Works Bill, West Coast Settlement Reserves Bill, Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill, Mining Bill, Naval and Military Settlers' and Volunteers' Land Bill.



## SECOND READINGS.

Tamaki West Licensing District Bill, Public Works Bill, West Coast Settlement Reserves Bill, Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill, Mining Bill.

## THIRD READINGS.

Tamaki West Licensing District Bill, Public Works Bill, West Coast Settlement Reserves Bill, Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill, Mining Bill.

## STATE'S PROPERTY IN RUNNING WATER.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he wished to bring this question under the consideration of the Council not with any desire that they should express an opinion on it at present, either one way or the other—either to indorse the view that he had embodied in the resolution or to negative it. But he thought that the question deserved to be ventilated, and that it was one that had very important bearings on the interests of the country. What the colony wanted was population—population of the right kind—and that, he thought, would be found to be a large agricultural population, which would develop the resources of the Crown lands, which they still had in abundance in all parts of the colony. One of the first essentials to secure this object was that the settlers should have all the necessaries of life; and there was not one necessary of life more essential than that of an abundant supply of fresh water. This supply would be short in parts of the country; it was absorbed by certain classes, who occupied the country for a time, and whose occupation was likely to wear out after a time, but who, in the event of their absorbing this great necessary of life, would preclude the possible settlement of the country by a class which would raise the country to permanent prosperity. He had not yet referred to the views he held on the rights affecting this property. The differences in laws in regard to these rights were very extreme even in the Mother-country. In the Californian goldfields they found that the titles continued very much what they were amongst our own honest ancestors when might was right. At the same time, the principle which had been recognised in those States in which legislation on this subject had begun earlier than in many other States, and where every point of detail had been provided for—as in the Italian States, where water for the purposes of irrigation was of very great consequence—was one which they could not do better than consider. He did not wish to detain the Council by many remarks. He thought what he had already stated indicated what he desired to say on this subject. The course which he would be most gratified to see adopted in considering this motion was, that the motion should undergo discussion, and that then it should be adjourned till a future opportunity.

Motion made, and question proposed, "*That the Government be requested to consider the*

*propriety of preparing a Bill, to be introduced in next session of Parliament, declaratory of the property of the State in running water; and providing that running water shall not be withdrawn from its natural channel otherwise than temporarily, and by way of a lease from the Crown, revocable if other interests should become injuriously affected.*"—(Hon. Mr. MENZIES.)

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND said, whatever the value of riparian rights might be at Home, they had led to great inconvenience in a country like ours. As he understood it, the present state of the law was that persons having land bordering on one of these large rivers were entitled to the water alongside. He knew of one case in which a road was given upon a piece of the bed, without the legal sanction of the Land Board, which road had been absolutely stopped on the ground that this was a part of the river, and the proprietors on the two sides had the right to occupy it. However, the question was in an uncertain condition. He did not pretend to have a clear and accurate knowledge of the matter, but he believed it was a subject that was worthy of attention, and he hoped the Government would look into this question.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said the passing of this resolution was quite unnecessary if its object was to induce the Government to consider the question, as it had been a subject of great difficulty from the very first day on which they took office this session. The question was constantly cropping up, and the difficulty was that there were two irreconcilable interests which had to be dealt with—the goldfields interest and the agricultural and pastoral interest; and he did not know of any mode by which these interests could be reconciled to the satisfaction of both. If the honourable gentleman during the recess would consider the question from that point of view, and suggest something which would solve the difficulty, he would be exceedingly thankful; for, as he had said, there had been a great deal of difficulty about it. With regard to these two interests which had to be considered, the one polluted the water which the other wanted clear and pure, and they derived the water from the same source. That was a serious difficulty. The Government had no objection to the passing of the resolution, but he could say that the resolution would add nothing to enable the Government to do more than they had already done, because they had done all they could do up to the present time to find out some mode by which this difficulty could be solved.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE said that, as the question was one of considerable importance, and as they had not sufficient time to consider it properly during the present session, he would move, *That the debate be adjourned for one week.*

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON said the honourable gentleman who introduced this subject had mentioned two industries which were involved in the consideration of the question—namely, the mining and pastoral industries.

But he would mention another industry which was largely dependent on a clear water-channel, and that was the timber industry; and if the bottoms of the streams were filled up with sludge and other things there would be an end to this industry at once. He hoped the Government would not forget to take that point into consideration.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR was of opinion that the matter was one which required a great deal of consideration; and what had just fallen from the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker corroborated that opinion. With respect to the contending interests, there was no doubt that if they allowed one to get the predominance it would have the effect of completely stopping all operations in connection with the other. He was sorry to hear his honourable friend, in introducing the motion, refer to the mining industry as one not likely to be a permanent industry. He thought they need only look at the last Statement of the Minister of Mines to see that it was not a temporary industry—not an industry which was wearing away; that it had assumed such dimensions that it was likely to last at least the rest of their lives. The goldfields would retain a population in this country and would be a source of wealth to the country for many—well, he might say, centuries. He would just point out in a few words that already in connection with this industry there were companies having a paid-up capital of £2,917,000; that there had already been expended on gold-mining plant—machinery and water-races—£1,745,000; and that £2,521,000 had been received as revenue from the mining community; and in the case of the West Coast, to which this resolution specially applied, there had been produced gold worth £18,789,000, being half the total quantity of gold produced in the colony. He would say, therefore, that this was not an industry which was likely to pass away, nor was it an industry whose rights should be sacrificed to another industry which could not exist without having this mining industry alongside of it. And he trusted that, if any Bill of this kind were brought in, due care would be taken that the rights of the mining industry would not be destroyed. This industry had given employment to a large population, and was bringing into use a very large area of land in the colony which would have otherwise remained idle. He would not have referred to this but for the remarks of the honourable gentleman, which seemed to him to imply that the mining industry was not an industry to be fostered, and that it ought to be sacrificed to the agricultural industry. For his part, he thought that both should be allowed to live. The riparian rights could be easily ascertained by reference to the common law. He should vote for the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS could not see any necessity for continuing this debate. The resolution simply expressed a desire that the Government should consider the propriety of preparing a Bill to deal with this question.

*Hon. Mr. Swanson*

When that Bill came down that would be the time to consider the subject. Therefore they were only wasting time by going on with the debate, while there were other things to consider.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES said that, notwithstanding what had been said by the Hon. Mr. Bonar, he still thought that the mining industry was only a temporary one. They had an example in California as to what happened in regard to that point; and he referred them to the account given by Captain Morgan, which showed that millions of dollars had been spent on water-races, but, when the gold was sluiced out of the land, the right to the water still continued, although it would be of no further use for mining.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said the gold was not exhausted, but they stopped the money.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES said it was of no use working it further. It was quite true, as the Attorney-General had said, that, unless there was some security given that in a mining district the agricultural settlers should have a supply of pure water, there would be no permanent agricultural settlement there. If settlement of agriculturists took place in a mining district, they could not be regarded in the light of permanent settlers, but rather in the light of camp-followers. He was glad to hear the assurance of the Attorney-General that this subject was receiving the attention of the Government. It might be that he should have occasion to refer to it at a future time; but he was glad to hear that the subject had not been overlooked. He should concur in the amendment which had been proposed for the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN understood that the adjournment of the debate in this particular case would have the same effect as carrying "the previous question." To his thinking, that was perhaps rather an advantage; but it was quite clear that the question was a very much larger one than some honourable members seemed to imagine. That was to some extent indicated by the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Swanson, who had brought under the notice of the Council the extreme importance of this question in relation to the timber industry. Apart from that industry, there were a number of other industries which were affected by this question of water-supply; and, in his opinion, it was one which ought to be considered on very much wider grounds than the interests of the agricultural and mining industries merely. The interference with a large number of vested interests consequent on the conferring of special water-rights was a question which demanded the attention of the Government. He should therefore support the adjournment.

Debate adjourned.

#### MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS moved, *That the amendments made by the House of Representatives in this Bill be agreed to.* The House of Representatives had struck out the greater number of the clauses of the Bill, and, as it

appeared that sufficient time would not be given to go further into the matter this session, he thought it would be better to accept the clauses which had been retained. The clauses retained authorised the passing of certain expenditure in connection with the Jubilee; also expenditure of money not by Councillors visiting Wellington, but in connection with the passage through the Legislature of any measure affecting the Corporation; and the other clauses retained were those dealing with the electric light. He thought, under the circumstances, they had better agree to the amendments, leaving over the question of all the clauses which had been struck out till next session.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY asked what was the position of this Bill. He understood the Council had passed a Municipal Corporations Bill No. 2, and he remembered that there was another Municipal Corporations Bill in the other House. He wished to know which of these the Council was now dealing with.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said the Bill at present being dealt with was the one which had been passed by the Legislative Council and sent on to the House of Representatives. It had now come back to them, he understood, with certain clauses struck out.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE pointed out that there was no new matter introduced into this Bill by the House of Representatives, but a number of clauses had been struck out.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said the Bill that had been referred to by the Hon. Mr. Buckley never proceeded further than the Order Paper of the House of Representatives, and the Bill had practically no existence. The one before them at that moment was the one they had passed in the Council.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS thought it was to be objected to that they should be called upon at a moment's notice to agree to amendments which had been made by the other branch of the Legislature. So far as he could see, there had been clauses left out dealing with matters that were of the utmost importance to corporate bodies. For example, there was the provision relating to taking over certain streets, and the width of streets. In his opinion, it would be the fairest course to defer the whole Bill till next session.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE pointed out that the honourable gentleman merely proposed that they should accept the provisions which had been agreed to without difference of opinion between the two Houses. It was simply a question whether they should not accept the clauses which had been left in the Bill, and wait for the others till another opportunity.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER thought it would be unwise to allow this Bill to drop, especially as the whole subject had been so carefully considered by the Council. On the principle that half a loaf was better than no bread, he thought the Council ought to accept what remained of this Bill rather than reject it entirely. It still contained certain provisions

which ought to be enacted, and he hoped, therefore, the Council would agree to the motion.

Motion agreed to.

#### FISHERIES CONSERVATION BILL.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said the necessity for this Bill lay in the fact that there were at present insufficient penalties and powers to prevent the destruction of seals during the close season. The maximum penalty at present was £50, and that was found to be quite inadequate to give effect to the conservation of seals. It would be seen that the powers given in the Bill were very stringent, and he might say that it was considered that nothing short of the most stringent provisions would be at all equal to the necessities of the case. The provision with regard to the seizure of the vessel was very necessary, for this reason: that the penalty for the offence of killing seals did not in the least affect the owner of the vessel, and it really was the owner of the vessel who was the person who might be considered most to blame, or, at all events, quite as much as any one else. Recent events had convinced the Government that strong measures would have to be taken to prevent the entire destruction of seals. In Committee he would propose the addition of words at the end of clause 6 to the effect that the provision shall apply only to vessels if found within the jurisdiction of the colony. That, of course, was absolutely necessary. He moved, *That the Bill be read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN did not know that it was desirable to go on with that sort of panic legislation, although no doubt the action taken by a sealing vessel latterly was very bad. If they passed panic legislation they would soon get back to the old times when people were hung for stealing a sheep. Even if such a prohibitory law as was proposed were passed, that would not prevent American boats coming and taking away seals. Perhaps some method could be devised for preserving the seals on the islands during the close season. If that could be done it would be far better than passing panic legislation, which would not effect the object in view. The Governor at present had power to make regulations, and probably under those regulations a fine could be imposed for each seal taken in the close season. If that could be done, he did not think there was any necessity for this Bill. He thought it would be just as well to let the Bill stand over.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE thought the Hon. Mr. McLean laboured under a misapprehension with reference to foreign vessels being able to kill seals during the close season and escape the penalties. Foreign vessels would be open to seizure. Foreign vessels had lately been seized at Alaska for breaking the fishery laws. The islands referred to in the Bill were within our own territory, and if any foreign vessel violated the law it would be liable to seizure. He was not prepared to say that this could be regarded as panic legislation. It must have been evident to all thoughtful observers for some time past that some legislation of the

kind now proposed was absolutely necessary. He remembered the time when Kangaroo Island, off South Australia, was a large fishing resort for fur-seals, and a large population was continuously maintained on that island, and they derived a profitable living by catching fur-seals. No provision was made to protect these seals; and now the seals had disappeared altogether, and what might have been a permanent source of wealth to the colony had been entirely lost. A similar course of events had occurred elsewhere. Under the 2nd clause it was clear that any vessel having on board seals outside the open season would be liable to a penalty. Sealing vessels did not return to port until nearly the close of the season, and if they happened to have any seals or sealskins on board after the actual close of the open season they would be liable to a severe penalty. That, however, was a point which might be easily remedied in Committee.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN said it appeared to him that clause 5 went further than possibly was intended. It provided that vessels engaged in illegally taking seals were to be forfeited. Under that provision the rights of entirely innocent persons who had lent money on vessels might be jeopardized. If the Commissioner could dispose of forfeited vessels, and, if necessary, return the proceeds, or a portion of them, to the persons justly entitled to them, then the clause would be all right. He thought that a similar provision to that which he had suggested existed in the case of property on which it was discovered that illegal distillation was carried on. It seemed to him that some provision ought to be made in this Bill with the view of protecting innocent persons who might have lent money on forfeited vessels.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said this measure was not panic legislation. Unless more legal power were given than existed at present there would be most serious results. As had been pointed out, foreign vessels would be within the jurisdiction of the colony. It was in order to make that quite clear that he proposed to amend the Bill in Committee. He would make inquiries with regard to the point raised by the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn.

Bill read a second and a third time.

#### PUBLIC RESERVES SALE BILL.

On the motion for the second reading of this Bill,

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said he would like to know what course it was proposed to adopt with reference to this Bill—whether, after the second reading, it would be referred to the Waste Lands Committee, or whether it would be discussed forthwith. According to the Standing Orders the Bill should be referred to the Waste Lands Committee. There were something like sixty or seventy reserves mentioned in the Bill, and it was utterly impossible, in Committee of the Council, that the matter could be dealt with as a matter of that importance deserved. On looking cursorily through the Bill it did not appear to him that

any of the matters contained in it were of pressing importance, and he did not know that, under those circumstances, at that very late period of the session, the Council would be justified in passing the Bill at all. They would certainly not be justified in passing it without some closer investigation of the circumstances of the case than could possibly be given in Committee of the whole House. Reserves should not be lightly dealt with, and the Council had always expressed a disposition to look closely into any tampering with or alterations of public reserves. He was certain that unless the matter was one of pressing importance the Council would feel that the Bill, which affected such a large number of reserves, should not be passed without more consideration.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said his intention was to have the Bill read a second time, and then move that it be referred to the Waste Lands Committee.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said there was no time for the Waste Lands Committee to meet. A number of members were leaving that day, and it would be impossible to get the Waste Lands Committee together. He did not think there could be any hurry for passing the Bill. There was one reserve that he knew of which it would be most objectionable to dispose of.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said the object of the Bill was to make available a large number of reserves. These reserves were all, except four, in the Canterbury Provincial District. The Bill provided that the Minister should have power to make arrangements for disposing of these reserves, which were of no use for any public purpose. Great numbers of reserves were formerly made, and many of them were of no use whatever for the purpose for which they were originally made, and they were not required, many of them, to be retained for any purpose at all. The Bill did not by any means imply that all the reserves mentioned would be turned into money; but it was desired to free the hands of the Government with regard to dealing with them, and making them apply, where necessary, to any other purpose of a public character than that for which they were originally reserved. It appeared to him that there could be no objection to such a course as that. It was useless to keep large quantities of land lying idle, as had been done for years; it would be very much better to make use of it for public purposes or for revenue purposes. He intended that the Bill should go before the Waste Lands Committee.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY hoped the honourable gentleman would not press this Bill any further. These reserves had been made a long time ago, and therefore the matter might very well stand over till next session. He saw in the schedule that the reserves proposed to be dealt with were reserves for police; railway; timber dépôt and railway; railway-station, Winchester; Mount Somers tramway; and there was a part of a cemetery reserve. Seeing the late period of the session, and looking at the fact that the Bill must go before the

*Hon. Mr. Waterhouse*

Waste Lands Committee, he thought the honourable gentleman would probably be consulting the wishes of the Committee if he would not press the Bill further.

The Hon. Mr. HART noticed that it was proposed to dispose of a reserve in the Town of Napier. Surely any reserve in that town ought not to be sold by the Government. There were not enough public reserves in the towns of New Zealand.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN said it was clear that the Government had not had time to give that attention to this matter which it deserved. Unless the Government could assure the Council that it had really considered the matter carefully, he questioned whether it would be wise to proceed further with the matter. It did not seem to him to be a question which required immediate action. There did not seem to be any immediate necessity for carrying such a Bill as this.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN wished to protest against this sort of legislation. He saw no reason why a Bill of this character could not have been brought in at an earlier period of the session, as the Government had the same information on the subject then as they had now. He moved, *That the Bill be read the second time that day week.*

The Council divided on the question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

#### AYES, 11.

Baillie	Mantell	Pharazyn
Bonar	McLean	Stevens
Dignan	Menzies	Whitaker.
Johnson	Peacock	

#### NOES, 13.

Barnicoat	Martin	Swanson
Buckley	Peter	Taiaroa
Chamberlin	Reynolds	Wahawaha
Hart	Richmond	Waterhouse.
Lehmann		

Majority against, 2.

Bill ordered to be read the second time that day week.

#### T. K. TAIAROA.

##### ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said this matter had been called on on the previous day, when he asked for an adjournment of the question so that he might be allowed an opportunity of reading the report of the Committee. Since then he had read the report, and he was glad he had read it before the motion had been decided upon. The report was as follows:—

"That this petition complains that, although the names of three Maori women—namely, Iwa, Pukio, and Hinewetee—were included in the list of names taken down by Mr. Commissioner Mantell in 1848 as being entitled to the Moeraki and Kaiapoi reserves, their descendants have been excluded by the Native Land Court from participating in these reserves, and further complains that no reply has been received to the application for rehearing. There seems no doubt that the persons named were living in Moeraki in 1848, and were entitled to

shares in the reserves at Moeraki and Kaiapoi. Your Committee recommend that a rehearing should be granted, in order that petitioners may have a further opportunity of proving the identity of the persons through whom they claim, and their own right to succeed to such interests."

The Council had nothing before it to show whether the time for a rehearing was passed, or whether a rehearing had been refused, or what had been done in connection with the matter. Then, he would ask, whom was the Council to ask to decree a rehearing? That was a matter entirely within the jurisdiction of the Court. If a rehearing was improperly refused, at a future time it might be within the rights of the petitioner to make application to the Legislature to set it right; but it was premature altogether to take any steps now in this matter. If they were to recommend the Judge of the Native Land Court to grant a rehearing they might as well recommend other Courts to do the same sort of thing. He thought that would be a false position to take up. He was of opinion that the subject should be allowed to stand over for the present; there might be something more in it than they knew of at present. He, for one, could not agree to the motion.

The Hon. Mr. MANT'ELL hardly thought that the course recommended by the Committee would give the relief the petitioners desired. If it should be found, on further investigation, that they had claims which had been overlooked in the partition of the reserves, and so on, it appeared to him that it would be a case for the consideration of the Government, who, he thought, should give them relief in some other place. In regard to the Moeraki and Kaiapoi reserves, he fancied that any claim that might be made in regard to these could only be given effect to by successional orders of the Court; and he therefore asked the honourable member to withdraw his proposal, and let a further investigation take place, with a view to action being taken on a future occasion.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said it was a fact that the Land Court sat last year and apportioned all the lands at Waikouaiti, and all the land in the reserves in the South Island, and, in fact, individualised the titles; so that he could not see how this case could be reheard, if the land had been divided among the people. If there had been any injustice done, the persons aggrieved must get relief by some other process, as they would not get it by this resolution. He saw the Natives at the Court last year himself, and he believed that the whole of the titles down there had been individualised. He would say, in reference to the Natives at Waikouaiti, that there were no more deserving settlers than these, and it was a pity that they had not their own land to support themselves on. They took round a large threshing-machine during the season, and went threshing for Europeans. They also took contracts for ploughing and shearing; and they were a very energetic lot of people, and were worthy of

some consideration: He thought they ought to be given their own land, which would enable them to make homes for themselves, and carry on a system of soil-cultivation.

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND agreed with the Hon. Mr. Mantell that there was no possibility of reconsidering any award that might have been made by the Court in this case. As Chairman of the Committee to which this petition had been referred, he did not agree to the report himself, and he pointed out the necessity of allotting more land in the South Island to the Natives. There was nothing to satisfy these claims, as to the justice of which there appeared to him to be a very high degree of probability, if not of certainty.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA would like to give some explanation as to the motion he had moved. The application for a rehearing was made within the three months specified by the regulations of the Native Land Courts. But no reply had even been received to that application. If the Council were to see a copy of the evidence taken in the Court it would be found that the evidence given by witnesses was accepted as being correct, and that some of the principal owners of that land gave written promises and invitations to the petitioners to participate in these reserves; and the owners of that land had asked outside Natives, such as the petitioners, to contribute funds towards the improvement of these reserves. Under the Act of 1865 these reserves were made for only ten persons or less, and it was given to them and their heirs; and an Act was passed in 1868 enabling these lands to be dealt with, in order that the people might be allowed to have shares in these reserves. And if honourable members would look at clause 9 of "The Native Equitable Owners Act, 1886," it would be seen that the Court had not dealt correctly with these reserves. It was there stated that promises made by the Natives entitled to these reserves should be carried out; but that had not been done by the Court. And the persons for whom these reserves were set apart had not been receiving any of the rent during the last thirty years, the other persons having been receiving it all. Natives from different parts had been admitted into these reserves, whereas those Natives who were found on the place when the Hon. Mr. Mantell made his list had been excluded. He thought perhaps he had better withdraw the motion, out of pure shame, for the Government had made such small reserves there that he did not think they would now amount to seven acres per individual. In withdrawing this motion, he trusted to the Government to take some steps with regard to the question.

Motion withdrawn.

#### PARLIAMENTARY HONORARIUM AND PRIVILEGES ACT.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS desired to ask the Hon. the Attorney-General a question without notice. He noticed in the Parliamentary Honorarium and Privileges Act, passed this session, clause 2, subsection (2), the follow-

*Hon. Mr. McLean*

ing proviso: "Provided that in the case of any members of the General Assembly residing within three miles of the building wherein the General Assembly is assembled the expenses allowed shall only be twenty-five pounds." He would like to know whether this applied to members of both Houses, or whether it only applied to members of the House of Representatives.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER replied that that was not a clause that he could give an interpretation of. It was a clause which would have to be interpreted by the Court or by the Hon. the Speaker. His opinion on the point would not determine the matter one way or the other.

#### PUBLIC BODIES' POWERS BILL.

This Bill was read a first time.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS, in moving the second reading of the Bill, might say that it had been introduced in fulfilment of a promise that he gave to the Council that the best the Government could do in this matter would be done this session. The principal object of the Bill was to do what they engaged to attempt to do—namely, to place the lessors and lessees in the case of lands in the hands of public bodies in the same position as private landlords and private lessees were in. It would be seen, in reference to the Bill, that effect was given to this object by the 5th and 10th clauses, and the 5th clause gave power to grant leases and renew leases upon such terms as might appear reasonable; and there was also power, in the 5th clause, to provide for payment upon valuation by the incoming tenant for improvements. This provision was no doubt familiar to honourable gentlemen, and it had been considered advisable to introduce it into this Bill. In the 6th clause the same provisions as were contained in the Act of 1886, which was to be repealed by this Bill, were preserved, with the addition that the principle of tender was introduced. The other clauses were mostly the same as in the Act of 1886; but in clause 8 there was provision for granting yearly tenancy by public tender, or by auction, or by private contract. The term "private contract" was a new term; but, as it only applied to yearly tenancies, it did not seem to be open to any objection. The 10th clause was a very important provision, inasmuch as it gave power to make allowances to tenants for rent due, and to reduce the rent; and he looked upon this as being, in fact, one of the most important provisions of the Bill, because the whole object of it was to give relief. The rest of the Bill was mostly the Act of 1886 re-enacted; and there was a provision in clause 15 limiting the length of time for which a lease, under certain circumstances, might be given to twenty-one years, instead of fifty years as provided in the existing Act. Fifty years was considered too long, and twenty-one years was considered sufficient, and reasonable, and satisfactory. There was one new provision to which he must call the attention of honourable mem-

bers. In the Harbours Act of last year a piece of what was really retrospective legislation was given effect to. Certain overdrafts existed at the time the Act was passed, and the Act imposed heavy penalties on those Boards which continued to make overdrafts. It was not intended, however, that public bodies with overdrafts prior to the passing of the Act should be liable to those penalties, and this was merely to put them in a fair position in regard to those overdrafts, in order that they might not be proceeded against by the Audit Department for not complying with the provisions of the Harbours Act of last year. There was in clause 17 a new provision, but it was one which proceeded from the nature of the Bill, being a provision for making allowances to any mortgager who might have purchased any land from a public authority and have executed a mortgage to such authority for any part of the purchase-money: so that, in point of fact, so far as he understood that clause, it was simply to put them in the same position which they had previously occupied. He believed he had explained the intention of the Bill, and he therefore moved, *That the Bill be read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE thought clause 5 provided for the indefinite renewal of leases, though he did not know whether it was intended to do this. This might lead to the nature of a permanent lease, the terms of renewal of which were to be decided every twenty-one years. Now, his honourable friend, he believed—though he did not catch his words very well—did not refer to a clause which had led to a change in the definition of “leasing authority.” He noticed that the term “leasing authority” in this Bill was of a wider scope than the term “leasing authority” as used in the Act repealed. In the Act of 1886 “leasing authority” was confined to what might be called the local bodies. It was defined to mean,—

“... the Council of a borough or county, a Road Board, Town Board, Harbour Board, respectively, in whom the management or control of any lands are vested for or on behalf of any of the corporate bodies such Councils or Boards represent; and also any authority (howsoever named) in whom any lands are vested for general educational purposes, or for the purposes of any public college or school, with power to dispose of such lands by way of lease.”

Here the definition went beyond that, and it extended the provisions of this measure to bodies intrusted with purposes of a public nature. He did not know what the effect of that would be as regards various reserves which they had set aside in different parts of the colony—what would be the result of these two clauses: the 5th clause and the “leasing authority” definition. He thought there were some reserves in the neighbourhood of Oamaru, for instance, of a pastoral character, and he asked if it was intended by the operation of these two clauses that tenants in those cases might have indefinite or perpetual leases of all those large tracts of country, subject simply to renewal for twenty-one years. There were

reserves of an extensive character in other parts of the country—university reserves and educational reserves of a very extensive character in the Province of Otago; likewise educational reserves in the North Island. He very much doubted the propriety in many instances of giving these permanent leases over reserves of such an extensive character. Perhaps his honourable friend would be able to show, in Committee, that such powers might safely be intrusted to the leasing authorities.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS did not think there was any fear of these powers being abused. He pointed to the Otago reserves, and said it had been a rule always to let at the end of twenty-one years, when all the improvements were valued, and the land was also valued; the rental of the land was then put up to auction, and the incoming tenant had to pay for the improvements. There could be no great difficulty—

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said that provision was overridden in the present Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said he did not understand it in that way. The result was that all the Corporation leases, the Church Board property leases, and even private leases, were granted in the same way; and there had never been the least difficulty in regard to the renewal of the leases. If the property was more valuable than it was when the original lease was granted, the ground-rent might be raised to four or five times the amount at which it was previously let. There had been many cases where this had happened. After valuation the property was put up to auction, and the highest bidder got the new lease for twenty-one years.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE said his honourable friend was mistaken upon that point.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said he was very much mistaken if the Act did not provide as he had stated. The honourable gentleman had referred to the words of the 5th section,—

“A leasing authority may let any lands vested in it, or any part thereof, and which it is empowered to let on lease, for any term not exceeding twenty-one years, to take effect in possession within six months from the making of the lease without any fine, premium, or foregift, and may in such lease covenant to grant renewals from time to time for a period not exceeding twenty-one years, but at a rent to be fixed by the leasing authority by a special resolution, or by valuation, or by arbitration. Any such lease may provide for the payment of valuation by the incoming tenant for improvements made upon the land by any outgoing tenant.”

That carried out the leasing regulations in the Provincial District of Otago, and he believed it was a most satisfactory provision, and as applicable to public bodies as it was to private individuals. He always preferred letting his own land in that way. He found it was a general rule so to grant leases in Otago, and he believed it would be adopted by the rest of the colony when they came to know the advantage to be derived from such a system.

of leasing. He did not think there could be any objection to granting leases in perpetuity, provided that the land was valued every twenty-one years. He did not think there could be any difficulty at all in doing so. Some leases were granted for fourteen years, others for twenty-one years, and others for forty years. There was a very large portion of this colony affected by this measure, and if the Legislature was to give public bodies the principle of local government those bodies should be allowed to carry that out to the fullest extent they desired to do.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES thought the leasing authorities should have power, in dealing with public reserves, to relax the conditions from time to time when those conditions were so stringent that the tenants could not comply with them. He had had occasion to say before that agriculture was not the same as it was four or five years ago, and that it was not possible to obtain the same results from the cultivation of the land as it was then; therefore it was quite right that the leasing authorities should be in a position to give the tenants some relief. The Public Bodies' Leaseholds Act was framed in a great measure on the same lines as this Bill, but it had some objectionable features in it which precluded it from being brought extensively into operation or being acted upon as it would have been had it all the advantages which this Bill had. In fact, it had not the same capacity as this Bill, and leasing bodies desirous of acting under it were unable to give that full measure of relief which in many cases they were quite satisfied ought to be given. Now, he thought it was quite right that a measure with such an object as this should have a wider extension than the Public Bodies' Leaseholds Act. In reference to the definition of "leasing authority," he thought it meant all public bodies having the control of public reserves. Then, clause 5 was one of the clauses which had survived, with some slight alteration, from the other Bill. It provided that a leasing authority might lease for a term of twenty-one years, and that at the end of that period the improvements which had been made by the tenant should be valued when the land was relet, the incoming tenant, if it should be another tenant, taking the improvements at a valuation. This was a common practice, and did not appear to be open to objection; but some honourable members seemed to think that the clause gave a sort of claim to the tenant for a re-lease of the property. But if honourable members would read clause 6 they would see that the Bill provided that that should not take place. It provided that the lease might be sold by auction or tender, but it was to be sold publicly, and consequently it was open to any one to bid, and the occupant was no more entitled to a re-lease than any one else, and would not be able to secure a fresh lease unless he was prepared to give increased rent. That was the principle laid down—that, in reletting the land, it should be done publicly. His honourable friend Mr. Mantell had drawn his attention to clause 7, and he

thought that if the honourable gentleman had carefully read that clause he would have seen that every lease must be offered to the public; but, in the event of any land being offered by public auction or public tender and no one taking it up at the upset price, then it would be possible to sell it by private contract; but in every case the land must be first offered to the public. The provision for reletting by private contract was necessary in the interests of the lessor, in order that the land should not remain unoccupied until every effort had been made to let it publicly. The Bill was a very great improvement upon the existing Act, and gave far greater advantages to leasing authorities, and enabled them to relax the conditions of the leases when the tenants were unable to comply with them. There were one or two things in the Bill which he would like to see amended; but, from communications he had had with the framer of the Bill, the amendments he desired to see could be proposed in Committee. There was one clause to which he took very great exception, and that was the last clause; but, seeing this was matter of detail, it could be referred to in Committee. He intended to support the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN thought this measure was a measure of necessity just now. The Government, like public bodies and private bodies, must be compelled to take a lower rental, under the altered circumstances of the colony, than was formerly paid. Somehow or other, public bodies did not seem to have that full sense of responsibility in dealing with these matters which, as a rule, appertained to them; and he would like to see in this Bill something which was not provided in it, and that was that the resolutions of these bodies should get publicity. So long as publicity was given to their intention to take certain action in regard to certain leases, it would then be open to the public to object to their proposals before they were carried out.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said these Boards were always open to the public, and that the proceedings in Otago were always reported in the newspapers.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN had not noticed it, and he had watched the papers as much as any one. He thought the omission of a provision as to publicity was a defect in the Bill. As to the clause of the Bill to which the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse took particular objection, that provision was in force in the South in connection with the Harbour Boards and City Councils, and it had worked particularly well. As the Hon. Mr. Reynolds had explained, it was purely a lease for twenty-one years, with valuation for improvements. At the end of twenty-one years the improvements were valued, the property was then put up to auction, and every one had a right to bid for it. The only thing was that if a new tenant came in he had to pay for the improvements. He thought it was a very fair way of dealing with these leases: at all events, it had worked particularly well in the South, and he did not see why it should

*Hon. Mr. Reynolds*



not work as well in one place as in another. As to the objection taken to clause 7, this clause was the usual provision which was put in such Bills. If his honourable friend would consider how publicity could best be given to the proceedings, and would make provision in that direction, he thought the Bill would be a very good measure, and that it was absolutely necessary in the present circumstances of the colony.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK did not think there was any special occasion to have publicity given to these proceedings. He had had some experience of local institutions, and he thought they were just as careful as the Legislative Council. As to publicity, the newspaper reporters had access to the meetings of these institutions.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN had not such implicit confidence in the wisdom and, possibly, the entire honesty of these institutions as his honourable friend had. His experience was that if local bodies were given the power of "jobbing" they would "job." He thought the Bill contained several exceedingly objectionable principles. No doubt it gave to local bodies the power to reduce their rents; but sections 9, 10, and 17 all went in the direction of allowing the local body to make any arrangements it chose with the persons who were taking the land from it. In the case of private owners it was no doubt sometimes found necessary and advisable to reduce rents; but a private owner first said to his tenant, "If you do not choose to pay this rent, somebody else will." A private owner looked about, and if he found anybody equally acceptable who would give a better rent he immediately made terms with the tenant who would pay the better rent. He thought the fair-lease system was one of the most detestable things which had ever been introduced. As far as this system of fair-leasing had been introduced in the Bill, he thought it was so objectionable that he felt he could hardly support the Bill. Perhaps the objections he had indicated could be removed, but, unless that were done, he would certainly be prepared to see the Bill read a second time that day three months. The principle of fair-leasing was simply attempting to regulate the price of a thing by Act of Parliament, and as long as the laws of political economy lasted it was absolutely impossible that they could fix, by legislation, rent or anything else. They were allowing all sorts of local bodies, subject to all sorts of local influences, just to make any pleasing little bargain they might choose. Unless the honourable member could show that the objectionable clauses would be modified in the direction he had pointed out, he (Mr. Pharazyn) would certainly oppose the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said the provision mentioned by the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse in the 3rd clause—namely, "or for any other purpose of a public nature"—was intended to be wide and to include all lands in which there could be public interest. It was considered that the provisions of this Bill might be beneficially

applied to all the interests concerned in those lands; and that, as there was a provision in the Bill leaving it with the Governor—that was, of course, the Ministry of the day—to say to what cases the Act should apply, there could be no possible injury in this respect. The Hon. Mr. McLean had spoken of the necessity of publicity being given to all the operations of the governing body; and the honourable gentleman stated that, amongst other cases, wherever they reduced rents public notice should be given of it. He (Mr. Stevens) could hardly conceive a more extraordinary proceeding than this: that there should be a public notification, say, by the Board of Governors of some high school, of their intention to reduce the rent of Mr. A. B. on such-and-such a day. The honourable member was good enough to suggest that this would give the public an opportunity of coming in and objecting. He did not know who the public would be in those circumstances, but it appeared to him that the proper persons, in such a case, would be those who were the landlords, and he believed they would exercise a reasonable discretion in the matter. But to have the public protesting against the granting of the renewal of a lease or the modification of the terms of a lease did not appear to him to be quite admissible. The Hon. Mr. Waterhouse spoke of the provisions for granting leases by way of renewal from time to time. There was in the 5th clause of the existing Act power to grant renewals from time to time—that was, after the expiration of twenty-one years, for a similar period—and provision was made for payment for improvements. The Bill was rather wide in its terms, and it was intended to be so: at all events, it expressed more clearly that intention. His honourable friend was probably familiar with what was termed "a Glasgow lease:" that was, to put it briefly, a lease in which the land was periodically revalued separately from the improvements. The improvements were separately valued, and the existing lessee, if he chose to give the rent at which it was valued by arbitration, had the right of continuing his tenancy; and, if he did not, the incoming tenant paid the outgoing tenant for the improvements. That system had been adopted in many parts of the colony by local bodies, and, he believed, with great advantage. The intention was that something of that kind should be left in the hands of the leasing body to adopt if they thought it was in the interest of the estate. It was not intended to tie up local bodies in such a manner that they could do nothing. It was intended that they should be able to make arrangements for the benefit of the estate generally, and not do what the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn suggested—seek for the very best rent, no matter whether the existing lessee was turned into the street. That was what the honourable gentleman meant by his remarks—that it was the duty of the local governing body, if it could possibly get a better rent from somebody else, to evict the existing tenant, no matter what the hardship or the circumstances might be. He hardly thought it

likely that his honourable friend's view would be generally adopted. If he thought it would be generally adopted then he should altogether refuse to entertain the opinion expressed by the Council about two weeks before, when he was begged to get a measure introduced which would enable these governing bodies to deal with their tenants in a fair spirit and relieve them from very serious difficulties. That was, in the main, the object of the introduction of this Bill, and he understood that that view was assented to by the Council. If he had not thought so he should never have given any encouragement to his colleagues in another Chamber to take a great deal of trouble and pains to have this measure introduced and to carry it; nor should he have thought of presenting it to the notice of the Council. It had come to him as a great surprise to find that they were to go back entirely to the old position, in which they were to do nothing to relieve these tenants, but absolutely to leave the governing bodies, which were anxious to give relief to their tenants, without power to give fair and reasonable terms, in times of great difficulty. He was not prepared to adopt that view, nor did he think the Council was prepared to do so. Hence the Bill, which he trusted the Council would now read a second time.

Bill read a second time.

#### SOUTH ISLAND (WESTLAND AND NELSON) NATIVE RESERVES BILL.

This Bill was read a first time.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER, in moving the second reading, said,—Honourable members will no doubt remember that this Bill has been more than once before the Council, and that the last time it unfortunately got into the same position in which it is now, to a certain extent—that is, it came on very late in the session, when there was no time to deal with it satisfactorily. The object of the Bill is to make provisions in conformity with the wishes of the Natives and Europeans. I do not think I need go through clause after clause. If the Council will allow it to go into Committee, we shall be able to consider the clauses; and explanations, if any are required, will be afforded.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—Sir, I am surprised to find that the title of this Bill has been altered. I first saw it as "the South Island Native Reserves Bill." Now it is confined to the Westland and Nelson reserves. It had been my intention to move an amendment in Committee, which I think I shall now be debarred from doing, since the title of the Bill has been altered. I think that will be the result of this change of title, because the amendment I wished to put in was that "The Native Lands Administration Act, 1886," should not apply to land in the Middle Island of New Zealand and in Stewart Island; and I think that would hardly come in under the present title of the Bill. I wished to have inserted that amendment because the Natives of the Middle Island are quite ignorant as to how their land really stands now, and how far it

will be affected by that Act. I have already explained to this Council that the Administration Act of 1886 was framed especially to apply to the North Island, and that its provisions should never have been extended to the Middle Island. Nothing has been done by the Government for the Natives of the Middle Island, and now a Bill is brought forward which is only intended to give relief to Europeans. I therefore trust that the Council will consent either to alter the title of the Bill, or else to allow this amendment to be inserted in the Bill as it stands. I have already explained to the Council that no harm can come by such an amendment. As coming from the other Island, I feel it my duty to bring this forward and to show that the Natives of the other Island are suffering wrong. The Bill only applies to certain reserves, and is intended to benefit the Europeans there. I wish my amendment to extend to the Natives outside these particular reserves. Both the Bill and my amendment apply to the Middle Island. The Council may suppose that I am misunderstanding my position; but I wish to make known the wants of my people, and I shall continue to advocate their case whenever I feel called upon to do so. I trust the Government will agree to my request, for, if not, I can assure them the Bill will never pass. I am not making any exorbitant demand now, and I think it is quite right this want should be attended to. If the title of the Bill excludes the amendment I propose, then I would move that the title be altered to what it stood originally. I see several things which I object to in the Bill, but my principal desire is to have this amendment inserted; and also I have scarcely had time to peruse the amendments which were made in the Bill, which I have only seen to-day: and I trust this will be agreed to.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—This is the Bill which came to the Council from the House of Representatives. If the honourable member thinks proper, he can, in Committee, move any amendment; and he can also move, as a consequential amendment, the alteration of the title.

Bill read a second time and committed.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA moved the addition of a new clause as follows:—"The Native Lands Administration Act, 1886," shall not apply to lands in the Middle Island of New Zealand and Stewart Island."

The Committee divided on the question.—"That the clause be added to the Bill."

#### AYES, 7.

Barnicoat	Martin	Taiaroa
Buckley	Shephard	Wahawaha.
Lahmann		

#### NOES, 9.

Bonar	Peter	Stevens
McLean	Pharazyn	Waterhouse
Peacock	Richmond	Whitaker.

Majority against, 2.

Clause rejected.

Hon. Mr. Stevens

Bill reported, and read a third time.

On the question, That the Bill do now pass, The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA said,—Sir, I am not yet satisfied with the reasons that have been given for not allowing my amendment to be made in this Bill. I would therefore beg to call your attention to the fact that there is not a quorum of the Council present.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I understand there is more than a quorum.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I would say, as I had not an opportunity of speaking when we were considering the proposition, my reason for voting against this proposition has been that it is proposed to introduce into this Bill, which affects only the Westland and Nelson Districts, a provision extending all over the other Island. It seems to me that this provision is entirely outside this Bill; and it is for that reason, and not because I do not sympathize with my honourable friend in his efforts, that I thought it my duty to vote against it.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—Sir, I would state that I have not had an opportunity of properly seeing the amendments which have been made in this Bill. They have not been printed and translated, and the copy of the Bill which I had in speaking is headed "South Island Native Reserves Bill;" and now, this evening, since I have been discussing the matter, I am told that the title of the Bill is altered to "Westland and Nelson Native Reserves Bill." I will not agree to the passing of this Bill, which applies to me, as I am one of the owners of this reserve. Clause 21 refers to 500 acres at Grey-mouth, and I am the principal owner of that reserve; and this is bringing in a Bill that applies to me personally, and I will not submit to this in silence. I said that, if my amendment were passed, I would agree to the Bill. I would remind the Council that this Bill is being passed specially affecting me, and yet the provisions of it seem to treat me, Taiaroa, as though I were not a being. I will therefore move, *That this Bill be read the third time this day three weeks.*

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman will understand that the question of the third reading is passed. The question now before the Council is, "That the Bill do now pass."

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—Sir, I thought this was the third reading of the Bill, and that I was in order in making this motion.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—As I have explained to the honourable member, the question was, in the first place, "That the Bill be read a third time." That was passed. The present question is, "That the Bill do now pass." It is quite competent for the honourable member to speak on that; but it is not competent to move that the Bill be read the third time at a future date, for the opportunity for that has passed.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—Can I not move that the Council do adjourn?

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—It is perfectly in order to do so.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—I beg to move, That the Council do now adjourn.

Motion negatived.

Bill passed.

#### NAVAL AND MILITARY SETTLERS' AND VOLUNTEERS' LAND BILL.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER had no doubt honourable members had not forgotten that this had been the subject of agitation for a great number of years. A Commission was appointed some time ago for the purpose of dealing with these claims. It was found that a great number of claims had to be satisfied in some way or another; but nothing had been done further than making the inquiry, and naturally the parties were anxious that matters should be finally settled. The object of this Bill was to deal with these claims. There was one special provision—that the Government might satisfy claims in cash, provided they did not pay more than 50 per cent. of the nominal amount of the scrip; and the object was to satisfy those claims by granting money instead land-scrip. It was found that people often disposed of this scrip at almost any price. It would be beneficial to the country as well as to the people themselves that they should have an opportunity of realising, and the Government should have the power to satisfy the claims of those who deserved it by granting 50 per cent. of the nominal value of the scrip. That was the principal matter of importance in the Bill. This Bill, so far as the Commission was concerned, would wind the matter up.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS would say, before the question was put, he thought it would be well that a Bill like this should be introduced at an early period of the session. There were some things of an objectionable nature in this Bill. The preamble stated,—

"... further evidence has been adduced by or on behalf of the persons mentioned in the Second Schedule in substantiation of their claims, and the same have been proved to the satisfaction of the Defence Minister to the extent in the said schedule mentioned."

They all knew what was meant by "to the satisfaction of the Defence Minister." He suggested it meant "to the satisfaction of the department." If it was found necessary to appoint a Commission on the previous occasion to go into all these claims, he did not think it should be left to the Defence Minister to settle the claims that had been rejected by the Commission. He thought that it would be better to let this Bill stand over till next session. He did not think honourable members had time to go thoroughly into the Bill, and he trusted the Hon. the Attorney-General would not object to holding it over for another session. He would move, *pro forma*, *That the Bill be read the second time that day six months.* He thought this was a Bill that ought not to be hastily passed. At an early part of the session the Council had little or nothing to do, and the Bill ought to have been introduced in the Council, and sent down to the other branch of the Legislature. It should go to the Waste

Lands Committee and be thoroughly examined before it was passed.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN would like a little longer time to study a Bill of this sort. From former experience of what became of land-scrip granted under this system, they should be very cautious before they allowed that experience to be repeated—they should certainly never submit again to what had occurred in the past. In former years land-scrip was granted to Volunteers who served a certain period, and the giving of that scrip did not tend to promote settlement at all, or to make settlers of the Volunteers who got it. The practice was to sell the scrip at from 2s. 6d. to 10s. in the pound, and a large amount of it got into the hands of one man, who used it at its par value in paying for Government land. He was afraid, despite any safeguards, that that was what would happen with the scrip issued under this Bill. This Bill did not deal with all claims; there were a lot more to come, including those of old soldiers who had forfeited their land through technicalities and no fault of their own, and who claimed now to be reinstated. He would like to see this matter held over: it was not fair to go on with it in the last hour of the session. The list of claims was a very long one, and after the claimants had waited so long they could wait four months longer without any loss. He moved, *That the debate be adjourned.*

The Council divided on the question, "That the debate be adjourned."

#### AYES, 18.

Barnicoat	Menzies	Shephard
Buckley	Miller	Swanson
Chamberlin	Peter	Taiaroa
Lahmann	Pharazyn	Wahawaha
Martin	Reynolds	Waterhouse
McLean	Richmond	Whitaker.

#### NOES, 7.

Baillie	Johnson	Peacock
Bonar	Kenny	Stevens.
Dignan		

Majority for, 11.

Debate adjourned.

The Council adjourned at five minutes to eleven o'clock p.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 21st December, 1887.

Second Reading—Third Reading—Property-tax Bill  
—Education—Native Land Court Bill—Education  
—New Zealand Loan Bill—Fisheries Conserva-  
tion Bill—Public Revenues Bill—Midland Rail-  
way Contract Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at eleven o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### SECOND READING.

Sheep Bill.

Hon. Mr. Reynolds

### THIRD READING.

Sheep Bill.

### PROPERTY-TAX BILL.

On the question, That this Bill be committed,

Mr. TURNBULL said,—Before that is put, I should like to make a few remarks upon the amendment which I have placed upon the Order Paper. The object of the amendment is to endeavour to meet the case of absentee proprietors, and the amendment is as follows:—

"Every person who has resided in the colony for six months during the twelve months previous to the date of the property-tax being payable shall, if he pays the tax on the due date thereof, be entitled to a deduction therefrom of twenty per centum."

Of course I admit that this is a clumsy way of getting at the question, and I have no doubt that the Premier, when the amendment is moved, will object to it, and say that it gives an appearance which it ought not to give, of our taxation being much heavier than it should be. There were one or two objections made when the amendment was suggested. I gathered from the remarks of honourable members who addressed the House that their objection is that the amendment applies to a great extent to money which is invested here in the colony: but, at the same time, when we consider that this amounts to really one-ninth or, at least, to one-tenth of the taxable property in the colony which is now bearing so small a share of taxation, it appears to me that it certainly should pay some additional sum. Of course many honourable members will have noticed the state of affairs at Home—that the rate of interest is very much less than it was, and that there is a proposal now on the part of the British Government to reduce the interest on Consols  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The argument that money should not pay to the extent that real property pays does not apply, because real property must bear its local burdens, but money bears no taxation whatever. This is a question of very great importance; but I am afraid it is too late in the session to expect anything to come of it, and, as honourable members wish to get through the business in Committee, I will only move my amendment and take a vote upon it.

Mr. TANNER.—Before going into Committee on the Property-tax Bill I desire to make a statement. When the House had the Bill under consideration the other evening the honourable member for Inangahua mentioned me by name, and read an extract from a newspaper which reflected both on the Property-tax Department and on myself, inasmuch as it stated I had sold land for a high price which had been grossly undervalued—in fact, that I had sold land at the rate of over £212 an acre which was valued for property-tax purposes at £18 an acre. The land referred to is a portion of a block that I laid out in small-farm sections of 100 acres each, which I advertised, and which were open for sale seven months at £5 an acre on deferred payments. This occurred

between two and three years after I had purchased this land—known as the Heretaunga Block—from the Natives. Some of these sections were taken up, and some were not; and the land under discussion was some of the latter. I have had this land laid out in town and suburban sections, which realised at auction an average of about £120 an acre, and not £212, as stated, and the land was assessed by the Property-tax Department at £115 an acre, and not at £18 an acre as stated; and here I will read from the property-tax paper which I now have in my possession: “316 acres 1 rood 20 perches, part Heretaunga Block, £36,340”—upon which amount I have paid my property-tax. So much, then, for the newspaper reports. One of the hundred-acre small-farm sections which I sold on deferred payments at £5 an acre—half of which I took out in contract ploughing—was laid out some time subsequently by the purchaser as the Town of Hastings. He gave me altogether for it £500, and sold it for £5,000; and the Borough of Hastings is now assessed at £500,000—showing how rapidly land may rise in value according to circumstances. Had the honourable member mentioned this matter in Committee I should not have referred to it; but, as he mentioned it in the House, and it will appear in *Hansard*, I considered it due to the department and myself that I should make this explanation.

## IN COMMITTEE.

## Clause 2.—Rate of property-tax.

Sir J. VOGEL moved, That, after the word “property,” in the first line of subsection (1), the following words be inserted: “of over two thousand five hundred pounds in value.”

The Committee divided.

## AYES, 14.

Fitzherbert	Joyce	Richardson, E.
Fraser	Kelly	Vogel.
Goldie	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	Perceval	Brown
Hutchison	Reeves, R. H. J.	Fitchett.

## NOES, 38.

Atkinson	Lawry	Pearson
Beetham	Levestam	Richardson, G.
Blake	Macarthur	Ross
Buchanan	Marchant	Seymour
Dodson	McGregor	Stewart, W. D.
Fergus	Moat	S.-Menteath
Fisher	Monk	Thompson, T.
Graham	Moss	Wilson.
Hislop	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Jackson	O'Connor	Bruce
Kerr	Peacock	Whyte.
Lance		

Majority against, 19.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

Mr. CADMAN.—I would ask the Premier if he will endeavour to make some provision in the Property-tax Bill which will make it easier for us to get English capital on the goldfields. The present law makes it compulsory for the total value of the shares to be taxed. One company, with a nominal capital of £180,000

and a subscribed capital amounting to something like £20,000, has taken up a mine, and has spent £8,000 or £10,000; but the Property-tax Department comes down and asks the company to pay property-tax on something like £185,000. If this goes on it will choke off foreign capital from being expended on the goldfields.

Major ATKINSON.—I am afraid it would be impossible to rectify the matter this session, because it would be an amendment of the Property-tax Assessment Act. I shall be very glad to consider it, and if I can see my way to giving relief I shall be very glad to do so.

Bill passed.

## EDUCATION.

Mr. O'CONOR explained that he had “paired” with the honourable member for Tuapeka on the educational proposals of the Government against the proposed reductions, and, as the “pair” had not appeared in *Hansard*, he wished now to have it recorded.

## NATIVE LAND COURT BILL.

Mr. HISLOP.—In the absence of the Minister of Native Affairs, I beg to move the second reading of this Bill. The Bill is merely supplemental to other Bills passed by this House, and relates merely to procedure. It is a technical Bill, and therefore it is not necessary for me to give any further explanations concerning it.

Mr. TAIWHANGA.—I should like to ask the Premier if the Government agree to the request of Paora Tuhaere and other chiefs. The request is that the Government shall pass my Bill called the Maori Relief Bill. Before speaking on these Bills, I should like the Premier to answer that question.

Major ATKINSON.—The Bill of the honourable gentleman would be utterly useless. His Bill is a mere scrap of a Bill, and would not provide anything. The position which the Government have taken up with regard to this matter is quite clear—that we should make temporary provision only to do justice to people who were suffering from our past legislation, the Government undertaking to show the Bill to the Maoris for them to see that what we proposed was only temporary and reasonable. The honourable gentleman seems to have got a section of Natives to agree to his own Bill, which is legislation of a permanent character, and which would not even carry out the objects which the honourable gentleman appears to have. The Government have strictly carried out their engagements. They proposed to make temporary provision, and asked the Natives to examine their proposal, so that they might see it was of a temporary and reasonable character. The honourable gentleman, because he will not get his own Bill, says he will not assist the Government to get their Bills through. Under the circumstances, I think the House will see that the Government have done all they could to consult the Natives in this matter. During the recess they will prepare measures and will ask the co-operation of the Natives in order

to do what is reasonable and right. In the meantime, I would ask that fair and reasonable provision be made for those who are suffering from our past legislation.

Mr. HUTCHISON. — I think the Colonial Secretary has hardly treated the House with the consideration which the importance of this Bill deserves. He has stated that this Native Land Court Act Amendment Bill is a mere supplementary measure. As I read it, it is nothing of the sort. It appears not so boldly objectionable, if I may use the term, as containing provisions which are anything but supplementary to the present law, unless under the term "supplementary" we are to consider almost anything that may be in the way of addition, however obnoxious. I should have supposed the Colonial Secretary would at least have considered some explanation necessary to the House with respect to sections 2 and 3 of this Bill. If I am not mistaken in my reading of the Native Land Court Act of last year, which this is proposed to amend, that was a mere machinery Bill, dealing with the procedure of a Court, but not dealing with titles. Another Act, called the Administration Act, by its very name indicates how titles were to be completed. I would ask the Colonial Secretary to inform the House what is the meaning of sections 2 and 3 of this Bill. They may deal, no doubt, only with conveyancing, and, presumably, only with the fee-simple of land; but legislation has hitherto hedged round dealings in Native lands with exceptional and necessary precautions. Deeds had to be executed in a particular way: the Natives signing had the transaction explained to them by a licensed interpreter, and the execution was witnessed by an official—ordinarily a Justice of the Peace—and an adult male witness. That, no doubt, has been swept away by the repeal of the various Acts last year; but the repeal of those Acts was coincident with the passing of that other Act which superseded all these formalities and precautions, inasmuch as it took the execution of deeds out of the hands of the Natives altogether, and left the transactions to pass the ordeal of a committee and afterwards to be given effect to by a Commissioner. I ask the attention of the House to these two clauses, which I consider most insidious in their operation; and their very presence in this Bill suggests something that is covert and undesirable. If there were any necessity for such clauses, their place is in the Native Land Administration Act Repeal Bill, and not in the Native Land Court Bill where we find them. Following the remarks I have just made as to the former safeguards and formalities in the execution of Native deeds, I would point out that under these clauses by the mere execution of conveyances land would pass, and pass with even greater facility than in transactions between Europeans. I will first quote section 2 of this Bill; and I draw attention to the words "certificate of title," because they indicate a mere transition state of title to Native land, the completion being a Crown grant, before the issue of which hitherto there

could have been no dealings with the land except with the consent of the whole of the owners of the land—the Crown grant, when issued without restrictions, carrying the ordinary incidents of an absolute grant. I will read the clause:—

"Any conveyance of land held by memorial of ownership or certificate of title issued by the Native Land Court executed since the thirtieth day of September, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, may be lodged with a Native Land Court Registrar, together with a true copy of such deed and of any indorsements thereon; and it shall be a duty of such Registrar to make a minute of the contents of such deed upon any memorial or certificate of title in his custody and having relation to the land the subject of such deed."

That clause gives even greater facility for the completion of transactions in Native lands than exists as to transactions between Europeans, and in that respect is in startling contrast with the whole series of Acts which up to last year had been devised and were in operation for the protection of the Natives. But it is more astonishing still to see the further facility the next section gives for the completion of transactions:—

"Where one such deed or several such deeds together effect a conveyance of the entire area held under a certificate or memorial it shall be a duty of the Chief Judge, at the expiration of three months from the lodging of such deed, or from the last of such lodgments where more than one, to forward such deed or deeds to the Minister of Lands, with such report as he may deem fit, and particulars of any unexpired leases of such land registered in the Native Land Court. Thereon a warrant for the issue of a certificate of title under 'The Land Transfer Act, 1885,' may issue to the person entitled under such deed or deeds. Such warrant shall be accompanied by the particulars of leases as aforesaid, if any."

Here is a second step, and for the first time in the history of our Native-land legislation the Minister of Lands has something to do with it. The Chief Judge sends the deeds and a report to the Minister of Lands and "particulars of any unexpired leases of such lands registered in the Native Land Court." Among the formalities which up to 1886 were rendered compulsory for the protection of the Natives in the execution of deeds there was this: It was required that all transactions between Natives and Europeans should be submitted to a Commissioner appointed under the Native Lands Frauds Prevention Act—a most suggestive title—and that official had to be satisfied as to the propriety of the transaction, and his sanction, his *imprimatur*, had to be given before the transaction could have any effect. Since 1878 the Court also had to satisfy itself of the fairness of each transaction. The 3rd clause of this Bill would do away with that. The 2nd section does away with all formalities heretofore necessary in the execution of Native deeds; and the 3rd section sweeps away the safeguards of the inquiry before the

*Major Atkinson*

Commissioner, and absolutely makes title to Native land complete by the deeds passing through what I may designate as a mere machine—you put the deed into one end and it comes out at the other, at the end of three months, a complete Land Transfer title, without the least check or supervision, or protection of the interests of the Native owners. And yet the Colonial Secretary calmly brings down a Bill with such provisions as these, and says to the House that it does not require any explanation—that it is merely supplementary to the present law. It is supplementary, but to a revolutionary extent, and to an extent such as I think this House will not lend itself to sanctioning. That is the first phase of the Bill; and there is another. There is a provision which I must ask the permission of the House to consider. I refer to section 5—and I would mention that “the said Act” means the Native Land Court Act of last year; it reads,—

“An order made under the said Act in favour of a Native may direct that the title given by or to be derived under such order shall or shall not be subject to any, and, if any, to what, restrictions on alienation, and that whether the title to the land partitioned was or was not theretofore subject to any such restrictions; and land the subject of an order directing restrictions on alienation shall be thereafter held subject to such restrictions, and any Crown grant thereof shall be made subject thereto.”

There is a flood of words! but the meaning of them is that the Court may revise any recommendation previously made on a certificate of title with respect to restrictions, and, if it thinks proper, may sweep these restrictions away. Now, these restrictions are in the form of recommendations to the Governor. By the Native Land Court Acts, from 1863 onwards, these were most valuable and necessary safeguards to the Natives interested in the land. Under the Act of 1863, supplemented by the Act of 1865, the names of all owners in any block dealt with by the Court were required to be recorded by the Court; but by the provisions of the Acts of both 1863 and 1865 no more than ten names could be inserted in the certificate. Those ten, according to all principles of equity and natural justice, would be considered to be the trustees of those not named in the certificate, sometimes amounting to over a hundred. Yet the practice has been, as often as it could be followed, to treat with these ten as if they were the owners in fee-simple of the land; and most transactions in the past have been of that character,—these ten receiving the whole of the purchase-money in the transaction, and either doling it out in very small portions to the others, or, more often, retaining the whole of it themselves. The only protection the other owners had was the strength of these restrictions or recommendations embodied in the certificate, and reliance on the Governor, when issuing the Crown grant, which was the ultimate perfection of the title, inserting a clause against the alienation of land by sale, or mortgage, or lease for more

than twenty-one years. Now, there are a great number of blocks of land to which that state of things has applied. The law as to there not being more than ten grantees prevailed up to 1873. Endeavours have been very often made to remove, or to partially remove, these restrictions to the alienation of land. For a period of some twenty years or more certificates of title have been issued by the Native Land Court, bearing its recommendation to the Governor that on the issue of the Crown grant there should be inserted in it such restrictions; but it has often been found in the political history of this country that such recommendations have been ignored; and sometimes even when the restrictions have been acted on they have afterwards been removed. No doubt the Governor may not act—or need not act—on the recommendation. Sometimes the Native Minister of the day, on his own responsibility, has advised the Governor to ignore them; and in some instances, of which we have had evidence quite recently, assurances have been given to intending purchasers that the restrictions would be removed, and it has been found by subsequent investigation that such removal has operated most prejudicially to very many of the Natives interested in the land, quite as much as to the ten or lesser number whose names appeared on the title and who were dealing with the European purchaser. In connection with this subject, a case lately came before the Supreme Court, and it is on this case that all this proposed legislation is stated to be founded. I do not at all admit that the Bills now before the House really are required as a consequence of that case. The case I refer to is that of *Seymour versus Macdonald*, the plaintiff being an intending purchaser of Native land and the defendant the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court. An application was made to the Supreme Court for a *mandamus* to compel the Chief Judge to certify, under the Administration Act of last year, to a transaction which the Supreme Court held to be, in its inception and its subsequent progress, illegal. It arose in this way: The land was the subject of a certificate of title which contained a recommendation such as I have mentioned—that on the issue of the Crown grant the Governor should insert a proviso making the land inalienable except by lease for twenty-one years. Yet, in the face of that, the purchaser went on to acquire a title in fee-simple. It was argued that the recommendation was simply a suggestion to the Governor, which he might or might not act upon, and that until he acted upon it Europeans might proceed to endeavour to purchase the land. Now, the view of his Honour Mr. Justice Richmond—before whom that case first came in the Supreme Court—is one which I hope honourable members will bear in mind in dealing with these Native titles. The case is reported in the fifth volume of the *New Zealand Law Reports*, page 67. The facts were as I have stated, and his Honour Mr. Justice Richmond, in dealing with the recommendation or report

in the certificate of title, against alienation, says,—

"It appears to me impossible to contend that the report can be treated as a nullity by the very Court which issued it. True, it is as yet only a recommendation, which the Governor may ultimately decline to act upon; but the Court, having once made such a recommendation, is *functus officio* in the matter. It would be *ultra vires* in any Judge of the Court to pretend to anticipate the action of the Governor and take the matter out of His Excellency's hands by allowing alienation. *The land must therefore be considered as subject to a restriction precluding alienation within the meaning of section 24*" [of "The Native Land Administration Act, 1867"].

This 5th section of the present Bill, as I read it, is a reversal of the law as laid down by Mr. Justice Richmond; and here again I would remind the House that the Colonial Secretary, in introducing the Bill, did not think any explanation necessary, although it is a most revolutionary measure. Is this House, on the last day of its session, to have brought down to it a series of Bills the first and most innocent of which is that now before us? I think the House will not allow itself to be imposed upon in this manner. These Bills were before the Upper House, and were considered by the Native Affairs Committee of that House, and various amendments were made in them; and now they are brought down here at the very end of the session, when it is, of course, out of the question to move that they be remitted to the Native Affairs Committee of this House. It would be merely a useless form. That is only another argument for refusing the Bills altogether. Therefore it is my duty to move, That this Bill be read a second time this day three months. I take this as the first step in the opposition I must offer to all these Bills. I have dealt very shortly with a very large and important subject, and I trust I have shown the importance of the legislation attempted by this Bill. I trust also that I have in some measure shown—what others who may follow me will affirm—that this is not legislation we should deal with at this time, but that it ought, in all justice, to be relegated to another session. If, however, my motion is negatived, I shall still consider it my duty—and there are others who will act with me—to oppose this Bill by every constitutional means. We shall offer the most uncompromising opposition to every one of these Bills.

Mr. FISH.—I do not rise to offer opposition to these Native Bills, for I know very little about them, and honourable members generally have not had time to consider them. But I think the argument of the honourable member for Waitotara—that it is too late in the session for these Bills to be passed—is so good that I shall feel bound to vote for his motion.

Mr. CARROLL.—I quite agree with most of what has fallen from the honourable member for Waitotara. There seems to be a great want in this measure. Our legislation in years past

has been in the direction of affording every protection to the Maoris, so that they should not be taken advantage of, as instanced in the case referred to by the honourable member for Waitotara. Finally, however, it was the Native Lands Administration Act that swept away all those measures of protection. Before any transaction was completed or any deed was executed by the Native Land Court it was necessary for the Natives to go before the Trust Commissioner, who was directed to make inquiries into the transactions. That Commissioner had to be perfectly satisfied that the Native signed his name to the deed knowing what he was doing; that he had other land besides that which he wished to sell, to live upon; that he was not holding that land in trust for another; that he had not received as consideration for parting with it arms, ammunition, liquor, *et cetera*. When the Trust Commissioner, after making these inquiries, was satisfied that the transaction was right, he authorised the deed. Under this law the Maori was amply protected, and had control of his own land; but the Native Lands Administration Act swept all that away: and now I see nothing in this Bill to provide a remedy for that state of things. I should like to have an explanation from the Colonial Secretary with regard to sections 2 and 3. They seem to me to open the door to very questionable transactions, without affording that protection which has always been afforded in the past to the Natives. There is no Trust Commissioner provided for, and there is no machinery at all for the protection of Native lands. The sections simply provide that after a conveyance has been signed by a Native it can be accepted, no matter how it has been signed. I say that is totally unfair, and, unless some provision is made in the measure by which you can revive the old system of protection to the Natives, I shall certainly vote against the second reading.

Mr. SAMUEL.—With the exception of sections 2, 3, and 5, the provisions of this Bill appear to be properly supplementary of the Act of 1866; but with regard to those three sections I think the honourable gentleman who moved the second reading of the Bill should have given us some clear explanation, so that we might know exactly what we are doing. Section 2, I think, would be an extremely improper section to enact, unless the date of the execution of the deeds therein referred to were changed from the 30th September, 1866, to the 1st January, 1867. By "The Native Land Administration Act, 1866," it was competent for Europeans to purchase lands from the Natives, and, as has been pointed out, the deeds then executed had to be examined in the manner provided. Previously the transaction could be inquired into by the Frauds Commissioner, and it required his signature before a deed could be registered. That provision, however, was swept away by the Native Land Administration Act, and it was provided by that Act that thereafter no dealings should take place between Natives and Europeans except in the manner prescribed by the Act. That Act, however, did

Mr. Hutchison



not come into force until the 1st January, 1887. If, then, this section had provided that all deeds executed after the 1st January, 1887, were to be dealt with in the manner provided the section would be understandable, for it would refer to deeds executed under the Act of 1886, and also deeds executed to the Crown, in neither of which cases would there be any objection. If, however, this section is to apply to deeds executed prior to "The Native Land Administration Act, 1886," I cannot see anything in it which should recommend it to us. With regard to section 5, that also seems to me to require explanation; but I am led to presume that it is merely intended to give power to the Native Land Court to free the persons negotiating for land from the restrictions which obtained over persons who held the land previously and who are deceased. As the older Natives pass away, and younger Natives come to exercise their rights over the land in a better manner than in the past, it might be well to take away the restrictions upon their dealing with their lands, and it might be well that the Court should have power to free from the restrictions the persons who had previously held the land. If this is the object of the clause, it certainly should have been explained to us. What is more, I am strongly of opinion that we should have had time to see whether it would have any other effect than that—possibly a bad effect. It is very dangerous to tinker with our legislation, as we have been doing for the last two or three years in regard to Native lands; and it is time that the Government took the whole matter into consideration, and, instead of, at the end of the session, introducing exceptional legislation in a manner which may injure both Natives and Europeans, they should bring before the House a well-considered system of allowing these lands to be disposed of for settlement without doing injury to the Natives and with their full concurrence. I trust that the Bill will not be ordered to be read a second time this day six months, but that it will go into Committee, and that the clauses other than those that I have mentioned will become law, because they contain most useful and valuable amendments.

Mr. TANNER.—The honourable members who have already spoken have referred to the Native Lands Frauds Prevention Act as one that would be repealed by this Bill, or, rather, by another that is to come on. I am one of those who agree that, if this second Bill to which I have referred is passed, that Act should be reinstated. Honourable members who have spoken on that Act—both the honourable member for Waitotara and the honourable member for the Eastern Maori District—have spoken of it as if it were necessary simply for the protection of the Natives. But I beg to say that it is just as necessary for the protection of the Europeans as it is for the protection of the Natives, and I will give an instance in point which came under my own knowledge. A Native conveyed a piece of land to a European; but another European, thinking that

there was a flaw in the title, induced the Native to go to his house and sign a twenty-one years' lease to him of the same piece of land. This European brought his lease down to have it registered, and it was necessary that he should go before the Trust Commissioner before he could get it registered. The person who bought the land put in his conveyance and objected, and on considering the matter the lease was declared to be "contrary to equity and good conscience," in terms of the Act. Had it not been for the Trust Commissioner the European who had bought the land would have had, in all probability, to go to law, and would have been put to much expense. So that the Trust Commissioner is as much a necessity in the interests of Europeans as of the Maoris. I understand it is now desired to go on with the Loan Bill, and therefore I will move the adjournment of the debate.

Sir G. GREY.—At what period of time will the debate be resumed? We should have full notice of it.

Major ATKINSON.—It is difficult to say when; but I will see that full notice is given. These Bills were not put at the top of the Order Paper, and were only brought on because the honourable member for Christchurch North was not in his place, and it was not desired to go on with the Loan Bill in his absence.

Sir G. GREY.—A number of persons have determined to resist this Bill and the others relating to similar subjects, because they consider that it is unfair to push them on at this period of the session; that, though no wrong may be intended to be done, still wrong will be the effect of passing them. I therefore think that a specific time should be fixed at which we should renew the consideration of the Bills.

Mr. KELLY.—I would ask the Government to withdraw the Bills for this session. The Native members are opposed to their being proceeded with. They came down from the other House, and they have not been sent to the Native Affairs Committee here for consideration; and, under all circumstances, I think they might very well be left over until next session.

Mr. CADMAN.—I would remind the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill that the country electorates in the North Island are looking very anxiously for legislation upon the subjects dealt with by these Bills, and we were led to believe that some important changes would be proposed, in the interest of both races. But none of the desired changes is proposed by these Bills. They seem to be mostly in the direction of making legal transactions which, if not illegal, appear to be not quite legal. If the Bills are to be gone on with, I suppose we must endeavour to make some amendments to make the measures beneficial to the people we represent; but that will take time, and if the Bills go on in their present shape they will be useless.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I wish to add my voice to those of other honourable members who have

asked the Government not to insist on these Bills being passed through this session. That such measures should be brought on without being sent to the Native Affairs Committee is a circumstance without precedent. I will not say that the Bills are of such a character that they might be postponed till next session, but I will say that, if they are of so much importance that they should be passed this session, then we should adjourn for a week or ten days from Christmas, and take up the consideration of them on reassembling after the adjournment. If that cannot be done, then they should be postponed till next session. The forcing-through of Bills of this kind within a few hours of prorogation, and in the absence of opportunity to properly consider them, is repugnant to all our ideas of proper legislation; and I hope that the honourable gentleman, finding that the sense of the House is against him, will drop them for this session.

Mr. HISLOP.—I think I may say that these Bills will not come on again before the evening. Although I cannot say that I am much impressed with the arguments brought forward by the honourable member for Waitotara, or with his threats to block the passage of the Bill, yet the Government recognise that the legislation asked for is of great importance, and, if the time at the disposal of the House will not permit of due consideration being given to the matter, they will consider the reasonable request of the Native members and others that the Bills should be postponed till next session. At the same time, I must say that we understood that these Bills were proceeding with the sanction of the Native members, and the objections of those honourable gentlemen have come upon the Government as a surprise. In the meantime I ask that the debate be adjourned, and later on we shall see better what the position is.

Major ATKINSON.—I hope that the House will consent to the adjournment at once. I merely had the Loan Bill postponed owing to the absence of the honourable member for Christchurch North. I will undertake to give the honourable member for Auckland Central ample notice as to when this Bill will come on again. In the meantime, as the Colonial Secretary has stated, the Government will, after the intimation received from the Native members, consider whether it is absolutely necessary to go on with these Bills.

Mr. MARCHANT.—Before the Government finally determine to abandon the Bill, I would appeal to them to take into consideration the case of Mr. Joshua Jones, of Mokau. He has been here during the whole session waiting to see if legislation can be effected to deal with his wrongs: for he undoubtedly has wrongs. These wrongs it is proposed to remedy to some extent in the Native Land Administration Act Repeal Bill; and I think it would be a grievous injustice to him if nothing were done to rectify his wrongs. I venture to bring the matter under the notice of the Government, and trust they will consider it, and that, in case they decide to abandon these measures,

*Sir J. Vogel*

they will see if they cannot make some provision to deal with his case.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I trust the Government will give us time to consider this matter. I take a great interest in the administration of Native affairs. This administration has been the bugbear of the colony for the past forty-five years. In my opinion, from beginning to end the Natives have been unfairly treated. I should like further time to be given to the consideration of this matter.

Mr. SEDDON.—I hope the adjournment of the debate will be agreed to. I find I have memoranda of some length for a speech upon the Financial Statement, and if we adjourn the debate an opportunity may yet be given of going on with the debate on the financial proposals of the Government.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I feel placed in some difficulty by the proposal of the Government. These Bills very much affect the district which I represent, and a great deal of interest is taken in them. I think the majority of the members of the House will not be here after the rising of the House to-night, and I think it possible that very great injury may be done to many persons with whom I am acquainted, and whose interests I have undertaken to watch, if the Bills are considered after so many honourable members have left. The case mentioned by the honourable member for Taranaki is one which certainly should be dealt with as quickly as possible; but it should be dealt with with care. Very much more harm might be done in that case by hasty and ill-considered legislation than by having the matter postponed. I hope the Government will, if they are not satisfied that they can bring the Bills on at a reasonable time, postpone them till next session, rather than cause the irremediable injury which might be occasioned by putting the Bills through when honourable members are not present.

Mr. CARROLL.—I would suggest that, if it is necessary that these Bills should be abandoned, some inquiry should be instituted into this particular case of Joshua Jones. From what I can hear he has suffered very great inconvenience and hardship. If it is possible to remedy his grievance—if there is time to do it by passing one of these measures—I shall be quite happy to assist; but, if there is no time to do that, I hope the Government will make inquiries into the matter and see what can be done.

Sir G. GREY.—It is hardly satisfactory to be told that we shall have information given to us as to the hour at which this debate will be resumed hereafter. Supposing, for instance, it is to be resumed at half-past two o'clock tomorrow morning, I really am not in a state to sit up. I think we should know, before agreeing to the adjournment, the precise hour at which the question will be taken. At the present moment we have the House at our disposal. I believe that the whole future of the Native race depends upon these Bills. I am certain the Government do not know what they are doing; and the Premier himself will agree with me, because he stood up in the House and told

me that I should find the whole of the Natives in favour of these Bills, and that I was wrong in saying they would object to them. He told me I should find out my mistake when they came on. Now, I have had no conversation with the Native members on the subject, nor with any Natives; but I knew they must oppose measures so wholly destructive of their race. In my belief these measures strike a blow at the Native race—at their existence, absolutely.

Mr. SPEAKER.—That is outside the question of the adjournment, and is speaking upon the main question.

Sir G. GREY.—We ought not to adjourn now, because these measures threaten the future of the Native race, and we have the House now under our command. We can move the adjournment of the House, and can even now prolong this debate to such an extent as to compel the Government to cease pressing on these Bills. I believe that no such destructive measures have ever before been brought forward as these Bills, and I believe they have been brought forward in favour of certain individuals, and that this great cruelty and wrong has been done for the benefit of some few persons. I am certain, Sir, that that is the case. Believing that firmly as I do, surely, in speaking to the adjournment of the debate, I may state these things, which render the non-adjournment of the debate necessary unless we are first of all told the precise period at which the debate shall be resumed. If we are promised that, I will give way; but, otherwise, if I speak for an hour, I shall continue to speak as I do. I wish to use no threats; but, if we believe that such vast interests depend upon this, surely we ought to use every means in our power to secure those whom we believe to be wronged. It was said that one reason for consenting that these things should be hurried through is that one individual has suffered wrong. Surely the whole race is not to be sacrificed to one man. Such a proposal was never made by Parliament before. I say, if an individual has been injured, clearly and justly let us devote ourselves to getting right done to him.

Mr. MARCHANT.—May I correct the honourable member? I did not make any such proposal; but I asked whether, if these Bills were not proceeded with, the Government would endeavour to afford some meed of justice to that gentleman. I asked nothing such as the honourable gentleman suggests.

Sir G. GREY.—There were two or three speeches upon the subject; I only gathered the tenor of the whole.

Mr. MARCHANT.—The honourable gentleman looked at me very hard.

Mr. SEDDON.—A cat may look at a king.

Sir G. GREY.—No, no, that is not it; but a heart that is touched by a look—(Inaudible.) I am in favour of justice to the individual. That I contend for; but I say, in this case, before we are asked to adjourn we ought, in fairness, to be told the precise hour at which

this debate shall be resumed. I move, That this debate be adjourned to this day week.

Mr. TAIPUA.—I quite agree with the proposal made by the Premier for the adjournment of the consideration of this matter, seeing that the debate is likely to be protracted. I hope no honourable members will make a party question of this on account of their opposition to the Government, but that they will consider the merits or otherwise of the Bill, and be guided entirely by that. It is to be remembered that all previous legislation relating to Native lands has brought trouble upon the Native people. We are still wondering and waiting to see what this Government will do for the benefit of the Natives. I hope the motion for the adjournment will be carried.

Mr. TAIWHANGA.—I quite agree with the honourable member for Auckland Central that the time should be named, because it might come on when we are busy. We were at the meeting of the Native Affairs Committee this morning, and nearly lost the debate on these Bills. Therefore I will support what has been suggested by the honourable member for Auckland Central, that the time should be named when the debate on these Bills will begin. I have made up my mind to stand firm to the wish of my people against these Bills.

Mr. SMITH.—The district I come from is largely interested in this question, and I am sorry the Government have brought these Bills down on the last day of the session without their having previously gone before the Native Affairs Committee. What was put in the Bills I am afraid will be lost. I do not know anything about the Native Land Court Bill; but the last Bill, the Native Land Administration Act Repeal Bill, will, I am certain, cause a very long debate indeed. Therefore it will be for the Government to consider whether they will adjourn it altogether or not. If they wish to adjourn the Bill until next session no doubt a great deal of opposition will be done away with. I may point out, with reference to these Bills, that a great many honourable members would have amendments—in fact, those representing the districts interested would be bound to have amendments—and those amendments would have to be considered, and would take a very long time indeed. There is one thing I wish to point out to the Premier. I believe there is a case put in these Bills coming from his own district—the case of Joshua Jones. I was on the Waste Lands Committee two or three years ago. We considered this case, and the Committee almost unanimously decided that he had a grievance, and recommended the Government to deal with it. They dealt with it by putting a clause in the Special Powers and Contracts Act. That was overridden in another Bill. He has come down again, and I think his case should be put in some Bill. The Committee more than once have decided that he had a grievance, and I hope the Premier will state to the House that he will put a clause in some other Bill dealing with this case.

Major ATKINSON.—I hope the House will

agree to go on with the work we are anxious to get at. I do not understand the position the honourable member for Auckland Central takes up; but, if this will meet his view, I am quite willing to make the following proposal: that these Bills be adjourned, and take their place on the Order Paper, as corrected, out of which they got because the honourable member for Christchurch North was not here. I will undertake not to bring them on to-night later than eleven o'clock.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—I was in hope the Premier would agree to the suggestion that these Bills should all stand over until next session. We have all suffered inconvenience in the past through continual change in the Maori laws. Nearly every session they are amended in some direction or another. I hope that when we do have Maori laws amended again it will be for all time. These are but temporary measures, and are only to remain in force until the end of next session; and, that being so, no harm can be done if these Bills all stand over until then. I agree with the suggestion that the case of Joshua Jones should be dealt with this session. The Government can in some way arrange that he should receive the benefits he was to derive under this Bill. I do hope the Premier will agree that these Bills shall all stand over until next session; and, if he does, I feel quite sure that the honourable member for Auckland Central will withdraw his amendment with regard to the adjournment question. I think it is only reasonable, at this stage of the session, that this should be done. I am not aware that the Premier has considered these Bills, or that any member of his Ministry has considered them. I feel certain that, through press of work, they have not had time to give due consideration to these measures. It would be better for all parties that these Bills should stand over. The subject is a very important one, and I should like to see a complete revision of the whole of the Maori laws.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—I wish to express a desire that, whatever may be the fate of these Bills, the Premier will take into consideration the case of Mr. Jones. I may say that I have had an opportunity of going very fully into the grievance of this gentleman, and I do believe he has a very substantial grievance against the Government.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I should like to say, about this claim of Mr. Jones, that I should think it would be well to have legislation this session upon that claim, although I fail to see how it is going to be done under present circumstances. I should be glad if the Government could see some way of opening that block of forty thousand acres for settlement, instead of allowing it to be blocked up for fifty-six years. I hope the Government will try and make some fair and equitable arrangement with Mr. Jones and the others interested for the purpose of having this block made available for settlement.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—I am in a position to state that as soon as Mr. Jones gets a title there will be a very large amount of capital

expended on that land, thus employing a considerable amount of labour. For the last thirteen years Mr. Jones has been fighting the battle single-handed to get that justice which he ought to have got years ago, and I trust the Premier will see his way clear to bring down a Bill to put Mr. Jones in possession of that land. It will have the effect of bringing half a million of money into the country within a very short time. The obstacles that have been continually thrown in Mr. Jones's way have retarded the progress of that part of the colony to a very considerable extent. I hope the Government will see their way clear to drop these Bills this session, because I am certain they will not carry them through; and I ask them, in all equity and justice, to bring down a short Bill to place Mr. Jones in proper possession of the land.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I feel that very great injustice has been inflicted on Mr. Jones. The whole of the papers were carefully gone through by the Committee. Mr. Jones has been for some reason or other deprived of his rights; and it is one of those cases that seem rather like romance than anything else. I refer to the manner in which Mr. Jones has been treated in reference to this land. I regret that these Bills have been left over until the very end of the session, and I think it would be wise to hold them over for the present. But as to Mr. Jones, I think a very great injustice has been perpetrated on him by his not being allowed to get possession of this land. On several occasions justice has been almost within his grasp, and but for the action of one or two Ministers he would have got it. The property in question is a very valuable one, and the opening-up of this block would bring a very great deal of capital into the country, would give a considerable amount of employment, and would add to the revenue of the country very much.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I think the Government would shorten the time taken up by this debate if they would give some indication as to whether they intend doing justice to Mr. Jones.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I hear "No" from those benches; and, if that is so, I am prepared to stay here until after Christmas until something is done in the matter. I was on the Public Petitions Committee when this case was fully inquired into; but, through the action of the Government, the whole action of the Committee has been upset on several occasions, and I think it is time the matter was looked into and finally decided. I think Mr. Jones has been treated very injuriously indeed. If the Government do not see their way to do something I think this debate will be prolonged to a very great length.

Mr. FISHER.—The Premier has already put before the House the plain position of affairs. He has said he is inclined to take the business on the Order Paper, and, as already stated, these Bills have come on because of the absence of the honourable member for Christchurch North, and the House wished to proceed to the

*Major Atkinson*

business on the Order Paper. If the House will consent to the proposition of the Premier, that these Bills shall be postponed and that the House shall proceed to other business, all difficulty, for the present, will be obviated. The Premier himself has said that he will go on with the orders of the day up till eleven o'clock, and that he will not proceed with these Bills at any later hour. I think that ought to meet the wishes of every honourable member who is interested in the passage or non-passage of these Bills, and I appeal to the Native members whether that does not meet their views. If the House will allow us to proceed with the business in the order in which it appears on the Order Paper there need be no further difficulty in the matter whatever.

Sir G. GREY.—I would point out that the southern members wish to leave at eleven o'clock to-night, and I should like to have these Bills discussed in their presence.

Mr. LAWRY.—I hope the Government will give effect to what is evidently the wish of the House; and, not only in the interests of justice, but also in the interest of our common humanity, I think Mr. Jones's case should receive immediate attention. I fear, if the consideration of the question is postponed, as has been suggested, the matter will simply be postponed out of existence. It has become notorious that Mr. Jones's case is one of exceptional hardship, and a grievous wrong has been done him by successive Native administrations by neglecting his legitimate claims. I therefore hope the justice asked for will be granted without delay.

Mr. ROSS.—The honourable member for Auckland Central has said that the southern members have made arrangements to leave at eleven to-night. I do not know what arrangements have been made by others; but, speaking for myself, I intend to stay till the business of the session is disposed of.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—I think the House will not be satisfied with the assurance of the Premier, more especially as it has been varied by the Minister of Education. It is manifestly unfair that the discussion should be open to be resumed at any hour up to eleven to-night; and to compel the honourable member for Auckland Central to be present continuously till that hour would not be treating that honourable gentleman with the respect he deserves at the hands of the House. Moreover, I object to its being resumed at that hour, or at any time near it; because, though the honourable member for Roslyn may remain after to-day, we know very well that nearly all the southern members intend to leave to-night, and, with reference to this Bill and the other cognate measures, I especially rely on the southern members to see justice done in this matter. They are totally disinterested in it, which cannot be said of some honourable members representing northern districts, because at the proper time I shall call attention to the fact that several honourable members are directly interested in this question. I say this: that I do not think this proposed legislation should be allowed to go on

if one southern member leaves, because I rely on the sense of justice—untrammelled by any interest, however remote—in the minds of honourable gentlemen from the South to see that this great question is treated as it deserves. I hope other honourable members will express their opinions on this question until we see that the Premier is convinced of the gravity of the subject, and until he gives an assurance that these measures shall not be proceeded with during the present session.

Mr. TAYLOR.—There is no necessity for carrying these Bills through this session. I hope it will not be done, and I, for one, shall stop as long as possible to prevent it. It is a monstrous thing to take advantage of honourable members wanting to get away to try and force these things through. In the South we see enormous tracts of land in the hands of a few individuals; and, if we do not deal properly with the Native-land question, we shall see the same thing in the North—we shall see a few individuals mopping up all the Native lands in the colony for their own benefit. I am not at all interested personally in the Native-land question; but I must protest against anything which would tend to further monopoly in land. I hope the Natives will stand up for their rights, and not allow a few selfish men to get possession of their lands.

Mr. W. P. REEVES.—I should be exceedingly sorry to do anything tending to embarrass the Government, and I know that honourable members on this side of the House are anxious to expedite business as much as is reasonable; but there is a limit to what is reasonable, and when that is reached the unreasonable begins. It would be utterly unreasonable to give the Government an opportunity to bring up these Bills at half-past ten to-night, just when we should all be starting for the steamer, and it would not be acting in the interests of both races in the colony to allow it to be done. The southern members are not immediately interested in the question of Native lands, but it is their business to see that any legislation on that subject is equally fair and reasonable to the people of both races. I do not say that, in dealing with this question, there are any northern members, even those who may be immediately interested, who are prepared to do anything but what is just and reasonable; but the fact remains that some honourable members are directly interested, and the country would think it most extraordinary if we should go away and leave legislation of this sort to be passed when the majority of honourable members were not present. I have no wish at all to do anything which might impede the Government, but I think they should of their own accord give us an assurance that these Bills will be dropped till next session, when they could be fully considered by this House, and carefully deliberated upon by the Native Affairs Committee; when southern members would have ample time to study them, and northern members who wished to make any amendments would be able to propose them and have them considered. I

trust that that is the course which will be taken.

Mr. KELLY.—I hope the Government will reconsider the matter and accede to the wishes of the Native members. We are not in a fair position with regard to these Bills. It has always been the practice to submit Bills of this kind to the Native Affairs Committee, and these Bills have been submitted to the Native Affairs Committee of the Council, where there are only two Native members; but here, where there are four Native members and a number of European members representing Native districts, no opportunity is given to properly consider these Bills, and they have been kept from the Native Affairs Committee altogether. At the beginning of the session I was asked by the Native members to request the Government to have these Bills sent to the Native Affairs Committee to report on and to consider any amendments suggested, and I thought the Government would send them, as usual, and I told the Native members that no doubt the Bills would be sent to the Committee after passing the other House; but that has not been done, and they are now brought before us at the fag-end of the session, when there is no time to consider them. I know that members interested in the question have a number of amendments to propose, and I feel sure that it would take two or three days to put the Bills through; and I therefore ask the Premier to again consider the question. If there are any particular clauses he wishes to pass to remove any injustice, I am sure the House will assist him; but, as it would take practically three days to go through the whole of the Bills, I again ask the Government to consider the suggestion to drop them.

The House divided on the question, "That the words 'this day week' be added to the question."

AYES, 25.

Buxton	Kelly	Taiwhanga
Cadman	O'Callaghan	Taylor
Carroll	Parata	Turnbull
Feldwick	Reeves, W. P.	Vogel
Fitchett	Seddon	Wilson.
Fraser	Smith	
Goldie	Steward, W. J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grey	Stewart, W. D.	Fitzherbert
Joyce	Taipua	Hutchison.

NOES, 38.

Allen	Jackson	Pyke
Atkinson	Jones	Richardson, E.
Barron	Lance	Richardson, G.
Blake	Lawry	Ross
Bruce	Macarthur	Samuel
Buchanan	Marchant	Seymour
Dodson	McKenzie, J.	Tanner
Duncan	Mitchelson	Thompson, T.
Fergus	Moat	Walker
Fisher	Monk	Withy.
Graham	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Pearson	Beetham
Izard	Perceval	McGregor.

Majority against, 13.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. W. P. Reeves

Mr. HISLOP moved, That the debate be adjourned till after Orders of the Day Nos. 1, 2, and 3, so as to reinstate the Bill in its original position on the Order Paper.

Mr. PERCEVAL.—I think the proposal of the Government is very fair. This morning the Government, out of consideration for the leader of the Opposition, took this measure first; and I do not think it is fair to take advantage of that to embarrass the Government.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I move, as an amendment, That the debate be adjourned till Monday next. I do so in order that the Government may have an opportunity of considering whether they will proceed with these measures; and, secondly, that honourable members may have time to know more about these Bills.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—Those who are acting in this matter are not obstructive in seeking to force the Government to comply with a very reasonable request. However, if the Government will not take the ordinary adjournment for luncheon, I will take the opportunity of referring to the case of Mr. Joshua Jones. That is a very urgent matter, and I would suggest that the Government should, during the recess, appoint a Commission to inquire into the matter. The case is one that cannot be dealt with properly in this hasty manner, because it is a matter on which evidence must be taken, and it would necessarily follow that it would have to be referred to a Committee of the House before legislation took place upon it. Most valuable evidence could be taken with regard to the working of the Native Land Court, and if this evidence were laid before the House next session it would be a very useful guide to us in considering necessary legislation.

Sir G. GREY.—Can we not have the usual adjournment now? We have been working early and late, and I think we are entitled to take some little adjournment. I remained up last night till past twelve o'clock, and that was nothing to what other honourable members had to do; and then we are called upon to work early in the morning,—and surely we ought to be allowed some little time for refreshment now.

Mr. SAMUEL.—It is usual at the end of a session, when there is such a decided objection to a Bill as there is to this, to ask the Government to consider whether it is not expedient to postpone the consideration of the measure to another session. I support two of these Bills, although I should like to see them considerably altered in Committee; but, still, it is quite evident that there are a great many members here who are prepared to resist the attempt to pass these Bills through in the limited time at our disposal. I hope the Government will not look upon this attitude as indicating a hostile feeling, but as proceeding from a desire to do justice, and to prevent improper things from being ratified, which might be the case under these Bills. I hope the House will agree to the adjournment of the debate until after the other orders of the day are disposed of, and that in the meantime the Government

will consider whether or not it is necessary to proceed with these Bills.

Major ATKINSON.—I gave an assurance more than an hour ago that that was what we intended to do.

Mr. SAMUEL.—Then, I hope the House will agree to the adjournment.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—I would suggest that the Government should bring in a short Bill providing for what is absolutely necessary, withdrawing what is unnecessary, on the understanding that no honourable members shall move any amendments in the Bill. It is far too important a question to be forced on; and honourable members, as a matter of duty, must resist such legislation as is here proposed, not with a view of interfering with the Government, but to satisfy their own consciences.

Mr. SEDDON.—I trust there will be no further opposition shown to the fixing of the adjournment of the debate. We know that, from the work that has been done, and the arrangements that have been made by members for leaving, it is next to an impossibility that these Bills can be dealt with; and the Government have, in effect, said as much.

Major STEWARD.—I am sorry that I was away when the Government, at an early period of the sitting, intimated that they would take into consideration the question of whether they would proceed with these Bills or not. If I had understood that, I should have voted with the Government on the last division.

Mr. CADMAN.—I can quite understand that the Government do not like being forced into the position of having to drop their Bills; but, at the same time, it is only fair that the Government should consider this: that our constituents are interested, and that we ought not to be put in the position of having these Bills forced upon us. We must debate them, and must endeavour to amend them.

Mr. KELLY.—I think that the Government should not be put out at the opposition shown to these Bills. It is not a party affair at all. A good many honourable members who have supported the Government throughout the session voted against them on the last division. For instance, the Native members, who have given Ministers a hearty support, are opposed to them in connection with these Bills. The Government should recognise this, and withdraw the Bills. I am in favour of the Native Land Administration Act being repealed, for it has done considerable harm in my district; but it is evident that there is no chance of the Bill going through, and it is of no use proceeding with it.

Dr. FITCHETT.—I should like to ask leave to withdraw my amendment. I may say that I did not hear the Premier indicate his willingness to consider the feasibility of proceeding with these Bills.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### EDUCATION.

Mr. BROWN wished to make a personal explanation. On Tuesday morning, at half-past three or thereabouts, when he had given

his vote on the education question, he was challenged by the Government whip, who stated that he had paired on the question. He replied that he had not paired, but had been waiting all night in order to give a personal vote. On inquiring with whom he had paired, the whip gave the name of the honourable member for the Buller. The next morning he saw the honourable member for the Buller, and asked him if he had paired with him. The honourable member said he had done so, and he replied that he had refused to pair with him and other members for the reason that upon the question of the reduction of the expense of education he desired to give a personal vote, and, although at great inconvenience to himself, as he was suffering from a serious illness, he had remained in the chamber to give a personal vote, and that he had done so as his constituents were interested in the reduction of the education vote, and that he knew some of them did not understand the system of pairing, and therefore it was desirable that he should vote personally. The honourable member for the Buller told him that there were other gentlemen present when he paired, and mentioned the honourable member for Inangahua and the honourable member for the Thames. He had referred the question to these gentlemen, and both had informed him that he had not in their presence given any pair, but had refused to do so for the reasons already expressed. The honourable member for the Buller had told him it was very important for him to set himself right with his constituents, and that he must make an explanation to the House; but he (Mr. Brown) understood this would not be done unless he was present when the explanation was made. After the statement was made to the House, he had received a note from the honourable member for the Buller, telling him what he had done. He thought the House would agree with him that he was not trespassing too much on its indulgence in asking it to hear both sides of the question. As the names of the honourable gentlemen who were present when he was said to have made the pair had been given, he would ask them if they would state what had taken place.

Colonel FRASER knew nothing further about the matter than that he was sitting with the honourable member for Tuapeka, the honourable member for the Buller, and some other members, and that the conversation veered round to the education question. The honourable member for the Buller then asked the honourable member for Tuapeka if he would pair with him, and the latter honourable gentleman said that he would not, as the Catholics in his district would not understand pairs, and that he wanted to give a personal vote. He (Colonel Fraser) left then, and of course did not know what happened afterwards; but no pair had been given in his presence.

Mr. PEARSON wished to say that the honourable member for Tuapeka had come to him, when sitting with the honourable member for Dunedin East, and asked him to pair him in this way with the honourable member for

the Buller: Increase of school-age—For, J. C. Brown; against, O'Connor; normal schools, the same way; capitation reduction, the same way; and also for strict-average attendance. The names were recorded at the request of the honourable member for Tuapeka.

Mr. W. P. REEVES said that, as his name had been mentioned, he would say what had occurred between the honourable member for Tuapeka and himself. He would have liked to have a pair, and went to the honourable member for Tuapeka and asked him to pair with him, knowing that he was going to vote in an opposite direction. But the honourable member for Tuapeka had replied that he wanted to give a vote in the House, and consequently would not pair.

Mr. O'CONOR thought it necessary to add something to what he had stated previously. The statement of the honourable member for the Thames was perfectly correct: the conversation named did take place, and the honourable member for Tuapeka at first did express unwillingness to pair; but afterwards he distinctly, in reply to a question, said that he would pair, and upon what. On saying that, he went into a certain portion of the offices of the House, and he (Mr. O'Connor) came direct, and, seeing the pair recorded, left. They had paired many and many a time before, and were old friends, and he was sorry that this misunderstanding should have occurred, and believed it to have been merely a misunderstanding on the part of the honourable member.

Mr. BROWN remarked that it had been said by the whip that he (Mr. Brown) had paired on certain questions. It was the usual thing for one whip to give notice to the other whip as to the members who had paired. This was the usual custom, and the reason of it was that both whips should know who had paired. The whip on the other side had not received any notice with regard to himself. All this had arisen from the offensive way in which the Government whip had come to him after he had recorded his vote. From the way the question was put he was under a misapprehension, and had voted exactly in the way that his pair would have voted. That alone should have secured him from any interference on the part of the whip, for he had broken no pledge. The general understanding with whips was, if possible, except when both members were present who had given the pair, that the member giving the pair should do so in writing. That was the general rule, and he thought it only fair that he should bring the matter before the House. He certainly had not intended to give a pair, and if he had done so it was not likely he would have remained in the House until three o'clock in the morning, especially in the state of health he was in at that time.

Mr. PEARSON wished to say that the honourable member would never have another opportunity of bringing a matter of this kind before the House, for so long as he (Mr. Pearson) was a whip that honourable gentleman's name should never appear in the book.

*Mr. Pearson*

#### NEW ZEALAND LOAN BILL.

On the motion for the committal of the New Zealand Loan Bill,

Sir J. VOGEL said,—Sir, before you leave the chair I should like to offer a few remarks. It will be remembered by honourable members that when this Bill passed its second reading I expressed the opinion that it was not necessary to borrow so large an amount, and that there was a risk in giving an assurance not to go into the market for three years and a half. No answer was made to the arguments I used. The Minister of Education, in his usual fashion, simply got up and abused me and the late Government. But a speech of that kind did not affect or touch the arguments I used. Later in the evening, or, rather, the next evening, the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government adopted a similar course. It is no answer to arguments to refer to the past proceedings of a late Government. As time is very short, I shall overlook anything of that kind, and go into the question as briefly as possible. I do not consider it necessary to borrow the large amount proposed, nor do I consider it safe to give the assurance which I understand the Government propose to give—to not enter the money-market for another three years and a half. As regards the question of amount, I pointed out—and no answer whatever was given to the point—that, if it is necessary to borrow so large an amount as a million early next year, it stands to reason that, as a million of money is to be expended next year, the same reasons operate in the direction of borrowing the following year again. In other words, if the funds at the command of the Government are so congested that, besides the money required for immediate expenditure, it is necessary to have so much in hand as is proposed by the Government, then the same causes, if in operation, require another loan next year. I said I did not consider that necessary, because I did not consider the million proposed to be borrowed early next year was necessary. The honourable gentleman proposes to add to his loan-power an amount of £400,000 for the deficiency of last year and the present year; and no doubt he will place himself, so to speak, to use a sporting phrase, "on velvet" at the end of the year, because he will pay off the deficiency and have a very large amount at his command. The question is, What may occur afterwards? The trust funds are fully invested, more or less, and the same causes will produce the same effects later on. As far as the Public Works Fund is concerned, it is tolerably free. But, as I pointed out when speaking on the subject, they sometimes carry a very large amount of various investments. Now, as regards the same causes being at work, I should like to point out to honourable members what we have to consider in future, supposing we give this assurance not to borrow for three years and a half; and I ask honourable members, as prudent businessmen, would they consider it safe and satisfactory to do so? First of all, the Sinking Fund debentures have to be taken up in the colony.



That is to say, those debentures that represent the accretions of the Sinking Fund amount to about £250,000 at the beginning of the year, and by drawing are reduced by £120,000, leaving £130,000 to be paid. Then, there are the Government loans to local bodies. The Government propose to reduce that amount to £100,000 for the coming year—that is to say, for the two years it is to be £300,000; and, afterwards, I am much mistaken if, on account of the very large amounts that are being taken from local bodies, they will be content with £100,000 per annum. At any rate, that is a source of requirement in the future that cannot be overlooked. Then, there are the guaranteed debentures. They are carried upon various funds. They are not, as honourable members sometimes suppose, unnegotiated: they are sold. They are not put on the open market, but they are used as a means of obtaining advances from various funds to enable those funds to take up securities from time to time. Then, there are the Westport and Greymouth Harbours. Money will be required for them, and it is not a desirable way to obtain money to issue the guaranteed debentures. I am of opinion the money would be much better obtained in a direct manner. Then, Sir, there are a large amount of public buildings to throw, sooner or later, on the Consolidated Fund, and, if that fund is not sufficient to meet this charge, it may be necessary to borrow money in order to do so. I am dealing now with local loans which may be required within the next three years and a half, in contravention of any assurance given not to go upon the market for three years and a half. Then, there are loans to be paid off: the Ten-forty loan, which we can now call in at any time, or shall be able to do so from January or February next. In six months we can pay off two millions of the Ten-forty loan, now bearing interest at the rate of 5 per cent.; and if the money were borrowed at 4 per cent. we could save 1 per cent. on that loan. There are other loans about falling due. Then, we cannot leave out of calculation, when talking about an assurance of this kind, the fact that this colony is in this position: Without any "reserve"—to use a banking phrase—we have £1,600,000 "on call" invested with us in the Savings-Bank. That is a very large amount. It is perfectly safe. It should be so while we have recourse to the English money-market; but, if we are to be shut out from that recourse, it would be an exceedingly dangerous thing to hold £1,600,000 without a reserve in bullion as security. I am not aware, as stated by the honourable member for Port Chalmers, that money can be borrowed in this colony for 5 per cent. I have to state, as against the idea of that being the case, that the late Government made inquiries in several directions and found it would not be safe to ask for money in the colony, because the chances were against anything like a considerable amount being obtained. When the Kaihu debentures—guaranteed by the colony as regards both principal and interest—were offered for sale, a small

amount at 5 per cent. discount was taken by the Insurance Fund, and the rest sold to one of the banks, but not without considerable difficulty. It is a mistake to suppose that a large amount can be obtained in the colony. The honourable member for Port Chalmers arrived at the result he did because, he said, there was a considerable amount of money offered on mortgage. That is quite a different class of investment. Persons who send money for investment on mortgage do not necessarily take Government debentures. Then, the honourable gentleman was at fault with regard to the equation of interest. He talked about the Government paying  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for its loans. He made a miscalculation as to the effect of selling at a discount. To sell a 4-per-cent. loan, with only thirty years to run, at 5 per cent. discount, would mean borrowing the money over the whole term, including sufficient to pay the discount at the end of the period, at £4 6s. per cent.: that is to say, if a loan were sold having thirty years to run, and bearing 4 per cent. interest, for 95, that would be borrowing money at £4 6s. per cent. That is for thirty years. But if we borrow for forty years, as we do now, it would mean something less, because there would be a longer time to accumulate the discount, or, in other words, a smaller annual amount would cover the discount. The honourable member for Port Chalmers was therefore altogether wrong as to the price that any discount we might have to pay would cost us in the way of interest. Selling, as I have said, at even 5 per cent. discount would only make us pay £4 6s. for the loan, and there is a great difference between £4 6s. and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum, of which the honourable gentleman spoke. Now, Sir, I think I have shown honourable members that, having regard to the various circumstances—and there are others which could be mentioned—it is not safe to give such an assurance as is proposed. I should like to make a merely passing reference to the position of local bodies' loans in the Home market. It is a question which it is undesirable to discuss, but any one who holds a responsible position in the Government cannot be unaware of the fact that the necessity may arise of consolidating these loans, and that it is not desirable to leave them out of any possible consideration that might be required to be given to them. For my own part, I believe the time will come when some arrangement will have to be made to prevent the issue of local loans in the English market, and to come to some arrangement for consolidating and becoming responsible, on the old principle, for the local bodies' loans. However, I wish to say, *en passant*—not to pledge myself to it, because there is a danger, in making such an utterance, of giving a fictitious value to the loans;—but some of the loans, I may say, are very high in the English market. I wish to say a word now as regards the principle of the Bill itself. It affects, by its schedules, to denote how the money is to be spent; but clause 15 completely

nullifies any supposed allocation of the loan, by leaving it within the power of Parliament to alter the allocation within the four corners of the objects comprised in the schedule. My contention is that the various items should not be set forth—that it is surplusage to do that, since the body of the Act gives power to alter and apportion the amounts. My contention is that the amounts should not be separately denominated, and that the loan should stand unallocated, the House reserving the discretion of ordering as small an expenditure as possible from time to time. I am confronted with this difficulty in the matter: that, while there is a majority of the House, I believe, strongly in favour of reducing the expenditure, the question arises, Who is to have the credit of doing the work? In speaking the other night of the Young New Zealand party I referred to them as “stupid boys.” That was rather an absurd thing to do, when you consider the age of the honourable gentlemen in question; and it was put to me afterwards that such a reference might possibly apply to members on our own side of the House. Of course I scarcely need say that I meant no reference to honourable members on our side. But I may explain what has been going on this session between sections on both sides of the House. There have been a number of honourable members loud in their expressions of discontent with the Government in the lobbies, but yet voting with the Government in the House; and there was a movement on the part of those honourable members in the direction of seeing whether they were strong enough to form an independent party. They had not the smallest amount of affection for the Government, and would have been only too glad to give it its *congé*. Then came the question, Should they try to get over the open opponents of the Government, or should the open opponents of the Government try to get over them? Their first attempt was on the tariff question, and a deputation was appointed to wait on the Government. The Premier gave no hope of granting the request. The adjourned meeting passed a resolution to the effect that the conduct of the Government was unsatisfactory: but the Government supporters who had taken part in the movement did not attend the meeting—they made their appearance no more. The same sort of thing has gone on intermittently with the party which has appropriated to itself the name of “the Young New Zealand party.” From time to time they have tried to obtain the services of the members on our side of the House, and we have been quite ready to obtain their services if they could be persuaded. Of course I do not at all mean to reflect on those members of our party who have been endeavouring to persuade the gentlemen of the “Young New Zealand party” to come with us—to come out into the open light of day and vote according to their principles. The title “Young New Zealand party” is a very comprehensive phrase. The party includes gentlemen who, apparently, are not open to the charge of youth. For instance, there is

Sir J. Vo

the honourable member for Port Chalmers, who, when I first came to the colony—twenty-six years ago—was even then put down as an old identity; and he certainly has not grown younger since. Then, there is the honourable member for Wallace—a gentleman for whom I have the greatest respect. From the outward appearance of that gentleman you would say that he is nearly as old as I am; but, judging by his words and actions, you would say that he is very youthful. I dare say most honourable members have read a charming book called “*Vice Versâ*,” and I cannot help thinking that my honourable friend has had that fatal Indian stone in his hand, and that, while he is able to show the exterior of a man in age, yet he really is a very young person. The feeling he has displayed towards myself makes me think that some dozen years ago perhaps the honourable gentleman was a little boy trotting about in socks and drawers, and that his nurse, with that evil custom which nurses have, made me a sort of bogey to him. I can fancy her saying to him, “Now, Master Samuel, if you will dirty your pinafore or get your boots wet, I will send for ‘Bogey Vogel,’ and he will put you into the next loan, or borrow you, or turn you into a sinking fund;” and that the honourable gentleman has grown up with the idea that Vogel is a most dangerous person, and he cannot get that idea out of his head. I ask the honourable gentleman to look at me and say if I am such a bogey—if I am such a “terror” as was represented to his infantile imagination. We have heard this session about honourable gentlemen voting day after day and week after week against their principles because of their fear that they might be voting on the same side of the House as myself. Sir, that appears to me to be a most absurd thing to do, and the results of it may be far more serious than these honourable gentlemen imagine. Take the question now before us, for instance. I believe there is a majority in favour of reducing this loan, but yet some honourable members do not like to vote for a reduction for fear they shall vote in the same way as I propose to do. Well, I do not wish to shock the sensibilities of those honourable members, and to give them the excuse of being able to say, “We should have reduced the loan, but Vogel proposed it,” and therefore I hope some honourable member will propose a reduction which will give them an opportunity of voting for it. Now, I think the course which should be taken is this: There is no object whatever in keeping these subjects in the schedule. Supposing we say we think a loan of £600,000 is sufficient, I would suggest that we should keep clause 15 as it is—though we should require to alter a word in it—and that the two parts of the schedule should read simply thus: “In aid of Part I., Public Works Fund, and cost and charges of raising loan, £300,000”—that would be reducing the £500,000 to £300,000; and, similarly, with regard to the second part, these words could be left in: “In aid of Part III., Public Works Fund, and cost and charges of raising loan, £300,000.” That

would leave the total amount £600,000, and would give the House an opportunity of voting the items as it might consider desirable from time to time. If the amounts had been "ear-marked," as in the Act of 1886, of course it would be different; but they are not "ear-marked," and there is no object in pretending to do what is not done. I wish to call the attention of honourable members who profess to be against borrowing to one point which may have escaped their notice. Do they know that within the last three or four days the Government have in view another £500,000? Recollect, we were first told that the loan might be a million; and then there came a Public Revenues Bill, with a proposal to increase the amount by £400,000. Now the Government propose to get another £500,000 at their disposal. Honourable members will ask what I refer to. I refer to the announcement made in another place by a member of the Ministry that they propose to sell that part of the Otago Central Railway already constructed—and that, when this year's expenditure is defrayed, will represent very little less than half a million. So there is another half-million to come in: that, surely, should cause those honourable gentlemen who profess to be averse from borrowing not to allow the present loan to be so large as is proposed. I shall support any amendments in the direction to which I have referred, and I hope they will be made. As it is so late, I should like them to be made in a shape that would least shock the sensibilities of the Government. I do not want to gain any triumph over the Government; and, at this period of the session, to talk about a change of Government would be absurd. If the Government want to take credit for having taken no advice throughout the session, but for having acted on their own responsibility right through, I do not grudge them that consolation. I shall be prepared to vote for these reductions, without proposing them myself, if some other member would propose them. I hope the proposal will be made in the shape of a £400,000 reduction; and if honourable members will not go so far, but will only go so far as a quarter of a million, and if the Government are prepared to accept that, I will take that as the next best thing. But I think the reduction should be made to the total amount I have mentioned, and I think no inconvenience whatever will arise from such a course being adopted. Sir, I shall not oppose our going into Committee on this Bill.

Major ATKINSON.—I will just point out that the real difference between the honourable gentleman and the Government is this: The honourable gentleman wants to borrow sufficient for one year, and to trust to the chapter of accidents for what may turn up next session. The Government, on the other hand, ask the House for authority to borrow sufficient to carry on the necessary works—with great reductions—for the next three years. That is the proposal we ask the House to adopt, so that by the end of that time our public-works expenditure shall have nearly receded to the

vanishing-point. That is the whole difference between the Government and the honourable gentleman. No doubt it is shrewd of him to recommend that the loan should be reduced, and some honourable members may perhaps be led away with the idea of getting his support in trying to effect reduction for their purpose. But the Government recommend this after very careful consideration, and they have based all their estimates on this proposal. Those estimates have all been approved by the House, except the one with regard to immigration; and I would remark that that vote being struck out has been a matter of very great regret to the Government, because we propose next session to submit a scheme of immigration which will require for its carrying-out a little money—not a great amount; and we shall ask the House not to strike all reference to immigration out of this Loan Bill, but to leave the amount for immigration blank, so as to deal with it next session. We shall then propose a scheme of immigration which, I think, will be satisfactory to the House—a scheme not for the immigration of labourers, but of people such as we greatly require; and I think it will be wise of the House to leave a small margin available for this purpose. The Government went very carefully into the matter before proposing this Bill, and it was with very great regret that they felt compelled to propose a loan at all. But their scheme is a complete scheme, and they wish to have this to go upon, to give them time for a thorough reorganization and reduction of the public expenditure out of the Consolidated Fund; and they ask the House, at the same time, to fix definitely the amount of loan-money that should be spent during the next three years. I do not propose to follow the honourable member in all his arguments; but he has told us that there are certain amounts which must be raised here. He is quite right, no doubt. He says, for instance, the Government will raise Sinking Fund debentures, which is quite true. Then, he says there are loans to local bodies, in which he is also right; but I do not know what he meant by "guaranteed debentures," because these have never been taken up by the trust funds, as far as I know, except that for a short time some of them were held by one of the funds. As the honourable gentleman knows, they are usually held to secure advances of money from the London banks. It will be my endeavour, at the earliest possible date, to provide for having a working balance of them in the Post-Office Savings-Bank, so as to provide against any sudden run. This, I think, the Post Office can have and ought to have. I think there ought to be, say, £200,000 in these debentures in London, so as to be able at any moment to raise money on them if it be wanted here to meet a sudden demand. This is the direction in which I think we should go, and it is in this direction that I shall propose we should go. Then, Sir, with regard to school-buildings, the honourable gentleman says we shall have to raise money for that purpose. With regard to the Tentforties, as they are called, and the renewal

of other loans, of course they will be exempted from any promise not to go on the London market for the next three years, and the London money-market would be only too glad to accept those loans, because it would be only a question of taking up a loan at a reduced rate. I hope, therefore, that the House will support the Government in their proposals.

Sir J. VOGEL.—It was proposed to put in the Bill a provision that the time should be extended. Has that proposal been adopted by the Government?

Major ATKINSON.—I have never adopted it, and the honourable gentleman has no right to suppose that I should adopt it.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Well, Sir, it was proposed by one of those honourable gentlemen who generally move these things for the Government.

Major ATKINSON.—Was it? I was not aware of that. There is no doubt that the honourable gentleman who makes the proposition is a good and staunch supporter of the Government, but I was not aware that he was in the habit of moving these things for the Government, and I am not prepared to adopt this proposal. However, I do not want to follow the honourable member for Christchurch North in the extraordinary line of argument he has used. What I want to impress upon the House is this: that the honourable gentleman's object is to leave the borrowing-power of the colony open, and to take only sufficient to carry on till next session; whereas we desire to extend the borrowing over three years in a fixed manner, so as to reach the vanishing-point. I ask honourable members to bear that in mind. As I have said, the Committee the other night did not reduce any of the estimates of the Government except that for immigration. I have already stated why the Government think that that should not have been reduced; and I hope the amount will not be taken out of the loan. I venture to think it will be not only safe and prudent but an act of wisdom on our part if we fix the expenditure for, say, three years. I wish we could accept the longer period proposed by the honourable member for Manawatu, but I think if we fix it as far as the life of this Parliament is concerned we shall have gone as far as is prudent. I hope the House will now go into Committee on the Bill, and will keep the schedule just as it is, because it is ear-marked in every way.

Bill committed.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 3.—Loan of £1,000,000 authorised to be raised for certain purposes.

Mr. W. P. REEVES moved, That the words "one million" be omitted, with a view to insert "six hundred thousand."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out be retained."

AYES, 36.

Atkinson	Fergus	Grimmond
Beetham	Fisher	Guinness
Bruce	Graham	Hislop

Major Atkinson

Jackson	Pearson	Thompson, T.
Joyce	Pyke	Turnbull
Macarthur	Richardson, G.	Ward
Marchant	Ross	Whyte
McKenzie, J.	Seymour	Wilson
Mitchelson	Smith	Withy.
Moat	S.-Menteath	<i>Tellers.</i>
Newman	Taiwhanga	Feldwick
O'Connor	Tanner	Fish.
Peacock		

NOES, 25.

Allen	Kelly	Steward, W. J.
Anderson	Larnach	Stewart, W. D.
Barron	Mackenzie, M.	Taylor
Blake	Mills	Vogel
Brown	O'Callaghan	Walker.
Buchanan	Parata	
Fitzherbert	Perceval	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hodgkinson	Reeves, R. H. J.	Hutchison
Jones	Richardson, E.	Lance.

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Carroll	Levestam
Lawry	Fraser
Mackenzie, T.	Fitchett
McGregor	Duncan
Ormond.	Reeves, W. P.

Majority for, 11.

Amendment negatived, and words retained.

Mr. MACARTHUR moved the following proviso: "Provided that no new loan of which the principal and interest are payable in the United Kingdom, other than the loan authorised by this Act, the million loan authorised by 'The North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Act, 1882,' and the four hundred thousand pounds authorised to be borrowed on short-dated debentures by 'The Public Revenues Act, 1887,' shall be raised by the General Government of New Zealand for a period of five years from the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight. And it is further enacted that the aforesaid provision shall be specifically set forth in every prospectus, notice, or advertisement inviting tenders or applications for any of the above-mentioned loans."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 11.

Allen	Monk	Withy.
Anderson	S.-Menteath	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	Taylor	Barron
Hodgkinson	Wilson	Macarthur.

NOES, 40.

Atkinson	Hutchison	Parata
Beetham	Izard	Peacock
Blake	Jackson	Pearson
Brown	Jones	Richardson, E.
Bruce	Kerr	Richardson, G.
Buchanan	Lance	Seymour
Feldwick	Lawry	Smith
Fergus	Marchant	Taiwhanga
Fisher	McGregor	Tanner
Fitzherbert	Mitchelson	Ward.
Fraser	Moat	
Grimmond	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Guinness	O'Callaghan	Fish
Hislop	O'Connor	Walker.

## PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Mackenzie, M. J. S.	Thompson, T.
Mackenzie, T.	Hall
McKenzie, J.	Mills
Reeves, W. P.	Ormond
Turnbull.	Ross.

Majority against, 29.

Amendment negatived, and clause agreed to. Schedule.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES moved, That the item, "Harbour defences, £130,000," be reduced by £20,000.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the item stand as printed."

AYES, 39.

Atkinson	Kelly	Richardson, E.
Bruce	Lance	Richardson, G.
Buchanan	Lawry	Seymour
Carroll	Macarthur	Steward, W. J.
Dodson	Mackenzie, M. S.-Menteath	
Feldwick	Mackenzie, T.	Taihua
Fergus	McKenzie, J.	Taiwhanga
Fisher	Mitchelson	Thompson, T.
Fish	Moat	Ward
Fitzherbert	Moss	Withy.
Fraser	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Peacock	Beetham
Izard	Pearson	Jackson.
Jones		

NOES, 32.

Allen	Grimmond	Stewart, W. D.
Anderson	Hutchison	Tanner
Barron	Kerr	Taylor
Blake	Levestam	Turnbull
Brown	Marchant	Vogel
Buxton	O'Callaghan	Walker
Duncan	O'Connor	Whyte
Fitchett	Parata	Wilson.
Goldie	Perceval	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	Ross	Guinness
Grey	Samuel	Reeves, R.H.J.

Majority for, 7.

Item retained as printed.

Mr. GUINNESS moved, That the item, "Helensville northwards, £25,000," be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the item proposed to be omitted be retained."

AYES, 56.

Atkinson	Grimmond	Peacock
Barron	Hislop	Pearson
Blake	Jackson	Perceval
Brown	Jones	Pyke
Bruce	Joyce	Reeves, R. H. J.
Buxton	Kerr	Richardson, E.
Carroll	Lance	Richardson, G.
Dodson	Lawry	Ross
Feldwick	Levestam	Seddon
Fergus	Macarthur	Seymour
Fisher	Mitchelson	Smith
Fish	Monk	Steward, W. J.
Fraser	Moss	Stewart, W. D.
Goldie	Newman	Taihua
Graham	O'Connor	Tanner
Grey	Parata	Thompson, T.

Turnbull  
Valentine  
Vogel

Walker  
Ward  
Whyte.

*Tellers.*  
Kelly  
Moat.

NOES, 18.

Allen  
Anderson  
Beetham  
Buchanan  
Fitchett  
Fitzherbert  
Hutchison

Izard  
Mackenzie, M.  
Mackenzie, T.  
McKenzie, J.  
Mills  
O'Callaghan

Samuel  
Taylor  
Wilson.  
*Tellers.*  
Guinness  
Marchant.

Majority for, 38.

Item retained.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN moved, That the item, "Blenheim-Awatare, £9,000," be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the item be retained."

AYES, 31.

Atkinson	Joyce	Richardson, G.
Beetham	Lance	Ross
Bruce	Lawry	Stewart, W. D.
Carroll	Macarthur	Taiwhanga
Dodson	Mitchelson	Thompson, T.
Feldwick	Moat	Valentine
Fergus	Monk	Whyte.
Fisher	Newman	
Hislop	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Jackson	Pearson	Seymour
Jones	Pyke	S.-Menteath.

NOES, 35.

Allen	Graham	McKenzie, J.
Anderson	Grimmond	Moss
Barron	Guinness	O'Connor
Blake	Hodgkinson	Perceval
Brown	Hutchison	Reeves, R. H. J.
Buchanan	Kelly	Richardson, E.
Buxton	Kerr	Samuel
Duncan	Levestam	Taylor
Fish	Loughrey	Turnbull.
Fitzherbert	Mackenzie, M.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	Mackenzie, T.	Fitchett
Goldie	Marchant	Seddon.

Majority against, 4.

Item struck out.

Bill reported, with amendments.

# FISHERIES CONSERVATION BILL.

This Bill was read a first time.

On the motion, That the Bill be now read a second time,

Sir J. VOGEL asked that the nature of the Bill should be explained.

Mr. FISHER said it was a matter of urgency. It altered the amount of penalty in the case of those found engaged in illegal sealing. It had come to the knowledge of the Government that several vessels had recently been fitted out for sealing purposes, and were about to act in contravention of the law; and it had been found that the present penalties to prevent illegal sealing were quite insufficient, and this Bill was necessary.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said, apparently the Bill would have a retrospective effect. These vessels might have left the coast, and those engaged on them might not find out the change

till too late. Should they not know the change in the law?

Major ATKINSON.—No; we do not want them to know till we catch them.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said there was a forfeiture clause in the Bill—not only were very severe penalties provided, but vessels found illegally catching seals were forfeited to Her Majesty. In the case of penal legislation of this kind, where there were not only very serious penalties, but forfeiture, very serious reasons should be shown before the Bill was allowed to be passed. He thought no sufficient reason had been shown that the matter was one of emergency; and a little more debate should take place on the question than there seemed likely to be.

Mr. FISHER said the penalties now inflicted had been found quite insufficient to act as a deterrent. In the case of the "Awarua," recently, fines had been imposed, but they were so insignificant in amount that it was found profitable to break the law, and he understood that, in spite of this fine, illegal sealing was now about to be engaged in.

Mr. BRUCE said the honourable member for Dunedin West might recollect that during the last Parliament some honourable members who could speak with authority on the subject contended that the present laws were quite insufficient to prevent illegal sealing. The late member for Port Chalmers (Mr. Macandrew), for instance, was strongly of opinion that the law should be made very much more stringent, in order to preserve the seal-fisheries. He (Mr. Bruce) did not think they ought to take into account the fact that those on the two vessels which had been referred to which had set off on an illegal sealing cruise might find, if caught, that the law had been altered. At present a man might get, say, three months' imprisonment for picking pockets. He might proceed to pick pockets, assuming that that was the maximum penalty he might get; but would he deserve any sympathy if he found, when caught, that the law had been altered and he could get six months? He did not think the Legislature should give a great amount of consideration to those who deliberately broke the law, and they should not be allowed to plead that the law had been altered without their knowledge.

Mr. W. D. STEWART had no wish to oppose the Bill, but they should be very careful in suddenly altering the criminal law to such an extent as was proposed.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES hoped the Bill would pass. It was so necessary that it should be allowed to pass without a word, and he hoped that it would have the effect it ought to have.

Bill read a second and a third time.

#### PUBLIC REVENUES BILL.

Major ATKINSON moved the second reading of this Bill.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Late as it is in the session, I certainly think that some explanation should have been given of this measure. However, I understand that, although power is given to

*Mr. W. D. Stewart*

appoint agents at Home, it is not the intention of the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government to negotiate these debentures in England. I do not know whether the honourable gentleman will give any pledge; but I understand that it is not his intention to do so. I should like the honourable gentleman to explain two other points in the Bill. As it is drawn, it is difficult to understand whether it is the intention to limit the amount of £400,000 to any less amount that might be proved to be the deficiency of the year, or whether it is intended to take this amount as a conjectural amount, and to give authority to raise the sum whether the deficiency should prove to be this amount or not. My difficulty is increased because notice has been placed on the Order Paper of an additional clause to be inserted by the honourable member, the meaning of which clause is not very clear to me. Before I proceed to remark further, I do not think I am asking too much if I beg of the honourable member to explain this clause, and whether he intends to limit the amount to the deficiency, or to take an arbitrary sum of £400,000.

Major ATKINSON.—I propose to take the arbitrary sum of £400,000, because it is very difficult to estimate the amount of the deficiency; but I should propose to issue the debentures to some smaller amount if this is too much. I do not wish to borrow more; but it may be difficult to say what should be the amount, because I may want to raise money before the actual deficiency is known. The honourable gentleman knows the necessity of this sometimes, and therefore I take an arbitrary amount. With regard to the new clause, I may remark that under the present Public Revenues Act the appropriations of the Consolidated Fund are extended over an additional quarter, up to June; and of the Public Works Fund only the balance of the unexpended votes is so extended. Up to a year or two ago it was customary to vote the amount proposed to be expended in the current year, and the amount which the Government would contract for was treated as liabilities at the end of the year, and taken as one vote. The late Minister for Public Works changed this system, and added one column for the amount proposed to be actually spent in one year, and then he took authority to let contracts to an amount which was indicated in a second column. We have followed this practice, and have taken in the first column the actual expenditure of the year; but it is necessary to have more than this in order to continue the expenditure to the following June. That is the sole object of this clause.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Then, I understand that this new clause has nothing to do with the deficiency of the present year.

Major ATKINSON.—Oh, no.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I thought it right to refer to the matter, because it appeared to give power to the Government to include in the deficiency of the present year the liabilities of next year, which, by the law as it stands, come into the expenditure of the next year.

Major ATKINSON.—This applies only to the Public Works Fund.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I thank the honourable gentleman. As regards the £400,000, I had intended to propose an amendment in Committee limiting the power of borrowing to the exact deficiency of the year. But, since the honourable gentleman adheres to his fixed arbitrary sum, and it will not indicate the exact deficiency of the year, I do not wish to place any inconvenience in his way. It is clearly understood that, although the £400,000 is borrowed, it does not follow that there is a deficiency to that amount.

Dr. NEWMAN.—The matter of these deficiency bills is one of the greatest importance. I do not think the Premier has, in this Bill, sufficiently grappled the position. The position I take to be this: that it is the grand aim of every Treasurer, when he finds himself behindhand in his revenue, to float paper in order to keep himself going. Look at the history of these deficiency bills in the past, and let us see what the results have been. Five years ago a Treasurer wiped off £1,800,000 of these bills, and then we started over again. But almost immediately afterwards there was another deficiency of £150,000, and this was, as in the former case, wiped off by being put into the funded debt of the colony; and now, again, we have to find another £400,000, which makes a total of some £2,400,000 of deficiency bills—in other words, of the money this country was behindhand in its revenue. The House should look at this matter with the gravest concern. I know what these deficiency bills are in England; and I believe that here they bear about the same proportion to our consolidated revenue as the deficiency bills in England do. This fact remains: that, after being free five years ago, we have £950,000 of deficiency, in addition to the fact that we have funded £150,000: in fact, there is a deficiency in revenue of nearly £1,100,000. It will be said, no doubt, that these deficiency bills are usually given to meet large payments of interest as they become due; but the whole history of the colony shows that sooner or later they will become funded.

Major ATKINSON.—The honourable gentleman is altogether wrong.

Dr. NEWMAN.—The honourable gentleman had £1,800,000 of deficiency five years ago, £150,000 afterwards, and now there is £400,000 to-day.

Major ATKINSON.—The proportion of deficiency bills funded is a very small fraction of those issued.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Although we started a fresh career when those deficiency bills were wiped off, we have since gone on adding to the number issued. Our power of issuing them will be exhausted in a few years, and then we shall find what we have issued and commence again. This simply means that this colony is out-running its revenue by so much; and that is an entirely unjustifiable condition of finance. I think we should live more within our means, and, instead of having £900,000 of deficiency

bills, surely it would be quite sufficient if we had £600,000 issued at one time. At one time we had only £600,000; and a year or two ago it was proposed to add £200,000 more. I then thought that that ought to be vigorously protested against, and it was my intention, if I had seen I had any chance of carrying it—which I found on canvassing honourable members I had not—to move an amendment refusing to increase the limit within which those bills might be issued. But, now, here we are authorising the issue of £400,000 more. We are asked to increase the limit by £200,000; and I ask the Premier if he cannot do with £700,000. If we do not check this kind of financing the result will be this: that the moment there is a strain upon our resources we shall fund the whole of these deficiency bills, and then start on a fresh course of issuing more bills. I do not think that the Treasurer should countenance this policy. If we are overrunning our revenue we ought to increase our taxation and make the people realise that they are living beyond their means, instead of issuing this enormous amount of deficiency bills, and from time to time greatly adding to the funded debt of the colony. For this reason I hope the Treasurer will accept my suggestion to reduce the amount of deficiency bills issuable to £700,000.

Major ATKINSON.—Of course it would be quite easy to do that and to abolish all Treasury bills; but it would come to this: that we should have to put on taxation to the extent of a million. I do not know whether the honourable gentleman is prepared to advocate that instead of the issue of Treasury bills. It is probably known to the House that the English Government is always a quarter behind in its revenue; and we are also, to a considerable extent, behind in our revenue, and we must, as they do in England, find means of anticipating our revenue or put on taxation to an enormous and unnecessary extent. It is impossible to abolish the issue of Treasury bills unless we are going to increase taxation.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I do not propose to abolish them all at once.

Major ATKINSON.—Well, the argument will apply to the extent that the honourable gentleman wishes to abolish the issue of Treasury bills. He wants us to go back to the old days; but he forgets that in the old days we had no interest to pay. The honourable gentleman has never considered the matter at all, or he would never have made the speech that he has made to-night. Why, the English Government have authority to anticipate the whole of their revenue, and very frequently take advantage of their authority to a very large extent. We have never asked for authority to anticipate more than a quarter of our revenue. Let us take the position of the Consolidated Fund on the 31st of March. Let us assume that our finance has been perfectly sound, and that on the 31st of March all payments due within that year have been met, and that all revenue due up to that date has been received at the Treasury. Supposing that our finance is absolutely

sound on the 31st March, and that we commence the new year with a clear balance-sheet, what happens? We have, during the month of April, to pay out £600,000 for interest. Where is that money to come from? It is quite clear that it can only be obtained by anticipating the revenue; therefore we must have authority to issue sufficient Treasury bills to raise money to meet that amount. When we get a little further into the year—in October—the revenue has nearly recovered itself; but then we have to pay out another £600,000 of interest, besides having had to meet demands for interest during the current half-year in odd amounts totalling up something like £900,000. Where is that money to come from unless we are able, when the pressure comes, to issue Treasury bills? When the honourable gentleman refers to the amount we used to issue in deficiency bills in past years he fails to recollect that the whole position of the finance is entirely changed, for the reasons I have stated. The Treasury bills must be in proportion to the interest that we have to pay, and must enable us to anticipate revenue in order to meet interest payments on particular dates. Since we have consolidated our debts we have had to pay most of our interest in April and October. In April we have received no revenue at all towards meeting that interest, because we are obliged to remit the money Home some six weeks before that, and we must have Treasury bills to enable us to do it. We are also thrown out by the revenue coming in unequally. We do not ordinarily collect the property-tax, for instance, until the second half of the year; and where are we to get the money to meet our liabilities which we look to the property-tax to discharge? I say, having considerable experience, that it is quite impossible that we can carry on safely unless we have authority extending over deficiency bills to the amount of £900,000. At present we have power to issue such bills to the value of £1,045,000; but we propose to reduce that to £900,000 by this Bill, which I consider to be the lowest limit possible. But the distinction between deficiency bills for this purpose—for anticipating revenue—and deficiency bills for covering deficits on the operations of the year is as great as the difference between light and dark. The honourable gentleman is mixing up deficits with the very necessary and proper operations, which are entirely independent of deficits, on the ordinary transactions of the year. The honourable gentleman has failed to give the matter any attention, and he has fallen into the error of confounding the practice of temporarily issuing deficiency bills in order to pay interest with the deficits that may occur at the end of the year. But the two cases are entirely and absolutely distinct. As to the funding of deficiency bills to which the honourable gentleman has alluded, if he had really looked into the matter he would have seen at once that this great sum which was funded by myself in 1881—£1,800,000—was partly an accumulation of £800,000 of deficiency bills which had been issued in aid of the provinces. They were

*Major Atkinson*

really to cover provincial liability which had accrued from time to time as we were winding up the provinces, and had to be met, and they were necessarily added to the debt of the colony. As to the other million, that unquestionably was a deficit; and it arose from the failure of the Land Fund to meet expectations. The honourable gentleman will no doubt recollect that the Land Fund had been relied upon to an enormous extent in the years 1878 and 1879; but the estimates proved delusive. A deficiency occurred, and it was necessary, in the opinion of Parliament, to add that deficiency to the funded debt. If we had not added it to the debt we should have had to put on taxation, and that was impossible. When we came into office at that time we did put on taxation to a considerable extent; but it was quite impossible to meet that million by extra taxation. It was felt desirable to fund it, and the House authorised that to be done. I am quite willing to go a long way with the honourable gentleman if he desires to put on taxation to cover deficiencies; but, if we are to do without deficiency bills at all, then we must—unnecessarily, as I think—increase the revenue by something like one-fourth; and, if he will go to his constituents and tell them that he proposes to do that, then it will be quite time enough for him to come and talk to us about doing away with deficiency bills altogether, and to give us a lecture such as he has given us to-night. I think the limit proposed is a most reasonable one, and, as I have said, I have taken £400,000 as an arbitrary amount, because I think that that will not leave us more than a fair margin. If he is prepared to recommend that, instead of taking power to issue deficiency bills, we should put on taxation for £400,000 to meet contingencies to the amount provided for, it will be very well for him to talk to us as he has talked. I agree that we should make our expenditure come within our revenue: that is what the Government are doing; but that has nothing whatever to do with the question that the honourable gentleman has raised, because, for the reasons I have stated, we must continue to issue deficiency bills in anticipation of revenue; and so long as the year's revenue is sufficient to meet its engagements, and wipe off its deficiency bills from time to time, there is no reason to complain of what is a very proper and very convenient transaction in connection with our finances.

Bill committed.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. MOSS moved the insertion of a new clause providing that the appropriation be continued for one month instead of two months after the expiration of the financial year.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 7.

Fitchett  
Joyce  
Parata

Perceval  
Reeves, R.H.J.

*Tellers.*  
Brown  
Moss.

NOES, 35.

Atkinson  
Beetham

Bruce  
Dodson

Fergus  
Fisher



Fitzherbert	Macarthur	Ross
Fraser	Marchant	Seymour
Graham	McGregor	Stewart, W. D.
Guinness	Moat	S.-Menteath
Hislop	Monk	Thompson, T.
Hutchinson	O'Connor	Vogel
Jackson	Peacock	Whyte.
Lance	Pearson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lawry	Richardson, E. Buchanan	
Levestam	Richardson, G. Wilson.	

Majority against, 28.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

#### MIDLAND RAILWAY CONTRACT BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—I propose to move resolutions on this subject, and then to ask the House to deal with the Bill. As I indicated to the House some few days ago, the Government have been in communication with the agents of the company, and have been informed that the company accept all the proposals which the House had made in its resolution based on the report of the Committee, except that there is a difficulty with regard to the running-powers. Had the House not been in session it would have been within the discretion of the Government to settle this matter; but, as the House is in session, we thought it desirable to apply to the House again. I therefore submit alternative proposals. The first is that the Government should undertake the working of the four sections which are described in the resolution, giving to the company 40 per cent. of the gross proceeds. Now, it is possible, in working the lines upon these terms, there will be a small loss. It may amount to £1,000 or £1,800 a year. It is proposed, as honourable gentlemen see, not to bind the Government to work these sections for more than five years. The company have also informed us that it is not at all likely that they will want us to work the sections on the West Coast, but that we shall be asked to work simply those at the Nelson and Christchurch ends, which adjoin our lines, and may be worked at small expense. The alternative is, that the company may begin the line where they choose, the Government not undertaking any working at all. Honourable gentlemen will find set out on the Order Paper the alternative proposals. The Government will recommend the first course. It will be for the House to determine which of these two courses it will follow. As I say, after careful consideration the Government recommend the first; but some honourable gentlemen may differ on the subject, and therefore the Government will accept whichever the House desires. In the meantime, I propose to move the first series of resolutions which appear on the Order Paper.

Motion made, and question proposed,—“(1.) That the Government be authorised to work the several sections of the Midland Railway hereinafter described: (a) A section from Belgrave southwards, to cost £60,000; length, say, six or seven miles: (b) a section from Springfield towards the west, to cost £60,000; length,

say, five miles: (c) a section from Brunner-ton towards the east, say, nine miles: and (d) a section from Brunnerton to Ahaura, say, twelve miles.

“(2.) The Government to be called upon only to run such number of trains as they may consider necessary for the requirements of traffic.

“(3.) The Government to maintain only the rails, sleepers, and ballast; not the formation-works or bridges. The company to remove all large slips, and to make good any damage which arises from floods or other accidents to the permanent-way or works.

“(4.) The Government to pay to the company 40 per cent. of the gross receipts derived from the working of the sections of railway above mentioned.

“(5.) If more rolling-stock than the Government has at present on the Nelson and Grey-mouth lines be requisite to work the company's sections at those places, the company shall either provide the additional rolling-stock required at their own cost, the Government keeping it in repair, or shall pay the Government the interest on the cost of providing such additional rolling-stock as may be required.

“(6.) The arrangement for working traffic on this basis to be for not more than five years from date of new contract, after which, if traffic is to be continued by the Government, the arrangement to be on the basis of similar arrangements hitherto made with other private companies.

“(7.) Beyond the four sections hereinabove referred to, the company may make extensions when and how it pleases, but shall not be obliged to work any such extension until it is ready to do so; and, if the Government wishes to work any such extension, it is to do so on the same terms as hereinabove set forth for the four sections therein referred to.

“(8.) The company will construct any particular section which the Government may desire if the Government agree to work it on the basis above set forth.

“(9.) The working or non-working of any section of the railway is not to affect the earning of land-grants by the company in respect of such sections.”—(*Major Atkinson.*)

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I understand from the Premier that the company agreed to the promises embodied in the draft contract, which was approved of by this House and the other branch of the Legislature. The resolution which we are now asked to agree to has only been in our hands a few minutes, and I have not had an opportunity of considering the precise effect or the bearing which the resolution would have upon the contract between the company and the colony. But there is little doubt that the resolution foreshadows this fact: that the company will ultimately force the colony to take over the railways entirely at an early date. It is only a step in that direction, but it is a very bold step, and whether the Government contemplate that or not I cannot say.

Major ATKINSON.—No, they do not at all.

This only refers to the proposal in the draft contract.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—It is contemplated that the colony shall run the lines.

Major ATKINSON.—Only these small sections which we compel them to make.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—You ask authority to work the lines.

Major ATKINSON.—Only those small sections adjoining our own lines. We are not compelled to work any more at all.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I believe if you work part you will wind up by working the whole. Then, for instance, I may direct the Premier's attention to these words: "The company to remove all the large slips." Well, it is rather difficult to define what distinguishes large slips from small ones. I do not know where the dividing-line can be drawn. I do not know that there is a legal definition, or that there is any distinction.

Major ATKINSON.—I shall be happy to fill in a word to define that.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—It says, further, that the arrangement is to be on the basis of a similar arrangement hitherto made with other private companies: does that mean private companies here or in England?

Major ATKINSON.—We have not worked any in England.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Probably we shall, however, one day if we go on like this—we do not seem to stick at anything. I understand that it means other private companies in the colony. Of course I do not exactly know what is meant by a private company unless it be a district-railway company. This measure, no doubt, has been carefully considered by the Government. It is not competent for a private member on the spur of the moment to say what is really the precise bent of these proposals: so that the Government must take the responsibility.

Major ATKINSON.—These proposals have been drawn up by the Public Works Department, and I suppose they are right.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—The Premier pointed out that the Government was to pay the company 40 per cent. of the gross receipts. Assuming that 60 per cent. was the cost of working, the colony would have to bear the loss.

Major ATKINSON.—That is so.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I understand the honourable gentleman to move the first resolutions, not the alternative one.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I may say I should certainly object to the alternative one. As regards the first resolutions, I think they are tolerably fair, and that the company may be submitting to some sacrifice in making the proposed commencement at the different ends. There is only one point I wish to draw the honourable gentleman's attention to. I presume that the exact points will not be incorporated in the contract.

Major ATKINSON.—No.

Sir J. VOGEL.—And therefore I would just

*Major Atkinson*

ask the honourable gentleman to make a note of this point. Clause (7) says,—

"Beyond the four sections hereinabove referred to, the company may make extensions when and how it pleases, but shall not be obliged to work any such extension until it is ready to do so; and, if the Government wishes to work any such extension, it is to do so on the same terms as hereinabove set forth for the four sections therein referred to."

Now, Sir, these words supersede the provisions of the contract which force the company within a certain time to complete the line. I think the words should be put in, "save as to the conditions of the contract as to the completion of the railway."

Major ATKINSON.—Yes.

Mr. HISLOP.—We propose an amendment to make it read in this way:—

"Beyond the four sections hereinbefore referred to, the company may make further extensions of each of such sections, but subject to their obligations to carry on and to finish the works as heretofore provided for, though they may carry on the works when and how they please."

Sir J. VOGEL.—That meets the point.

Mr. PEACOCK.—May I ask on what basis it is calculated that we shall lose not more than £800 or £1,000? How is the calculation made that we shall not lose a larger sum than the one mentioned?

Mr. HUTCHISON.—I would suggest to the Premier a verbal alteration in the last paragraph of clause 2 of the contract as it came from the Upper House, where these words occur: "Nothing herein contained shall affect the rights of the Queen to resume any lands selected by the company pursuant to 'The Mining Act, 1886.'" The Mining Act of 1886 does not apply to land selected at all, but only applies to land alienated by sale or lease. So I would move that "pursuant to" be altered to "save where the same has been sold under 'The Mining Act, 1886.'"

Major ATKINSON.—We cannot amend that now; but if the honourable gentleman will kindly give me the amendment we will get it inserted in the contract.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—The very words might be important, as preserving the rights of the Crown under the Mining Act.

Major ATKINSON.—Will the honourable gentleman kindly make a minute of that and let me have it? and I will put it in the contract.

Mr. WILSON.—Will the Premier say which of the two alternative proposals the company themselves wish?

Major ATKINSON.—The company have intimated that they agree to the first, but probably not to the second, so far as the agents here know.

Mr. ROSS.—I would ask, what object has the Government in relieving the company from their obligations with regard to the working of these lines, especially when, according to the statement of the Premier, we shall do so at a certain loss? We have given the company

large concessions to construct the lines, and now it appears that we are going to work them at the cost of the country.

Mr. PERCEVAL.—I think the honourable member does not quite understand it. If he will recollect, in the contract we bound the company to commence at Springfield, Belgrove, and Brunnerton. That undoubtedly puts the company at some disadvantage, because they make pieces of the railway which they cannot work advantageously, and have to distribute their plant to construct these lines. Well, in the contract there was a clause that the Governor might enter into a contract with reference to the running-power on such terms as the company and the colony might agree to. These resolutions now set out in detail the terms of this running-power. That really is the position. Instead of leaving it as it is in the contract, these resolutions now set out the terms upon which the company and the colony shall work these lines.

Mr. ROSS.—I quite understand that, but not why we should make such terms as will entail upon the colony a certain loss in the working of the lines.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—The honourable member for Roslyn asks, first, why we should relieve the company of such an obligation. The company have entered into no obligation of the kind. They have entered into no obligation to commence at three ends at once, and we ask them to do that, and they will consent to do it on condition that we undertake to do a certain thing. My honourable friend asks why we should entail a certain loss upon the colony. It is not a certain loss, but a possible loss. I do not know that it is a probable loss, because there are twenty miles to be run, which would entail no further expense to the colony except for a little fuel. The same rolling-stock and men would do.

An Hon. MEMBER.—We have to maintain the rails.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Yes; but my honourable friend must know that if you have an empty train running the wear-and-tear will be very light, and within the term of three years within which we undertake to work the line it would be inappreciable; and, then, we gain the employment of working-men in all those centres.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I would point out to the honourable gentleman that this is not a thing to be decided upon at five minutes' notice. I think we should pass the resolutions as they stand, leaving the Government to see afterwards to the proper wording of the contract. I do not think the amendment of the honourable gentleman is altogether safe. He speaks, for instance, of "the works as heretofore provided for." It should be "the works provided in the contract," for this may not be the last clause of the contract. And then the words "how they please" is a very wide phrase. It may mean flatter works, steeper gradients, or worse curves. I am content to pass the resolutions as they are printed, leaving the Government to see that they are put in proper shape.

Mr. Hislop's amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Motion, "That these resolutions be read as part of the draft contract brought up with the report of the Committee," agreed to.

Bill introduced, and read a first, a second, and a third time.

The House adjourned at fifteen minutes past two o'clock a.m.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 22nd December, 1887.

First Readings—Second Readings—Third Readings—  
Midland Railway Contract Bill—Government  
Railways Bill—Property-tax Bill—Australasian  
Naval Defence Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at eleven o'clock a.m.

PRAYERS.

### FIRST READINGS.

Public Works Appropriation Bill, Appropriation Bill, Public Revenues Bill, Loan Bill.

### SECOND READINGS.

Public Works Appropriation Bill, Appropriation Bill, Public Revenues Bill, Loan Bill.

### THIRD READINGS.

Public Works Appropriation Bill, Appropriation Bill, Public Revenues Bill, Loan Bill.

### MIDLAND RAILWAY CONTRACT BILL.

This Bill was read the first time.

On the motion, That the Bill be read the second time presently,

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said,—Probably it will be convenient for the Council if I state what course I propose to pursue in reference to the different Bills which have been brought down and which have only just been distributed. The Council having read those Bills a first time, I propose that the second reading should be taken at half-past two o'clock to-day. That will give honourable members plenty of time to read the Bills. In regard to the Midland Railway Bill, the object will, I apprehend, be only to see that the Bill is in accordance with the contract that has been passed. This Bill has been passed by the House of Representatives, and is now submitted to the Council for its consideration. The only objection that has been made is, in point of truth, a money question. As the Council is aware, the 13th section of the contract which we passed provided that there should be running-powers given in accordance with what was done with other companies in New Zealand. That was found to be exceedingly indefinite, and the Government thought it was desirable that it should be put into a definite shape. The Government insisted that the railway should be commenced at Belgrove, Springfield, and Brunnerton. The company naturally objected to that without some arrangement being effected as to run-

ning-powers upon these different sections when completed and ready for use. The matter has been, I may say, under negotiation with the company from the time when the matter was first before the Council up to yesterday. Yesterday was the only time when the arrangement was made; and it came to this: The option was offered to the House of Representatives of passing resolutions—which have been passed there, and which are printed—to allow the company to begin where they like and carry the work on where they like; or that, if the House of Representatives did not like to do that, but would rather incur the money responsibility, and would require them to carry on at Brunner-ton, at Springfield, and at Belgrove in the manner proposed, therefore, if that were done, there should be some arrangement by which the Government could run those sections when they were finished. The House chose the alternative of compelling the company to begin at Belgrove, Springfield, and Brunner-ton, and agreed for a limited time to run trains under certain conditions; and if the company required the Government to run more trains they would be able to do so on certain conditions, which would be arranged. The resolutions adopted by the House—in which the Council is now asked to concur—are inserted in the Bill, because it was thought the Council should have power to deal with this part of the matter. The Bill is so drawn that it does not compel the Government to enter into a contract, but gives them power to do so on certain conditions, those conditions being those which we had under consideration a short time ago. This announcement may facilitate the consideration of the matter by the members of the Council. What I propose now, therefore, is that you, Sir, should leave the chair, to resume it at half-past two o'clock this afternoon, when I shall propose to take the second reading of the measures which have come up from the other branch of the Legislature.

The Council adjourned till half-past two o'clock p.m.

#### COUNCIL RESUMED.

The Hon. the SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past two o'clock p.m.

On the motion for the second reading of the Bill,

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said,—I have already intimated to the Council that the object of this Bill is to give effect to the arrangements made in the contract presented to the Council about a fortnight ago. Of course nothing could be done with those resolutions unless authority were given to the Government to execute a contract. It would have been much more convenient and much better if we could have prepared a contract and then legalised it afterwards; but that was impossible, because the contract would have to be submitted to the directors of the company in England, and no doubt it is a rather complicated matter to pick out from two Acts of Parliament and two long contracts exactly what is meant. It is in pursuance of a reso-

*Hon. Sir F. Whitaker*

lution arrived at by the House of Representatives, and forwarded to the Council for its approval, that this Bill is now introduced. I have already explained to the Council that under the original contract, as it was framed and laid before the Assembly in the first instance, and passed by the Legislature, section 18 left it very indefinite as to the way that running-powers were to be given to the company or the Government on their respective lines. As I have said, the matter has been the subject of a great deal of correspondence since the conditions of the contract were approved by the Legislature, and I am almost afraid to say what the telegrams which have been sent Home will cost the company. The end of the correspondence has been that a great number of alterations have been made in the contract as it was originally proposed—that is, the draft contract of 1887. As the Council is aware, a draft contract was sent out; but the Government did not think fit to accede to that, and it was referred to the House of Representatives, and they came to certain conclusions. And the end of it was that very large alterations were made in the proposals as contained in the draft contract of 1887. The company have been informed by telegram of all these alterations, and, one after another, they have acceded to them. The only question outstanding to the last was this question of the running-powers. The Government did not give way upon any other point; but upon this question of the running-powers it was thought, both in the interests of the Government of the country and of the company, that something more definite should be done. The company were to be compelled to start at three different places, and to carry the work on steadily from each with expedition; and it was thought that, in compelling them to do that, a concession might be made to them with regard to the running-powers. A proposition to this effect was made, and was assented to by the company's agent here, and I presume the company themselves will take no exception to it. The alteration was to this effect: to abolish the 18th section altogether, and leave to the company to say whether they would accept these resolutions as they were placed before the House of Representatives, and agreed to yesterday. I do not know that there is anything more to say about it. It is necessary that this Bill should be passed, and that these resolutions should be embodied in the Bill. I do not know whether we should deal with these resolutions first, or whether we should postpone dealing with them until we come to the section in the Bill which will embody them. However, I now propose, *That this Bill be now read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I suppose there will be some loss entailed upon the colony by the granting of this further concession. The Attorney-General has not stated whether such will be the case or not. If there is to be a loss by granting this concession, I think it is desirable that we should be informed as to what would be the extent of that loss.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I am not

able to say what the loss will be—very different estimates have been formed; but the expense of carrying it out will be only small, because no additional rolling-stock will be required at Springfield, and there would be no additional cost at Belgrove, so that the cost of carrying out this arrangement will be very small. It may be that it may cost nothing at all, but I apprehend that there probably will be some cost. There appears to be no population at all beyond a given point on one section, although on the Springfield Section, I believe, there is a portion of country where there are some settlers. I anticipate that the expense will be trifling, because the present rolling-stock will be sufficient to perform the work. When the Brunnerton Section is carried on, I apprehend there will be no loss on that. That line will run through a district which will pay very well, and I have no doubt that the result will be no loss at all, but, in point of fact, a profit.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I hope that my honourable friend's rather sanguine views of the result of the opening of these detached pieces of railway will be fulfilled. I can only say, with reference to the Bill, that I view it with a great deal of apprehension. The whole history of our transactions with the persons who have undertaken this contract has been one of concession. Further concessions have been demanded, and further concessions have been yielded. It is impossible for one to say when these concessions will come to an end. I am satisfied in my own mind that this proposal is only a lever whereby to obtain still further concessions. I shall, in this matter, confine myself merely to voting against the Bill; I shall take no further action, leaving to the Government the responsibility of the matter. My own impression is that we have granted concessions enough already.

Bill read a second and a third time.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I beg to move certain resolutions. It is necessary that they should be entered on our Journals, and that we should send back a message to the House of Representatives stating that we agree to the resolutions. It is merely a formal matter. The resolutions are as follow:—

“(1.) That the Government be authorised to work the several sections of the Midland Railway hereinafter described: (a) A section from Belgrove southwards, to cost £60,000; length, say, six or seven miles: (b) a section from Springfield towards the west, to cost £60,000; length, say, five miles: (c) a section from Brunnerton towards the east, say, nine miles: and (d) a section from Brunnerton to Ahaura, say twelve miles.

“(2.) The Government to be called upon only to run such number of trains as they may consider necessary for the requirements of traffic.

“(3.) The Government to maintain only the rails, sleepers, and ballast, not the formation-works or bridges. The company to remove all large slips, and to make good any damage which arises from floods or other accidents to the permanent-way or works.

“(4.) The Government to pay to the company 40 per cent. of the gross receipts derived from the working of the sections of railway above mentioned.

“(5.) If more rolling-stock than the Government has at present on the Nelson and Grey-mouth lines be requisite to work the company's sections at those places, the company shall either provide the additional rolling-stock required at their own cost (the Government keeping it in repair), or shall pay the Government the interest on the cost of providing such additional rolling-stock as may be required.

“(6.) The arrangement for working traffic on this basis to be for not more than five years from date of new contract, after which, if traffic is to be continued by the Government, the arrangement to be on the basis of similar arrangements hitherto made with other private companies.

“(7.) Beyond the four sections hereinabove referred to, the company may make extensions when and how it pleases, but shall not be obliged to work any such extension until it is ready to do so; and, if the Government wishes to work any such extension, it is to do so on the same terms as hereinabove set forth for the four sections therein referred to.

“(8.) The company will construct any particular section which the Government may desire, if the Government agree to work it on the basis above set forth.

“(9.) The working or non-working of any section of the railway is not to affect the earning of land-grants by the company in respect of such sections.”

Resolutions agreed to.

#### GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

A message was received from the House of Representatives stating that the House had agreed to the following amendment proposed by His Excellency the Governor in this Bill—namely, in clause 9, to strike out the words “not exceeding one thousand five hundred pounds,” and to substitute “not exceeding two thousand five hundred pounds.”

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I propose that this amendment be agreed to. During the course of this Bill through the Council I intimated that it was probable that some such amendment as this would be proposed. When the whole subject of the salaries of the Commissioners was under the consideration of the Government they felt very great doubts about the matter. Therefore, when they came to the conclusion to make the salary of the Chief Commissioner £1,500, they felt it was probable that they might have to ask the Legislature to agree to such an amendment as that which is now proposed. I, for one, felt very strongly on the subject, because I think that the success of this new arrangement entirely depends upon the capacity of the persons who have the matter in hand, and especially of the principal Commissioner. The amendment does not absolutely pledge the Government to determine that the Commissioner shall have the sum named, but it says

that he shall have a sum not exceeding that. It leaves it to the discretion of the Government, to a certain extent, to say whether they will import from England a first-class man—who could probably be got at £2,500—or whether they will be content to find a person in this colony, or in one of the adjacent colonies, to hold the office of Chief Commissioner. For my part I should, first of all, ascertain from the Agent-General whether we could obtain such a person as we want at the salary named. I feel that a great responsibility attaches to us in connection with this new arrangement, and I am very anxious that we should make it successful. I have taken a great deal of interest in the Bill from beginning to end, and I am satisfied that the Bill as it stands is a workable Bill. I believe that everything will now depend on the Chief Commissioner. I think it would be a great pity if, after making this great change in connection with our railways, and going to this great expense, we were to allow the matter to be spoiled by not giving a sufficient salary in order to get a competent man to take the Chief Commissionership. I move, *That the amendment proposed in the Governor's message be adopted.*

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I hope it will not be agreed to, for this reason: The honourable gentleman has informed the Council that it is discretionary with the Government to determine whether they will give this £2,500 or not. My own impression is that, if you put a sum of that kind before the public, no less a sum will be paid to the gentleman who may receive the appointment. There was a very strong expression of opinion in the Council a few days ago that we should endeavour to obtain some suitable person in the colony for the Commissionership. It is quite clear, from the remarks of the honourable gentleman, that it is the intention of the Government to apply to the Agent-General for assistance in selecting a Commissioner at Home.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I did not say that.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I make no assertion. I only form my own conclusion from the remarks of the honourable gentleman, and I think any one would gather from what the Attorney-General said that it is intended to seek the assistance of the Agent-General in England to see whether we can get a good man from England at the sum mentioned. I am of opinion that we can get within the colony or colonies as good a man as we should get from England. I am quite sure that if we go to England we shall not get a first-class man. We may get what would be considered a fifth-class man. A first-class man is not to be obtained for that salary. I hope, therefore, the Council will not agree to this proposal.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—The expression of opinion referred to by the honourable gentleman was by no means unanimous, that we should obtain a Commissioner in the colony. Various opinions were expressed by honourable members; and some honourable gentlemen,

myself included, thought it would be very advisable to obtain at any rate the Chief Commissioner from England. I am very glad to see that the Government propose to take power to themselves to give this increased salary if required. For my part, I regard this Bill very much as being in the direction of experimental legislation, and I consider that the whole success of the scheme will entirely depend on the administration. That is to say, if you do not get a first-rate man, a man with a great variety of qualities—qualities of the character demanded for that particular position—the whole thing will be a disastrous failure, and very shortly there will be an outcry to revert to the old system. If you get a first-rate man, in whom the people will have confidence, probably the departure will be a success. I think it quite possible, however, that, after a short time, an outcry will be raised and the Railway Commission will be denounced by the popular voice as a despotism. The only chance to prevent that happening will be to give the Government power to get the very best man they can for the position. I shall cordially support the proposal of the Government.

The Hon. Mr. WATERHOUSE.—I very much agree with the Hon. Mr. Buckley that the Government might obtain a suitable man within the colony. Whoever may be the Commissioners, they will be possessed of an amount of power that no previous managers of our railways have possessed. I am quite satisfied that there are men here who, under the altered conditions, would prove quite equal to the majority of those whom we are likely to be able to choose from in England. The responsibility of this measure must lie with the Government. If the Government can get suitable men in the colony, I hope they will do so; but I am not prepared to say that, if the Government cannot get within the colony those who, in their opinion, are suitable for the position, they should not have the power of going to England and obtaining Commissioners there. With reference to this Bill, I leave the responsibility entirely on the Government; and I will do nothing to cramp their liberty in doing what they consider best under the circumstances.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I said, when the Bill was under discussion on a previous occasion, that I feared one cause of the failure of the Bill, if there should be a failure, would be that the salary of the Chief Commissioner was fixed too low. I am glad to see that a discretion is now to be given to the Government to fix the salary of the Chief Commissioner at £2,500. I feel that the whole success of this scheme depends on the manner in which it is administered. I think that the amount asked for in the Governor's message is a very reasonable sum, and that it will give the Government an opportunity of putting the thing into a fair position. I trust, with other honourable gentlemen who have spoken, that if the Government can see their way to getting a competent man in the colony they will give him the preference. At the same time, I recognise that it is much better to leave in their hands an ample

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margin of salary, in order to get the very best man for the management of our railways.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I apprehend that the Council would place itself in a somewhat false position if it were to reject the proposition of the Government. The House of Representatives has passed this amendment of the Bill, and has asked us to agree to it. I apprehend that the Council will place itself in a false position in this respect if it does not agree to that request: If this new arrangement in regard to our railways fails in consequence of the inefficiency of the men, no responsibility will rest with the Government or with the House of Representatives, but the sole responsibility will rest upon the Council; and, therefore, looking at it from that point of view—that it is a question which has been agreed to by the House of Representatives, and in which our concurrence is asked by that House—under all the circumstances in which we are placed, and considering the fact that the responsibility would rest entirely upon the Council, I trust the Council will not think of rejecting the proposition which has been made. I have always said that it does not follow that we shall find a suitable man in the colony, and that we shall probably have to go to England. I think it is of the very greatest importance that we should have the utmost latitude in order to find a competent man, as the whole matter entirely depends on the competency of the principal man. I hope, therefore, the Council will come to the conclusion that, under the circumstances, it is a wise thing and a proper thing to agree to this amendment. If the Council want to take the matter into their own hands and say, "We are entirely responsible for fixing this," they will, of course, be taking up a position they are entitled to take up; but they would place themselves in a very false position. There may be very competent men in the colony, for all I know; but I would point out that, if they have not had that kind of experience which is necessary to qualify them to undertake the management of such railways, they would not be competent in that sense of the term. It is not a constructing engineer that we want; we have constructing engineers already. But what we want is a man who understands the management of traffic; we want, not an engineer especially, but a man to act as traffic manager, and upon whom the whole management will rest, and it will depend upon his competency whether the undertaking becomes a success or not. Whether there are men sufficiently capable to discharge the duties of the appointments of second Commissioners is another question, no doubt; but, in my opinion, there is no man here who has that experience which men largely engaged in connection with railways in England have had; and we are in an out-of-the-way corner here, and, comparatively speaking, we are not in a position to judge properly of what is going on in the shape of improvements at Home. I think, therefore, we should look abroad and see if we cannot get a man for the position of Chief Commissioner sufficiently versed in

the management of railways in England. I express my opinion freely on this subject at once, because it has entered into my mind from the very beginning that the whole difficulty of this matter had reference to the difficulty of obtaining a competent man, and I felt that we should have to go to England in order to obtain a man to fill the appointment of Chief Commissioner. The men among us have not had that experience which the men in England have had in the working of railways. At one time we thought that America would afford us a greater field of selection for a competent man; but the feeling now is that we ought to go to some of the men engaged in connection with the large railways in England and ascertain whether or not we can make a fair and reasonable engagement with one of them. But if we had to fall back upon America I do not think we should find that the scheme would be so likely to be a success. The Government and the House have fixed a sufficient sum for the purpose of making a fair trial of this matter. Let us have a fair sum put on the estimates, in order that we may induce one of the best men we can get to undertake the management. I would also point out that it is possible we may not have to spend the whole of the £2,500, but we wish to have the opportunity of arranging for the best man in England. Then, it is provided that the Act does not come into operation till such time as may be appointed by the Governor, and this, therefore, gives us ample opportunity of obtaining the best men to be had, and also of deciding on what is to be done in pursuance of the powers contained in the Bill. This does not hurry us, whereas if we had been hurried we might have taken a step that we should afterwards have regretted. Therefore I say that every possible consideration will be given to the subject, also to the men in the country and to the men out of the country, and that all pains will be taken to make a good choice. We may make a choice, but probably the scheme will not come into operation before the next session of the Assembly. I think that is exceedingly likely. I think, under all the circumstances, the Council will come to the conclusion that the wisest thing to do is to agree to the amendment which His Excellency the Governor has submitted to this Council.

Amendment agreed to.

#### PROPERTY-TAX BILL.

This Bill was read a first time.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER, in moving the second reading of the Bill, said,—This session I have had many disagreeable things to do, especially in reference to the Midland Railway matter, for instance; but that is on a big scale, and the matter now before us is on a small scale. I have a belief that the present measure is necessary in order to equalise the revenue and expenditure, by raising the tax to a penny in the pound for the next year. It is not necessary that I should explain the object of this Bill, for, unfortunately, I think we can all understand the nature of the Bill perfectly.

If some means could have been taken for avoiding this I should have been well pleased; but we must remember that at present we have not only to exercise economy in our administration, but we have also to so manage that our expenditure shall not be the means of adding to the debt of the colony. There has been a deficiency during the last two years, which we have endeavoured to provide for by means of a Bill which has been read a second time just now. This is another measure, therefore, by which we can equalise the revenue and expenditure. I move, *That the Bill be now read the second time.*

Bill read a second and a third time.

#### AUSTRALASIAN NAVAL DEFENCE BILL.

This Bill was read a first time.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER, in moving the second reading, said,—Honourable members will remember that in the very early part of this session papers were laid on the table with reference to Australasian defence, and subsequently a draft of a Bill, which had been prepared in Queensland, and which had been passed by Victoria and New South Wales, was also laid on the table. Therefore I do not think it will be necessary for me to give any lengthy history of this matter, because I have no doubt that honourable members have well considered what is now before them. And I should say that the Bill is the same as that sent down from Queensland. The matter originated, as honourable members will remember, in the Conference which took place in England some seven or eight or nine months ago. This colony was represented there by the honourable gentleman who is now in the chair here, and also by Sir Francis Dillon Bell; and the other colonies were represented by some leading persons from each of them. This matter was fully discussed, and a conclusion was come to—a conclusion which, I think, was an exceedingly wise one—that an agreement such as this should be entered into by the Imperial Government and the Australasian Colonies. Two colonies have already adopted it, and I have no doubt that the non-agreement on the part of the other colonies at present is only temporary, and that Queensland will come in before long. I cannot understand the opposition to it. This agreement appears to be of the most favourable kind to the colonies; and it appears to me strange that the people of these colonies, who are far better off than the people at Home, should refuse to contribute their share towards their own defence, but seek to cast that burden on persons who are not so well off as we are. I think, as a matter of duty, we should so contribute, and that every consideration is in favour of our dealing with this subject in the way that it is proposed to be done. I cannot see anything more unwise than to reject this agreement. I am quite sure that the result of that would be to affect our reputation, and that our reputation would be worse in England than it is at the present time, and everybody knows that it is not very good at present. I should be very sorry

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that we should lose any respect which we may have. I am quite sure every reasonable man who thoroughly considers the Bill without any feeling of opposition, or any feeling of that kind, must come to the conclusion that it is very favourable towards the colonies, and that it is our duty as well as our interest to accept it fully and fairly. With these observations, I move, *That the Bill be now read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I think, Sir, I should not like to see a Bill of this importance pass through the Council without, at all events, expressing very briefly my approval of it. I quite agree with the remarks of the Hon. the Attorney-General in moving the second reading of the Bill. I think it a step in the right direction, and that it is only a fair and reasonable thing that the colony should bear its just share of the cost of the protection of its own commerce. It is not for us to wait till a war breaks out. I think it is for us to be prepared to protect ourselves no matter what may occur. And, looking at the horizon at the present time in Europe, I think we may be prepared at any moment for a war among the great nations there; and it is our place to protect ourselves by this means, which is the most rational way that we can take to guard ourselves—by seeing that our waters are occupied by an adequate squadron. We are getting past the age of children, when we used to look to our mother to protect us; and I think we should take upon ourselves some share of the responsibility of defending these colonies, and also a share of the cost. In that respect we should only be occupying the position we are entitled to as one of the great colonies of the British Empire. We have not been behindhand in what we have done in former years. I can recollect when the colony undertook “a self-reliant policy,” as it was called, and we took our responsibility on our shoulders, and were able to bring the colony to a state of peace and harmony. The policy adopted in this Bill is the proper policy to adopt, and the question submitted to our consideration is one of a reasonable character. It does not attempt to throw more on us than we are able to bear, and gives us all we require at a very moderate cost, and gives us as efficient protection as we are in a position to accept at the present time. We wish to occupy a position that is right, and according to the arrangements entered into. In coming into an agreement of this kind the whole of the colonies will reap the benefit from it, and those colonies which choose to stand out from an arrangement which may be come to will be excluded from the position in which, for the first time, the colonies are interested as part of the Imperial whole. And we are consulted and advised with by the authorities themselves. The colonies which do not join in this will not be doing themselves justice at all; and I hope, therefore, that this Bill will not only be passed, but passed by a very substantial majority, as indicating the feeling of Parliament on the matter. It is not a matter which requires a great deal of discussion. I see we shall only be called upon by



this, in the event of any of the other colonies standing out, to pay our *pro rata* portion of the original sum. And I agree with what the Attorney-General has said, that any colony that has not adopted the agreement will only stand out temporarily, and that ultimately better counsels will prevail and we shall find them all uniting on this question of common difficulty—this question of defence. It will bind us in our relations with the Home authorities, and raise our standing in the eyes of people at Home, when we take our proper duties on our own shoulders in seeking to assist the Home authorities in the work of defence.

The Hon. Mr. HART.—It seems to me, Sir, in regard to the policy of the measure, that it is something like insurance from fire in the case of a man's house. If a man had occasion to borrow money, it would be one of the things insisted upon by the lender that he should insure his house. If we must once more go into the money-market for borrowing purposes, it seems to me that, in order to get a favourable consideration of a proposal for such a loan, it would be absolutely necessary that some measure for the mutual defence of the colonies should be adopted, and that we should pay for our share thereof.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—Sir, while I cordially approve the measure now before us, yet I cannot but express my regret that it was not brought down earlier in the session. In saying this, I have no wish to cast any reflection on the Government, who have no doubt had great difficulty in piloting their various measures in the other House—although it has been a very easy matter in this Chamber—and probably the Government were compelled to defer this measure to a late period of the session. Yet, as a matter of fact, I think it is to be regretted that we are in this position: that we have really no time, nor a sufficient number of members present, to discuss this Bill in the manner which its importance demands. It may be said—and I think it was said by the Hon. the Attorney-General in introducing the Bill—that every one had been so fully informed as to the nature of these proposals that discussion is needless. I quite agree with him that, so far as public men are concerned, and especially so far as the members of this Council are concerned, discussion is needless. We have probably all made up our minds as to this proposal, and have thought over the subject, and we have no doubt generally arrived at the conclusion that this measure ought to be passed. But we have to consider also the effect which discussions in the Legislature have upon outside public opinion. I have heard it stated, and I think it has also been stated in the Press, that this measure was not brought before the country at the late general election, and that the country has had no opportunity of considering it. And it is said that if the question had been put to the constituencies they would have opposed it. Sir, that is not my opinion. I believe if the question had been fairly and properly put to the people

they would, if not unanimously, at least by a very large majority, have approved of the measure now before us. But, Sir, it is quite within the knowledge of most people that this measure, like every other measure, has as its opponents persons who honestly believe, no doubt, that in doing what is here proposed we are going outside the sphere of our duties, and may involve ourselves in some very troublesome complications. These persons will no doubt put forth their views to the country, and it will strengthen these views if it is found that a Bill of this importance was passed through the Council without any discussion. It will be said, "Oh, no one cares much about it; no one could give any definite reasons for supporting it!" Though I think that would be exceedingly unjust, it is exactly an argument that will be used. A gentleman with whom I was conversing the other day—a gentleman who was known formerly very well in public life, and who is a very able writer and speaker—took these very views, and expressed his opinions—quite opposed to my own—which he would no doubt be able to address very strongly to the country; and, in that respect, I think it is to be regretted that a full and ample discussion is not to take place. But, while saying this, I do not detract from the reasons, or in any way wish to impugn the weight of the reasons, of the honourable gentleman who introduced the measure. Sir, it does appear that, in the first place, it is the duty of all parts of the British Empire to assist in its defence; and I think it would be an act of madness on our part to refuse to share the Imperial burdens whilst assuming the advantages of being connected with this great Empire. I quite agree with the Hon. Mr. Hart that it is to be looked on very largely as a question of insurance; and, in fact, it is the very cheapest form of insurance this colony could adopt. In regard to the cost of maintaining a navy, it is perfectly clear that to do it ourselves is entirely beyond the power of the colony, and we cannot merely rely on harbour defences for the defence of the country, and more especially for the defence of our commerce, which, as the preamble to the Bill states, we have recognised as an object of this measure, because the preamble to the Bill refers to the "maintenance of an additional naval force to be employed for the protection of the floating trade in Australasian waters." That being the case, it is quite clear that some measure of this nature was required. And now, referring to the amount we are asked to contribute, I think it is an exceedingly moderate one, and it appears to me that every care has been taken to limit our responsibilities to a very reasonable amount. The sum mentioned is, I think, £20,000 or £25,000 a year. No doubt that does mean, if capitalised, a considerable addition to our debt; but we must regard it in the nature of insurance, as has been described by the Hon. Mr. Hart; and I am sure that, if the matter were placed before the people in that way, they would realise the businesslike considerations involved in this

proposal and vote for the sum. Apart from the question of justice and the question of prudence, I think there is another which ought also to be considered, and that is the tendency which the joining in this scheme will produce in the way of preserving the unity of the Empire. I am not one of those who have any belief in a political federation. I believe, myself, that a political federation in the shape of anything like representative institutions which would endeavour to discuss all such questions as peace and war is practically impossible; and that the time must inevitably come when the enormous increase of population over the whole of the Australasian Colonies will be such as to entirely remove the centre of political gravity from the British Islands to the colonies of Australasia themselves. It is merely a question of time when the population of these colonies must necessarily be enormously greater than that of the British Islands. Under these circumstances, it is quite clear that any attempt at political federation would fail, because, if you took anything like a population basis for your representation, then the inhabitants of Great Britain would be absolutely nowhere in comparison with the rest of the Empire. Instead of any attempt at political federation, I believe a measure of this sort will help to strengthen that federation of sentiment and interests which is already so exceedingly powerful in preserving the unity of the Empire. I believe the mere fact of the colonies showing their willingness to take a share of the expenses of the English navy will tend largely to strengthen the unity of the Empire. It will be looked upon as an earnest; it is not merely a sentimental belief, but a belief expressed in pounds, shillings, and pence, which is always the strongest; and when we believe in the unity of the Empire, and are prepared to pay for our share of the responsibility, apart from the purely commercial aspect of the question, apart from the question of insurance and the question of safety, I think that is a point which ought to be considered, and which this country would fairly agree to. Then, there is another point which I think New Zealand may fairly consider, and which has always seemed to me to be of importance,—that in any action of this kind in which the other colonies take part it would be exceedingly unwise for New Zealand to assume an attitude of isolation. I think we shall have to look to Australia something in the same sort of way as England looks on its connection with the Continent. The fact that the interests of England and Continental interests sometimes agree and sometimes conflict made it absolutely necessary for English statesmen to take a part in foreign affairs; and I believe, although in a very much smaller degree, there will be the absolute necessity of acting in unison in matters regarding the whole of Australasia, and that it will be impossible for New Zealand to “play a lone hand,” and that any attempt to do so will lead to very great disaster in future. Of course I do not mean to say that it will approach to anything like war; but there are other things be-

sides war—questions of telegraphic communication, and the tariff, and matters of that kind, which, if we show a disposition to isolate ourselves from the other colonies, they will remember against us. Sir, I will not take up the time of the Council in discussing this subject, but I wished to make these few remarks for the very simple reason that no one else seemed prepared to speak on the subject: not that I think myself in any way competent to take up properly such a very important subject as this. I very cordially support the measure which is now before us.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPARD.—Sir, we do not all take the extremely favourable view of the Bill that has been, so far, put forward. It seems to me, looking round this Council and seeing how thinly the seats are occupied, this is not the time to open up a question of such vast magnitude—in fact, it may be called a question of world-wide importance. If we had had this Bill a fortnight ago we might then have discussed it at length, and the Government would have been able to gather the opinion of the Council from the discussion which would have taken place; but I think it is exceedingly unfortunate that we should have a measure of this magnitude—a measure not simply relating to a question of money, but to a great principle—coming down in the last hours of the session, and with scarcely a quorum present. It is not altogether a question of money, although something may be said about that aspect of the matter, for in a time of such severe retrenchment as that which has been proposed, when every branch of the public service will be reduced, and when every officer connected with the government of the country is compelled to submit to this scheme, it is hard that they should have to witness the adoption of a policy that may lead to still further severe reductions; and it certainly requires something more to be said than I have heard on this question to justify us in at once entering upon additional expenditure of, as far as I understand, £25,000 a year. I am not certain of the amount; we have not been told what the amount will be; but I think—from what I have gathered here and from the other branch of the Legislature—that it would not be much less. But, as I have said, it is not merely a question of money that is before us; we are taking an entirely new departure in a most important question of policy. We are going into partnership with the British Islands in the matter of war and peace. The reasons, so far as we have heard them—“the sentimental reasons,” I think, were the words used—were that by doing so we should be contributing our just share to the responsibilities which devolved upon us. But we should be just before we are generous, and we should know whether we are prepared with the money before we decide to do this. I should like to have this question considered: If war is brought upon us, and is brought about by a quarrel with any great European Power, with which these colonies have nothing to do, I think that is a question in which the colonies are not in the remotest

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degree concerned. Our population might endeavour to improve the country and found a new State, without being at all concerned in quarrels about the possession of Constantinople or the fortifications of some part of the Mediterranean. They do not concern us; and yet we may be told—as we undoubtedly shall be told, both inside and outside of Parliament—that it is our duty to support the Imperial Government in this matter. I say we have only to fall back upon what was said something more than a hundred years ago as to the duty of the American colonists of that time in regard to paying taxes for the support of wars engaged in by the United Kingdom—that taxation without representation is tyranny. We are told that our reputation would suffer if we did not agree to these proposals, and that if we did not join with the other colonies we should be treated worse than those who did.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—No.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD.—No doubt that is what will weigh, and has weighed, so far, with members of the Legislature in inducing them to agree to this Bill. I do not think there is anything of the kind that need be considered here. I think we should deal openly and fairly with this measure, not caring what persons in Australia or on the other side of the world may think of our conduct. I am sorry to say that we are proposing to pass this Bill without fully discussing it, as we should have done if we had had a full Council. I know it is not right to refer to proceedings in another branch of the Legislature, and I will carefully avoid doing so except in such a way that you, Sir, will hold me quite in order. We know that the number of members of the other branch of the Legislature in actual attendance is enormously reduced—indeed, that there were not more than one-third of the members of that House present during the discussion on this Bill; and I do not think it is right that we should enter upon this important policy at this time, with so small an attendance of members. A large number of those who are now present will by to-morrow have disappeared from Wellington. Members are all scattering fast. Why? On account of this season of peace and goodwill towards men. And here we are needlessly involving ourselves in the wars of States on the other side of the world. I must deprecate any remarks which I have made being taken as in themselves necessarily hostile to some arrangement of this kind; but what I do complain of is that we have this Bill brought in in the last hours of the session, and we have not that numerical force in the Council to discuss it that we ought to have. I beg to move, *That the debate be adjourned.*

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I am very much surprised, very much disappointed, and, I may say, disgusted at the speech which has just been made.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD.—Sir, I ask whether it is a parliamentary expression for an honourable gentleman to say that he is “very much disgusted” with the speech of another member.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I think the honourable gentleman should withdraw so strong an expression.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I am very much surprised, and will not repeat the other word if the honourable gentleman feels it. I must say that I was disgusted that there should be any opposition to a measure of this description. The honourable gentleman says we should not mix ourselves up in the politics of Europe. I do not wish to mix ourselves up in the politics of Europe. We are doing this simply for the purpose of defending ourselves, and, as was stated by an honourable gentleman opposite, we are doing it as an insurance against the destruction of our property. We are not called upon to enter into the politics of Europe; we are not called upon to invade other people's country, or to make any attack on anybody; but we are simply called upon to subscribe some funds for the purpose of defending ourselves, and especially our commerce, on the high seas. Can anything be more reasonable than that? It appears to me to be an absolute duty that we should undertake it; and I think it would be most unreasonable for the people of this part of the world to call upon the Imperial Government to compel the unfortunate poor people of England to provide for the defence of our property. I say that it is enough to disgust anybody when he hears a doctrine of that character brought forward. The honourable gentleman says, using a cant phrase which we have heard so often, that taxation without representation is tyranny. I do not know what application that has to this question. Are we called upon to pay taxes? The honourable gentleman referred to the American colonies. That was a totally different thing. We are not taxed by England. We are simply told that if we do certain things—that is, if we will find a certain amount of money—we shall then have additional protection beyond what we have at the present time. That the Imperial Government should be called upon to do more than they are doing at the present time—that is, to keep five or six war-ships in these waters—is, I think, unreasonable. I say, under the circumstances, looking at the agreement which has been made, it is of the most fair and reasonable character; and I say again that I am very much disappointed that we should find an honourable member stand up and make the complaint that we are going into something which we ought not to touch under the circumstances. I was in hopes that this Council would be unanimous on this matter. I think it would have been very much to our credit if we had been so; and I only hope that the honourable gentleman who has just spoken will be the only black sheep in the flock.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD.—I ask whether that is parliamentary language.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I think the honourable gentleman should withdraw the expression.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I withdraw it entirely and freely, and without any reser-

vation at all. Of course I am at liberty to maintain my own opinions. I have an opinion on the remarks of the honourable gentleman, but I will not express that opinion. I do not think I need trouble the Council at any greater length with the honourable gentleman's speech, a great deal of which was irrelevant, a great deal of it unfounded on fact, and it was exceedingly weak in argument. I only hope that the honourable gentleman, when he has a little more experience in these matters, will find that he has taken a very erroneous view. When the honourable gentleman comes fairly and honestly to consider the whole thing I have great hope that it will work a reformation in him, and that he then will be able to agree with the rest of us that we are taking a very wise course and an honest one.

Amendment negatived.

Bill read a second and a third time.

On the motion, That the Bill do pass,

The Hon. Mr. SHEPARD said,—I think it is due to the Council and to myself to say that the Attorney-General in his remarks entirely misrepresented what I said. I did not enter into the merits of the scheme; I merely said that it appeared to me to be inopportune: and I think the same still—that this is not a fitting time for us to deal with such a proposal as has been made. I guarded myself against discussing the contribution in itself. I conceived it not only my right but my duty, as a member of this Council, holding such an opinion, to express it; and I conceive that it is a wrong and an injustice that any member of the Council should be denounced in the manner that I have been for daring to have an opinion. I have said no disrespectful word about the Government of the country, and I certainly never dreamed of saying any disrespectful word against the Sovereign of this Empire. In all that I have said I merely exercised that right of free speech which belongs to every member of every Legislature in the world, and I shall exercise that right on all occasions when it appears to me right to do so; but I shall carefully abstain on all occasions—as I have done in the past, during the whole time I have been in the other branch of the Legislature and in this—from using an offensive expression about those who may chance for the time to differ in opinion from me.

The Hon. Mr. RICHMOND.—The logical outcome of the speech of the Hon. Mr. Shepard, if it were to be acted upon, would be that we should at once seek release from the bonds which now bind us to the Empire. It is quite true that we have no particular call to involve ourselves in the troubles of the great European nations; but so long as we remain part of the British Empire it is perfectly clear that we shall have no choice in that matter, and if we do not ask for release we are bound to take our lot with the rest. That this is distinctly recognised at Home will be seen from a story which, I believe, is true. Some complaint was made by the representative of one of the Australian Colonies that the whole of New Guinea had not been taken by the Im-

perial Government, and that the Germans had occupied part of the island. In case of war, it was said, it would lead to great inconvenience; but the Secretary for the Colonies, in reply, said, "Oh, you need not trouble yourselves about that: in the event of war, the first thing we should do would be to take possession of the German part of New Guinea." Whatever may come about in that direction is much more likely to be healthy if it is brought about *pro re nata* by the obvious need of the day. I think, in the present state of European politics, the defence of the colonies is a thing which is required at the present hour, and for that reason the combination is a natural proposal.

Bill passed.

The Council adjourned at a quarter to five o'clock a.m.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 22nd December, 1887.

Red Hill Gold-mining Company—Government Railways Bill—Australasian Naval Defence Bill—Education—Loan Bill—Supply—San Francisco Mail Service—Masterton-Mangamahoe Block—Reefton Town-sections—Bay of Plenty Natives—Greymouth Harbour—Appropriation Bill—Australian and New Zealand Cable—Supply Bills—Business of the Session—Adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at twelve o'clock.

PRAYERS.

### RED HILL GOLD-MINING COMPANY.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES moved the adjournment of the House to bring before the Government a question which had been placed on the Order Paper referring to the floating of a certain Nelson mining company. He would like this question to be answered, so as to have ventilation given to the matter. From the nature of the question it would naturally be assumed that something very serious was hidden behind, and it would lead members of the House and the public outside who saw the Order Paper to believe that this Nelson mining company had some swindle at the back of it. Knowing something of this matter, he wished to explain the position. What were really the facts of the case? A certain number of gentlemen in the colony, some living in Auckland, some in Nelson, and others elsewhere, took up a lease of land some time ago for mining purposes and prospected it, expending £3,000 or £4,000 in so doing. It was then proposed to float a company in London with a capital of £150,000. The syndicate sent out an expert to report, Mr. Price Williams, a gentleman of high standing on the London Stock Exchange and amongst syndicates. He was coming out, in connection with other business, to Western Australia and New Zealand, to report upon the coal and iron deposits in Collingwood, and unofficially he was requested to report upon the Red Hill property; and he did report favourably upon it. The syndicate at

Hon. Sir F. Whitaker

Home cabled out to a firm of solicitors to act on their behalf, to receive a transfer of the property from the vendors. They, knowing nothing at all about the matter, cabled Home to this effect: "Red Hill. Believe gold-mine practically worthless. Government Inspector, common opinion, agree. Strongly advise further inquiry; otherwise cannot act." Now, in doing that they acted in a most unbusiness-like manner. They were asked by the London solicitors to act on behalf of the syndicate in getting a transfer of the property, and, without knowing anything at all about it, they merely wired to Sir Robert Stout, the Premier, to get an expert to report on the mine. The expert was sent—Mr. Warren, the person acting as Under-Secretary. This expert, however, could not get into the mine. The drive was closed, and he had no order from the directors at Nelson to inspect the mine. He came back to Wellington, and made a report to the effect that he believed gold did not exist in the ground. The firm of solicitors sent a report Home to that effect. The result was that a panic was caused on the London market until Mr. Price Williams arrived at Home, and, concerning this matter, said at a general meeting of shareholders,—

"I made a most careful examination. I went into the tunnels and satisfied myself by careful notes, which shall be produced if necessary. I may say I certainly examined it most carefully.

"Mr. BALL: There is one point I should like to be satisfied about—viz., Does Mr. Price Williams consider the amount we paid a fair amount?

"Mr. PRICE WILLIAMS: I certainly should be very glad to pay that amount for the property."

He hoped the House would excuse him for taking up so much time, but this was really a matter of importance to the colony, as a thing of this sort going abroad would have the effect of doing very great damage to the mining industry of the colony. This company had been floated, and successfully floated, and the shareholders in New Zealand, the vendors of the mine, had never got a shilling, but, to show their *bona fides* in the matter, had taken scrip instead of money. The question had been put on the Order Paper by the honourable member for Gladstone, who really knew no more about the Red Hill Mine than the man in the moon; but he had been inspired by certain gentlemen who came from Nelson to put this question on the Order Paper, with the idea that it could not be answered satisfactorily, and to injure the enterprise in the eyes of the people in England. His (Mr. Reeves's) idea, too, was that this firm of solicitors wanted to screen themselves from having an action brought against them; for he understood that it was very likely that an action would be brought against the firm for a very heavy amount before long, for sending Home a cablegram stating that the mine was worthless. From what he had seen of it he could say that it was one of the best mines in the colony. The company had a large area of land, and it con-

tained all sorts of minerals besides gold—it contained silver, copper, and lead—in fact, Collingwood was the true head-centre of the whole of the mineral resources of the colony. That this was the case had been said by Sir James Hector and by every geologist who had been in that part of the country. The company were getting some of the best mining-machinery that had ever been manufactured, and were expending £3,000 to £4,000 in bringing in a water-race for motive-power. He hoped that the next time the House met he would be in the proud position of saying that the company was one of the great factors in the prosperity of the colony. He was sorry the honourable gentleman was not here to ask the question; but he thought it his duty, in the interests of the mining community, to bring the matter before the House. The question on the Order Paper was as follows:—

"(1.) If he [the Minister of Mines] has any official knowledge concerning the floating of a certain Nelson mining company, to wit, the Red Hill Gold-mining Company, on the London market, and of the terms of the prospectus issued by the company? (2.) If he has taken any action in the matter, or is aware that his predecessor, the late Minister of Mines, took action in the matter? (3.) If it is true that representations on the subject were made to the late Government, and that some member of that Government cabled to England about the Red Hill Gold-mining Company; and, if so, will the Minister of Mines inform the House what was the purport of that cablegram? (4.) Whether he is prepared to bring in a Bill to amend the Mining Act by making it necessary to the legal operation of any New Zealand gold-mining company working with foreign capital that the prospectus of that company, published in Great Britain or elsewhere, should have obtained before such publication the approval of an officer to be appointed by the New Zealand Government?"

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON thought the honourable gentleman had been trying to take advantage of his position as a member of the House to advertise a mining company. There was nothing the Government wished to withhold. He thought it as well that the question should be answered now. The question divided itself into four, and the answers were: (1.) There was official knowledge of the floating of the company on the London market, as a copy of the prospectus was sent to the Hon. the Minister for Public Works by Messrs. Fell and Atkinson, in a letter dated the 3rd February, asking for information respecting the mine. (2.) He had taken no action in the matter; but there was a record of a telegram in reply to the letter from Messrs. Fell and Atkinson by the late Minister for Public Works on the 4th February, 1887. (3.) It was true that representations were made to the late Government as stated above. There is no record in the Mines Department of a message by cable having been sent to England. (4.) It was not the intention of Government to legislate on the question of appointing an officer to approve

prospectuses for mining companies before being published. It would be a dangerous precedent, and to a certain extent would compromise the Government if the company afterwards proved a failure.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES hoped the Minister would not for a moment imagine that any blame was intended to be attached to him in the matter; but, in connection with the question, he (Mr. Reeves) wished to explain the real position of the company.

#### GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS BILL.

A message was received from His Excellency the Governor, transmitting an amendment in subsection (1) of section 9, striking out the words "one thousand five hundred pounds," and inserting "two thousand five hundred pounds" in lieu thereof.

On the motion, That the message be agreed to,

Mr. W. D. STEWART said,—I do not know whether it is intended to vote this salary, but I venture to say that it is too large. It is a salary in excess of that paid to the highest officer in this colony, I suppose—the Chief Justice himself. I am quite satisfied that you can get the services of a good man for a less amount. I really think that a mistake has been committed in proposing such a large salary. I entirely disapprove of the proposal, and am satisfied you could get as good a man as you want for £1,500.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—I am satisfied the Government have no intention of paying such a large salary if they can by any means procure a suitable man at a lesser salary.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—There are plenty of good men in the colony who would be willing to take £1,500 a year, and it is quite a sufficient salary to pay. As the honourable member for Dunedin West has said, you will have the door opened to paying a higher salary to the Chief Railway Commissioner than for your Chief Justice. It seems an absurdity and an anomaly altogether that an officer in this position should receive three times the amount which his chief, the Minister, should himself get. You can get plenty of good men in New Zealand to undertake the duties for the sum originally mentioned.

Dr. FITCHETT.—It seems to me that the sum suggested by the Governor is altogether out of proportion to the work to be done or the capacity of the colony to pay. I do not think we can get much advantage by importing a man. He would have to unlearn a good deal before he could begin to learn the peculiar conditions under which our railways are run. It would be better to secure a man within the colony who has local knowledge. I do not think I should be doing my duty to my constituents if I consented to this large amount being agreed to by the House. I shall therefore move, That the amount be reduced to £1,750. That is an increase of £250 on the amount originally proposed, and is certainly fully adequate to the duties to be performed.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I hope the honourable mem-

*Mr. G. F. Richardson*

ber will withdraw that proposition. There is no comparison at all between the services rendered by the Chief Justice, or even those rendered by the Governor himself, and the services required of the Chief Commissioner of the Railway Board. We must remember the enormous amount of property we are placing in the hands of this Commissioner, and £1,000 should be no consideration in the matter of securing a really good man for the position. It may be possible to import a man of European reputation, to the great benefit of the colony. I think this is one of those matters in which private members should not interfere. It is far better to leave it to those who are responsible to the House. If they give too high a salary it will be their fault, but if they are not in a position to give enough it will be our fault.

Mr. PEACOCK.—I think, if the new system of managing our railways is to be tried at all, we should see that the circumstances are most suitable for making it a success, and I do not think the salary proposed is too large considering the salaries given to gentlemen occupying the position of managers of railways in the Old Country. It is intended, I presume, to get one with special knowledge of this subject to take charge of the railways, and I think the hands of the Government should not be hampered, especially as men in that position receive, sometimes, double the amount proposed to be inserted in this Bill.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—The considerations that arose in my mind are these: that we have to go to the market to find what we want, and, if we take the amounts paid to men undertaking similar work done in other parts of the world, we must at once recognise that the sum originally provided in this Bill is altogether inadequate. I believe it would be impossible to buy the services we want at anything less than the sum now proposed. It was with very great regret I saw the small sum inserted in the Bill brought down by the Government. I thought that was one of the great blots of the Bill, and I shall most heartily support the larger sum now proposed.

Mr. SPEAKER.—As this is a proposal to increase the salary, it ought to be referred to the Committee of Supply.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—I beg to move, That the message be referred to the Committee of Supply.

Mr. MOSS.—We hear a great deal about getting first-class men from England; but is it to be supposed that first-class men will surrender highly-paid positions and come here for even £2,500 a year? What we shall have to do is to take some promising junior from some railway in England. A junior will be only too glad to take £1,500 a year; and let us increase it when we find he has earned it. Altogether it seems to me lowering to the colony to send away at all. I believe we shall find in the colony gentlemen who are in every respect able to manage our railways. We had gentlemen in Canterbury who managed the railways well there; they are now in other colonies. And

I think we should have no difficulty in finding suitable men who would think it an extremely good thing to get £1,500. We have had quite enough of sending to England. We should only get a second-class man, to be passed off upon our poor colonists in the higher character.

Mr. BROWN.—I can bear my testimony to the zeal and efficiency of some of our railway officials. I have had an opportunity recently of making a comparison as to how our railways are worked with the way railways are worked in Great Britain and elsewhere. I am certain we have got as good men in our employ as we can get elsewhere, who will be satisfied with the original amount. I shall not mention names, but if the management of the railways were placed under the control of some of those now in our employment I believe the railways would give better results to the colony. The Ministers consider themselves not worth more than £800 and £1,000 a year, and they now propose to pay three times that amount to one of their officials. We call it retrenchment. We began at the wrong end, and seem to be sorry for what we have done. Now we go to the other extreme, and offer a great salary when we can find gentlemen in the colony to take the position for half the sum proposed by the Government.

Mr. KELLY.—I shall support the lower sum. I think there are many promising rising young men in the railway service here who, if they only got a chance of coming forward, would be found capable of undertaking what is required. I trust the Government, in considering the matter, will fully consider their own officials. I do not think we should import a man for the position if we can find a capable man in the colony. This is a sort of distinction I do not like to see, because our Ministers and Judges and other high officials receive salaries altogether inadequate in comparison with the sum now proposed for the Chief Commissioner it is intended to import. I trust the Government will agree to the smaller sum, for I think £1,500 a year is a good salary for any man in that position.

Mr. CADMAN.—Let us look at the matter from a business point of view. Supposing honourable gentlemen were a company and were working the railways for themselves, what would they do? Their first object would be to get the best possible man as manager; and, looking at the past, and looking at the position of the railways of the colony, I, for one, do not think it is possible to pick up a good expert in the colony outside the present officials. I am of opinion that, even if a man has been working the railways of the colony for some time, he has still much to learn. If we are to take a man in the colony, we must certainly take some Government employé; and if we do raise the salary, as is proposed, it will mean that we shall be simply giving an increased salary to some one now in the Government employ. I believe we are paying the present General Manager £1,000 a year, and if he is appointed one of the Commissioners it will give him several hundreds more. I do not object to him as much as some do, because I

think that if he had been left untrammelled in the management of the railways he might have proved to be a very good man, and if we are to retain his services under the new system I think it quite possible he may be worth more to the colony. I do not think we can get three good Commissioners outside the Government employ in the colony; and, if we are to get good men, let us not restrict the choice of the Government altogether to people in the colony; but, assuming that we do try to get a man outside the colony, it appears to me that the amount of remuneration already fixed—namely, £1,500 a year for five or six years—ought to be a sufficient inducement to many in the Old Country to accept a position on this Board.

Mr. PARATA.—I wish to know why it is proposed to give this official so much as £2,500 per annum, while our Premier, who has much greater responsibility, receives a far smaller sum. Seeing that our policy is retrenchment, and that reductions are being made in the honorarium and in the salaries of Civil servants all round, I cannot understand why this large salary should be paid. I think there are gentlemen in the colony quite capable of carrying out the work for a much less sum. If we get an official from England, what guarantee have we that he will be capable of performing the duties? In my opinion the salary should be reduced, seeing that the colony has resolved on a policy of retrenchment; and I think those railways which do not pay should be closed up altogether. If we pay such extravagant salaries as this, then the colony will never regain prosperity, because taxation has to be laid on Europeans and Maoris to provide the money. The Premier has stated that the Government is pledged to retrenchment all round: but this proposal is quite contradicting that statement. What guarantee have we that this system of management will be a success? It is quite an experiment, and no one can say what the result will be. I did not think we should borrow money to spend in such a manner as this, and I regret that this extravagant proposal has been brought forward. I object all the more because nothing has been done for the benefit of the Natives this session, and therefore I shall support the reduction.

Mr. TAIPUA.—I wish to say that I fully agree with what has been stated by the honourable member who has just sat down. He has said all I should have expressed myself on the subject, and therefore it is unnecessary for me to repeat it.

Colonel FRASER.—I regret exceedingly that the Premier has thought it necessary to bring down this proposal. It would be much better if the Bill were left as it is. It is ridiculous to suppose we can import a first-class man from England even if you make the salary £2,500. No first-class man will leave England for that salary, and if you are willing to take a second-class man it is very likely you will get a sixth- or seventh-class one. Our experiments in the way of importing talent have not been successful hitherto. I am perfectly certain we have talent sufficient in the colony to manage our

railways if that management is left free from political control. The next thing will be a message from the Governor saying it is necessary for the salvation of the colony to import Premiers and Treasurers, because we have not men among ourselves capable of governing the country. I am astonished at the Government bringing down this proposal, and especially at the last hour of the session. I am as certain as that I stand here that it is a mistake to alter the Bill. We have talent enough in the country if we only go the right way to make use of it, and we should not go looking for big fish in other countries when we are likely only to catch sprats.

Mr. IZARD.—Sir, I shall support the vote for the higher sum, as proposed by Ministers. It is of the greatest importance that a thoroughly efficient man should be appointed to the head of our railways. To get a good man we must pay a good salary, and the amount paid is of no great importance if the man appointed has a thorough grasp of his work. He would soon save his salary and more. It is no doubt an anomaly that a larger salary should be paid to a railway officer than is paid to a Premier or Chief Justice: this must be faced, and we need not disturb ourselves about it. Again, Sir, I would suggest that the Government may very appropriately appoint Mr. Maxwell to one of the inferior Commissionerships. He is a thoroughly energetic, hard-working officer, and his merits have been testified to by the chiefs of his department on both sides of the House. No doubt he is, to some extent, an unpopular man. That is the result of the system. He has been hampered by hard, fixed official rules, and has not been allowed to exercise his independent discretion. I hope the Government will take these matters into consideration when making the appointment.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—We have heard some special pleading from the honourable member for Wellington South and Suburbs on behalf of his friends. Now, we have heard a lot of rubbish about getting a first-class man and paying a high salary, and one honourable gentleman has said that no first-class man could be got from England even for £3,000 a year. Does any one suppose the manager of, say, the London and North-Western Railway or the Great Western Railway would come out here for £3,000 a year? Certainly not. Look at the business they have to do. I suppose there is more traffic over either of those lines in a fortnight than there is over all ours in two years. It must be remembered that all our railways are single lines—we have no double or treble lines—and therefore the management of our railways is not nearly so difficult as of those of England. I am quite sure we have sufficient administrative ability in the colony if we only employ it in the right way. I think it is discreditable to the colony to assume that in a House of ninety-five members we cannot get a Minister for Public Works capable of carrying on the Railway Department properly. It is a most ridiculous

*Colonel Fraser*

thing; and I say again that if the local managers of our railways were allowed a certain amount of discretion we could do without any Boards at all; but instead of having that discretion they are tied up with red tape and sealing-wax, and cannot do what they are capable of doing. I do not take it upon myself to be a prophet, for a prophet seldom has honour in his own country, but I say that before we have had the Board in operation for two years there will be a cry to abolish it. Under any circumstances I think we can find within the colony men of sufficient business capacity to carry out the duties of Railways Commissioner at a salary of £1,500 a year. Even the honourable member for Wellington South and Suburbs agrees that we have good men in the colony. I may say that I think very extraordinary powers are given to the Chief Commissioner. He is to be all-powerful, and he might as well have no colleagues for all the power that they will have. I shall support the proposal to reduce the sum now proposed to be given, and should be glad to see it negatived altogether.

Sir G. GREY.—What I would represent to the House is this: that we have no extraordinary emergency to meet here—no great accidents have taken place, no great defect has been found in our railway management except so far as the fixing of the rates is concerned. That is the one thing in connection with which there has been a grievance. I believe that as able men are to be obtained here as you could procure from Great Britain, and therefore I hope we shall not import gentlemen to fill these positions. I hope that the House will pursue a course which I am satisfied will bring out the latent talent in the country and hold out a legitimate object of ambition to the young men of this colony, and prove that New Zealand has men within her borders quite as capable of performing these duties as any person who might be imported from Great Britain. A short time ago every Judge on the Supreme Court Bench was imported from Home or elsewhere, and yet now we have chosen from among ourselves, as Judges, men quite as able as any who were imported. We may hope for the same in connection with this Railway Board. And I do hope the House will give the young men of New Zealand a chance to rise to the higher positions in the service.

Mr. ROSS.—I hope that the amount will be left as it is in the Bill—at £1,500 a year,—because I believe that we can obtain in the colony not only sufficient subordinates to carry on the working of the department successfully, but also suitable men to take the higher positions; and I think the sum mentioned is quite large enough. There is one argument which I think might be urged against increasing the salary to be paid. We are making reductions in all the departments of the Service, and especially, I hope, in the salaries of some of the higher officers, who are, I think, in many instances, overpaid. It will be difficult to make those reductions in the salaries of heads of departments if we are at the same time increasing the amount to be paid to the Chief Railway



Commissioner to so large an extent as is suggested by the Government. I hope the amount, therefore, will be allowed to stand as it is.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—I trust the Government will adhere to the former salary of £1,500: I think it is ample for any person. And I hope that we shall get these Commissioners from the colony. There is too much of a habit of importing expensive men from Home. If it is an Inspector of Prisons who is wanted, or an Inspector of Asylums, or an officer of Defence, we must send Home and import these men at a tremendous cost. There is no chance given to men of ability in the colony. I do not, however, agree with the honourable member for Wellington South and Suburbs that Mr. Maxwell should be retained. On the contrary, I think that all the trouble that has occurred has been largely due to Mr. Maxwell. But I believe that Mr. Hannay would be a very suitable man to be made one of the Commissioners. I think, however, that we should not increase the salary for the Chief Commissioner as is here proposed. We discussed the whole thing when the Bill was before us, and decided that £1,500 was a proper sum to pay. I do not see that we should, now that two-thirds of the members of the House are absent, alter the sum fixed by the whole House. I think it is an unfair and improper proceeding for the honourable gentleman to bring this proposal down; and on this ground, as well as upon others, I shall vote against the proposition of the Government. I hope there is no truth in the rumour that Mr. Maxwell is to be appointed as Chief Commissioner. If so we might as well not have passed the Bill, and certainly I, for one, should be very sorry that I voted for it. The principal object of the Bill was to remove the railways from his influence and beyond political control.

Major ATKINSON.—I hope the House will consent to this proposal. It will be in the recollection of honourable members that I myself thought that £1,500 would be found to be sufficient, and, indeed, I still hope so; but there were a large number of honourable members whose opinions were well worth considering who expressed the view that the hands of the Government should not be tied in this matter. I then stated that if the Government found themselves unable to get a man for the sum fixed by the Act they would take upon themselves the responsibility of giving a little more; but on consideration we have thought it better to bring the matter before the House at once. I will point out that the language used is "not exceeding"—we do not bind ourselves to give a higher sum. I think the appointment is one of great importance: in fact, the whole success of the scheme depends on the right man being appointed. I hope the House, therefore, will see its way to leave the Government free to act for the best in this matter. I can assure the House that the Government will act very carefully.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I think the question of salary in a matter of this sort is utterly beneath contempt to talk about. In all big companies and financial institutions they never think of a

trifle in the way of a salary, because a good man may at any time find out little methods of making savings in connection with which a thousand or two a year would be not worth considering. The real question, I think, is, whether the Government will take sufficient care in the choice of a suitable man. That is the real question; and I do hope that they will give most complete attention to this matter, and not take any man who may happen to endeavour to force himself into the position. I have not much sympathy with the craze for importing expensive people, for I do not think it has been a success so far; but in this matter there will be a great gain in getting a man who has knowledge and experience, and in that connection a question of salary is very trifling. We saw an instance of that the other day, when, by the substitution of one kind of paint for another, a saving was made to the extent of something like £5,000 a year on the working of the lines. And that, I believe, was done by Mr. Maxwell, of whose capabilities the honourable member for the Hutt has so low an opinion. My own belief is that Mr. Maxwell is a very capable man, and that his unpopularity and, perhaps, want of success are due not to any want of capability on his part, but to the system under which both the Minister and the Public Works Department have been subject to political influence. Honourable members have gone to them—I have done it myself—and have said, "Oh! you must reduce the freight on wool,"—on grain, on cattle, *et cetera*. There has been enormous pressure by honourable members to get special concessions for their own constituents, and many have done it not because they thought it right, but because they saw that other people were getting these concessions, and they did not see why they should not get them also. If we get rid of this pressure, which has led to districts getting benefits at the expense of the colony generally, we may hope our railways will be more successful.

Mr. BRUCE.—I think a great responsibility will rest upon this House if it carries the reduction moved by the honourable member for Dunedin Central, because I believe that the whole success of the scheme will depend upon the introduction of a really skilled specialist. I do not deny that we have sufficient talent in the colony to fill the minor positions, but it is scarcely likely that we shall find here those special qualities which we want in the Chief Commissioner. I think we should look at this as a matter above party, and that we ought to leave it in the hands of the Ministry.

Mr. BLAKE.—I think that the Government should be left entirely free to choose the best man they can get; but at the same time I must admit that, as a full House approved the sum which is now in the Bill, it is scarcely fair to those who have left that an alteration of this kind should be made. However, my opinion is so strong that we do require a very able man at the head of our railways that I am disposed to say that the Government should be able to please themselves as to the man they will choose.

Sir G. GREY.—I should like now to say that the speech made by the honourable member for Thorndon, representing to us the pressure he himself at particular times has brought to bear upon the Government, and the great pressure that was brought from all parts of the House to bear on the Minister for Public Works, satisfies me that there is just as much reason for making the Public Works Department a non-political body as there is for making the Railway Department a non-political body. In fact, I think there is a much greater necessity for the one than for the other. Therefore, if this increase is carried, and as weighty duties are to be laid upon these Commissioners—I do not mean weighty in number, but in importance—I shall strive next session to have the Public Works Department made distinctly a non-political body. I believe that that will result in great advantages to the colony; and arrangements might be made by which, in point of fact, there would be Public Works Councils in various parts of the colony, assisted by the local bodies, so that really some control would be given to the local bodies over public works in their districts. And we shall in that way give a system of local self-government which we have not at this moment. I want the honourable member who feels that, by his sitting upon the Government, he has brought such a weighty pressure to bear upon them, crushing them down by force, and that similar pressure is brought to bear by other honourable members to do the same thing, to see that it really would be desirable in the interests of the country that the Public Works Department should also be a non-political body, and that the change should be accomplished in the manner I have pointed out.

The House went into Committee of the Whole to consider the message.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

On the question, That the Committee agrees to the recommendation in His Excellency's message,

Sir J. VOGEL asked whether it was proposed to put this Bill into force at once.

Major ATKINSON said it could not come into force until the Government had made the necessary arrangements, which they proposed to set about at once. They would make inquiries in England, in America, and in the colonies for a good man as Chief Commissioner.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Then the Colony of New Zealand will be excluded?

Major ATKINSON.—Not by any means.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The salary proposed is far beyond the scale of salaries paid in New Zealand.

Major ATKINSON.—We do not fix the salary: the resolution says "not exceeding."

Sir J. VOGEL would suggest that in the arrangement with the Commissioners a clause should be inserted providing that if the House should feel inclined to resume the charge of the railways the Commissioners should continue to receive the same salaries, but should act in the capacity of Under-Secretaries under the

Minister. He had been unable to carry an amendment in the Bill to that effect, but he would ask the Premier to take it into consideration.

Major ATKINSON said that in making the arrangement the Government would take that matter into consideration.

Sir G. GREY moved, That between the words "the Committee" and "agrees" the words "does not" be inserted. He was put at a great disadvantage in moving this amendment, because honourable members who would support him were away under the impression that there would be the usual adjournment for luncheon. He hoped the adjournment would be taken.

Major ATKINSON trusted the Committee would not adjourn. The principle of the message had been fully discussed, and honourable members were anxious to bring the business to a conclusion.

Sir G. GREY said the Premier had before promised he would not hurry the business, and he (Sir G. Grey) must protest against this attempt to force the matter through. Only on the previous evening the honourable gentleman had brought down the Midland Railway Bill when no one was expecting it, and had carried a series of resolutions, which were not even put under the proper date in the Order Paper, as they appeared under the date of Wednesday, although the Order Paper on which they appeared was not printed till Thursday. There was a great deal involved in the question before them, and the adjournment ought to be granted. If the Premier would not accede to the request he (Sir G. Grey) would have to speak until honourable members who were absent had returned.

Mr. BROWN moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

#### AYES, 11.

Blake	Grey	Reeves, R. H. J.
Cadman	Joyce	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fitzherbert	Marchant	Brown
Fraser	Parata	Guinness.

#### NOES, 29.

Atkinson	Lawry	Richardson, G.
Beetham	Macarthur	Ross
Buchanan	McGregor	Taipua
Fergus	Mitchelson	Taiwhanga
Fisher	Moat	Vogel
Graham	Monk	Whyte
Hislop	Newman	Wilson.
Izard	O'Connor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Jackson	Peacock	Bruce
Lance	Richardson, E.	Pearson.

Majority against, 18.

Motion negatived.

Sir G. GREY thought it best to keep the salary at the present amount, as passed by both branches of the Legislature. Those honourable members who had gone away believed that no change would be made. It was due to the country, and to those honourable members who had gone away, to see that no change took

place. He believed that if all the members were present this proposal to increase the amount to £2,500 would be refused.

Sir J. VOGEL said he would oppose any increase beyond £2,000; but he was of opinion that the services of a suitable man could be obtained in the colony for less. Our system of railways was very dissimilar to that of Victoria, where, as in Great Britain, the lines were more costly, and converged on one great metropolis. In New Zealand the railways had to be worked from several centres; and the first thing a stranger would have to do would be to learn the local history of the country to enable him to regulate the services throughout the colony. He believed that a fuller House would not be willing to go to a higher amount than the sum he proposed to the Government as a compromise, and in his opinion it should either be £2,000 or remain as it was.

Mr. GUINNESS considered the time was inopportune to reopen this question, when more than half the members of the House were away. The Government had the power in their own hands to make this appointment without increasing the amount now. They could make inquiries in England and America and the other colonies, and, if they found they could not get a suitable man for less than £2,500, they could tell the House next session that they could get a man for that amount, and he had no doubt the House would vote the money.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words 'does not' be inserted."

#### AYES, 14.

Brown	Joyce	Taipua
Cadman	Monk	Vogel.
Fraser	Parata	Tellers.
Gray	Richardson, E.	Fitzherbert
Guinness	Ross	Reeves, R. H. J.

#### NOES, 22.

Atkinson	Jackson	Richardson, G.
Bruce	Lance	Taiwhanga
Buchanan	Lawry	Whyte
Fergus	Macarthur	Wilson.
Fisher	Mitchelson	
Graham	O'Connor	Tellers.
Hislop	Peacock	Beetham
Izard	Pearson	McGregor.

#### Majority against, 8.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES moved, That the words "two thousand five hundred pounds" be struck out, and "one thousand seven hundred and fifty pounds" be inserted.

Sir G. GREY hoped the House would accept that reduction. He thought it was entirely wrong, after a majority of the House had decided on a certain sum, to suddenly increase that sum, in the circumstances that now existed. This had been a session of reduction of expenditure, and he thought it would appear incredible to honourable gentlemen who had gone away to find that as soon as they were gone, after coming to a decision, that decision was reversed. Now that the

majority of honourable members had gone, this increase of expenditure certainly ought not to be forced on the country. He hoped the House would insist on this reduction at least.

Mr. ROSS said, having, by his vote against the increase of the salary proposed to be paid to the Chief Commissioner of Railways from £1,500 to £2,500 per annum, recorded his opinion that any deviation from the amount fixed by the House when a large number of members were present ought not to be made, he would not offer any further opposition to the proposal, but would leave the matter to be dealt with in the discretion of the Government.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES said his desire in moving this was to show the inconsistency of the Government and of the honourable members who were supporting them in this proposal. A number of honourable gentlemen who, a short time ago, deliberately voted that the salary should not exceed £1,500, now, owing to outside pressure being brought to bear—and honourable members had seen inspired articles on the subject every morning for some days—were prepared to vote for £2,500. The Government were trying to make this important change by nothing else than a sidewind. It was most unfair to introduce such a proposal behind the backs of the majority of honourable members. He did not say it was done in an unprincipled manner, but it would be thought so outside, and the public would condemn the action of the House.

Mr. MOSS moved, That the amount be £1,525. He did not think the amount ought to be raised. He thought the decision should be put off till honourable members returned—those who had gone away at one o'clock. It should have been brought on only when all the members available could be present.

Major ATKINSON said the decision could have been come to before any honourable members left but for the obstruction.

Sir G. GREY said the Premier was not justified in saying there had been obstruction. Any obstruction there had been had been on the honourable gentleman's own part in requiring honourable members, most improperly, to vote this whole amount at once, though he knew a number of honourable members had left the House. The honourable gentleman had availed himself of that to do an improper thing; and very improper things had been done in a similar manner on the previous evening. If there was any obstruction the Premier himself was the cause of the obstruction. He moved, That progress be reported, and leave asked to sit again.

The Committee divided on the question, "That progress be reported."

#### AYES, 12.

Brown	Kelly	Withy.
Cadman	Parata	Tellers.
Grey	Reeves, R. H. J.	Fraser
Guinness	Taipua	Moss.
Joyce		

## NOES, 23.

Atkinson	Hislop	Richardson, E.
Beetham	Lance	Richardson, G.
Bruce	Lawry	Taiwhanga
Buchanan	McGregor	Vogel
Carroll	Mitchelson	Wilson.
Fergus	O'Connor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fisher	Peacock	Jackson
Graham	Pearson	Whyte.

Majority against, 11.

Motion negatived.

The Committee divided on the question,  
 "That the words 'two thousand five hundred' stand part of the clause."

## AYES, 22.

Atkinson	Jackson	Taiwhanga
Beetham	Lance	Whyte
Buchanan	Lawry	Wilson
Carroll	McGregor	Withy.
Fergus	Mitchelson	
Fisher	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	Pearson	Bruce
Hislop	Richardson, G.	O'Connor.

## NOES, 13.

Brown	Joyce	Vogel.
Cadman	Kelly	
Fraser	Monk	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grey	Parata	Moss
Guinness	Richardson, E.	Reeves, R. H. J.

Majority for, 9.

Amendment negatived.

The Committee divided on the question,  
 "That the motion be agreed to."

## AYES, 22.

Atkinson	Kelly	Richardson, G.
Bruce	Lance	Taiwhanga
Buchanan	Lawry	Whyte
Carroll	Mitchelson	Wilson.
Fisher	O'Connor	
Graham	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Pearson	McGregor
Jackson	Richardson, E.	Withy.

## NOES, 10.

Brown	Monk	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	Moss	Cadman
Grey	Parata	Joyce.
Guinness	Ross.	

Majority for, 12.

Resolution reported to the House.

On the question, That the resolution be agreed to,

Colonel FRASER said,—I was astonished at the proceeding of the Government in this matter in the former part of the day: I am now perfectly amazed. Where is all the talk of retrenchment we heard blazoned about by them and their party in the previous part of this session? They commenced by taking off a few hundred pounds, bit by bit, from one end of the rope; and now at this moment, when the session is at an end, they add thousands of pounds to the other. The House, by a large majority, when a large number of honourable members were present, fixed this salary at £1,500; and

now, when all those honourable gentlemen have gone to their homes, this is brought down as a matter of surprise, and, in a House of thirty-two, a motion is carried increasing the salary from £1,500 to £2,500! I think the proceeding is most unconstitutional. There is no endeavour to do what is right here now, and I therefore satisfy myself with entering my solemn protest against the proceeding.

Mr. MOSS.—I should like to say that I shall not vote any further upon the question. I do not wish to waste time, but I must express my regret that the House has been forced—that it should have been surprised—into an action of this kind.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—It was announced yesterday in the House.

Mr. MOSS.—A number of honourable members thought it was safe to use the hour between one and two o'clock, which is always the hour of adjournment, in order to prepare for their departure at seven o'clock to-morrow morning. I know that several honourable members left the House under that impression. I, for one, left it, and certainly should not have gone had I the least idea there was to be this variation in our invariable proceedings, and that a measure of this importance was to be forced on during the usual hour of adjournment. That was the reason why I was not here to vote against the proposal on the first division, and I wish to place that reason upon record. I returned to the House just a little too late for the first division, and other honourable gentlemen returned in the same position with me.

Mr. TAIWHANGA.—If those honourable members had something to do in the House, what did they go away for? I knew I had something to do in the House—those three Native Bills. Although the Government promised that nothing should be done yesterday, I would not believe them. I stuck to the House till the last moment. I hope there will be no more divisions and waste of time, as our time is nearly up. I say it is childish to divide again and again. I think it is a shameful waste of time when the Parliament is nearly over.

Mr. LAWRY.—I should like, briefly, to say that I was as desirous as any member of this House to see economical administration by the Government; but I have heard honourable members outside the House declare over and over again that this Railway Board is to be a failure, and I say in this particular thing we should throw the whole of the responsibility upon the Government. Allow them to appoint Commissioners without let or hindrance, and then, in the event of a failure, we shall have some excuse for saying that the responsibility rests wholly with the Government.

Mr. CADMAN.—Now that it is decided by the House that the salaries shall be increased largely, there is one thing the Ministry ought to look to in these Commissioners. I think it is likely the time will come when pressure will be brought upon the House to repeal the Bill, and I would suggest to the Government that

an arrangement should be made with the Commissioners so that the colony will not be heavily mulcted by having to pay these Commissioners large salaries for the four or five years for which they are appointed, in the event of the Bill being repealed. I think that, in the negotiations with the Commissioners, some provision should be made whereby, if the Bill is repealed, we should not have to pay them for four or five years after their services are dispensed with.

Motion agreed to.

#### AUSTRALASIAN NAVAL DEFENCE BILL.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, it is a matter of very great regret on the part of the Government that this very important Bill has, through force of circumstances, been delayed to the last day of the session; but, although the Bill itself is delayed, no doubt honourable members have given the matter very careful consideration. At this period of the session, and with very few hours before us before we conclude our labours, I cannot go so fully into the matter as I should like to do, and as the importance of the subject would not only have justified, but perhaps demanded. Still, I think that I shall be able, in the short statement I shall make, to convince honourable members that the proposal of the Government, in asking the House to read this Bill a second time, is reasonable; and it is one which I hope the House will agree to with something like unanimity. This measure appears to me to be the first real step in uniting us in closer bonds with the Old Country. I do not propose to say as much upon this subject as I could have liked; but it seems to inevitably lead to what many of us most sincerely desire—a much closer bond of unity than at present binds us together. To my mind, it is impossible that the present relations between the colony and the Home Government can continue for a great number of years. They must inevitably either weaken or strengthen; we shall have to draw closer, or we shall have gradually to separate from the Old Country, and that, I believe, would be a matter of great regret, not only to the inhabitants of this colony but to the Mother-country herself; and, in my opinion, it would be a great misfortune to the world that the British Empire should unfortunately be dismembered by her colonies separating themselves from her. What I have felt for many years, and what I have expressed in this House before, is that the first real and practical step to draw us together, and really awaken the people at Home to the position of the colony, is to impress upon those people the importance of the connection; for, I take it, the great difficulty in promoting a closer union is not with the colonists themselves, but with the people of the Home-country. If we now, by consenting to this Bill, agree to contribute to the defence of the Empire a reasonable proportion of the expense, it will follow inevitably that after a certain time the people of England will wake up to the fact that we are a part of the Empire; and as soon as that fact has really

been recognised, and we contribute a substantial proportion of the expense of the fleet in these seas, then the question will be asked, "Is it reasonable, is it right, that these people should contribute without having a direct voice in the question of peace or war of the Empire?" This seems to me to follow inevitably; and therefore for many years past I have been favourable to a fair contribution to the cost of the navy, looking forward to the time when this contribution will be recognised by the people and Parliament of England as necessitating the drawing of our connection closer than it is at the present time. Now, some people say, "Well, why should we contribute? England decides questions of peace or war. She is mixed up with European States, and probably her quarrel will be on European questions." Many answers might be given to this argument; but I do not propose to go into the whole question. The first question to ask is, Do we desire to remain connected with England? I think we may take this for granted, for I cannot go into the matter at great length at the present time, although I think I could successfully show that it is greatly to the advantage of the colonies themselves, of England, and of the world in general, that the colonies should remain united with England. However, I am going to take this for granted. If, then, we assume that we are part of the Empire, then I think we may very fairly ask ourselves, is it not right that we, citizens of the Empire, well-to-do citizens, as must be admitted on all hands, and better able to bear taxation than the large number of taxpayers of the Old Country—should contribute a reasonable proportion to our own defence in these seas? It may be said that it would be better for each colony to have its own fleet. That is a question which was discussed by the representatives in the Conference of 1883; but I think all thinking men will dismiss that as an impossibility—as a proposition that must inevitably turn out to be a failure. If each of the colonies were to get a ship or two of its own, we should soon be in a difficult position. There would be no authority; the ships would be unable to meet, they would be unable to combine; and we should get into this position: that our officers and men would not be up to the mark when a war suddenly broke out. There would be no promotion. That is a difficulty in all young services. That is got over by this Bill. The proposition is that there should be practically a part of the Imperial fleet here, which we should pay for. Now, I should like here, perhaps, to inform the House what the proposition is. It is proposed that there should be seven ships of a particular class paid for by these colonies. They are of a class estimated to be the best possible class for the work to be performed here. They are to be ships of about sixteen hundred tons displacement, and will steam about seventeen knots; and there are to be two torpedo boats, to steam nineteen knots. It is proposed to place three of the ships and one torpedo boat in commission during peace.

Now, the total estimated cost of this fleet, building, fitting out, *et cetera*, is estimated to be £700,000; and it is proposed, and was agreed to by the representatives at the Conference, subject to the approval of Parliament, that the Imperial Government should find the money to build the ships, and that the colonies should pay for ten years 5 per cent. on that amount. The colonies are also to pay for the cost of the establishment of the four ships which are to remain in commission during peace. The colonies are to pay the whole cost of the crews of these ships, and it is agreed that the cost shall not exceed £91,000; so that the total contribution of the colonies is to be £126,000. Then, in the event of a war the remaining ships are to be immediately sent out, and are to remain always ready. They are to be sent out at the cost of the Imperial Government. In the event of loss in war or by wreck the Imperial Government are to bear the entire cost of new ships; and, if the annual cost of the fleet should be less than £91,000 per annum, then the colonies are to have the benefit of it: so that we know the total amount we are liable to pay. It may be said that this is too much for the colonies to contribute; but I think, when honourable gentlemen bear the fact in mind that the Imperial Government at present maintains its fleet in these seas at a cost to the Old Country of £240,000 per annum, they will see that our contribution is not an unreasonable amount. We are to pay for the peace establishment £126,000. There are, in the event of war, to be three other ships commissioned at the cost of the Imperial Government, and the cost of the present fleet is £240,000. Looking at the position of the colonies, bearing in mind the great interest we have in the trade as well as the Home Government, I think it will be admitted that the proportion of payment by the colonial Governments is not unreasonable or unfair. In fact, to my mind, it is a very fair and liberal offer on the part of the Imperial authorities. Further, by the late Government, and upon the authority of the late Government through their representatives at the Conference, it was agreed that two ships should always remain in New Zealand waters. There is some little doubt whether this includes Fiji; but I do not think it is a matter of much importance, and this will go on the other side of the account. I think it was very right and reasonable to ask the Imperial Government to have two ships in these waters; but, still, I feel rather ashamed at making this matter one of pounds, shillings, and pence. We are therefore always to have two ships stationed in these waters. That will be a considerable direct gain as against the cost of maintenance of these vessels, and the annual expenditure upon them is a very considerable sum. The maintenance of the ships in these waters will amount annually to £126,000; and if we have two ships of that class on the station—and no doubt they will be here most of the time—honourable members will see that we get a very direct benefit paid back in supplying these ships with coal and food. I only

*Major Atkinson*

put that as part of the case, because these are times when every pound of money is of importance to us; but I know there are honourable gentlemen who think our first duty is economy, and therefore I put it to those honourable gentlemen that there is another side of the matter, and that we shall annually receive a very large amount of this back directly by the employment of our people in supplying coal, food, and other things. Then, two naval cadet-ships are to be offered to New Zealand. It is very desirable that our young men should be allowed fair openings both in the army and navy, if they desire that sort of service. The reason why, at this late period of the session, the Government have brought this down, or, rather, I should say, one of the reasons why, although so late in the session, I am asking the House to agree to this Bill is this: that it would take two years to build these ships; that the Imperial Government have framed the estimates to be laid before Parliament, which is to meet in February; and that, therefore, if we delayed this until next session, the delay in the commencement of the building of the fleet would be twelve months from the present time, and, as it would take two years to build these ships, it is very desirable that no time should be lost. It is not taking the House in any way by surprise. This matter has been very carefully considered by the late Government, who agreed to it. All the papers have been before the House, and the country is well acquainted with the proposals of the Conference, so that we are not hurrying on this unduly, and, in asking the House to deal with it this session, are only asking the House to do what is prudent and reasonable, in order not to delay the building of these ships any longer than possible. The contribution we are to pay is upon the basis of the population of the colonies, and our contribution will be in accordance with our proportion to the whole population of the various colonies. I have had a return prepared according to the estimates of the Registrar-General, which shows the contributions of the various colonies under this agreement. [Extract read.] I may say the New Zealand Government originally, apparently, proposed that our minimum contribution should be £21,000; but they afterwards agreed to raise it a small amount, if the contribution was determined on the population basis. It seems to me that the population basis is the right one. It was proposed to consider tonnage, shipping, and trade; but that would be too complicated, and I think would have told upon us.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Is it European population?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes, European population. The other Australian Colonies agreed that the basis should be population, and so we have proposed that in our Bill. There is one question my honourable friend the member for Christchurch North drew my attention to. Supposing some of the colonies which had signed the agreement did not see their way to ratify the agreement made by the delegates: the question then was, Are the remaining colo-

mies to be liable for the amount in default? I think they should not be liable. I therefore propose to introduce a clause to the effect that our contribution is only to be upon the basis that all the colonies contribute; and, if the Imperial Government is prepared to carry out the understanding with four or five instead of all the colonies, the Imperial Government should make up the difference. Now, with regard to the question of our land-defences, that subject is intimately connected with this, and I am not going to throw any blame upon the late Government. I approved of what they did under the circumstances in which they were placed—that is, that they proceeded with the defence of the four principal ports; but it is undoubtedly a matter for our consideration whether it is advisable to continue to fortify and defend those four ports. I do not say it is so; but the Government are going to take that into careful consideration—that is to say, to make one port as secure as possible, so as to have a harbour of refuge for the ships to refit in, and coal; and I doubt whether we shall not find it—looking at the great cost of maintaining these four distinct ports—a more economical and wiser course to concentrate our attention upon one port in order to make it tolerably safe. If that is determined upon, after very careful consultation with the Imperial authorities, then we shall consider which of the ports it would be best to make safe, in the interests of the general defence of the colony. But it is quite clear that, if we are to maintain these ships and get advantage from them, if they are to be about here in time of war and be really serviceable to us, we must have some port in which they can take refuge after action, or come in to refit and to coal. That is absolutely necessary. I do not wish to evade this question of defence, and therefore I thought it my duty to point out to the House what was in the mind of the Government on the subject. I agree with those who think our main defence must be by ships. We cannot possibly defend ourselves from land, our coasts are too extended; and for external defence we shall therefore have to look to the Imperial authorities. But we do know that some time ago, at the period of the last Russian scare, the Russians had made arrangements not against New Zealand, but to make a raid on Australia, and in the circumstances it appeared very likely that it might be successful. Of course that is now impossible, since those places have been fortified; it would be absolutely impossible at the present time on their then plans. But I wish to impress on the House that we must have at least one of our ports thoroughly defended, so that in it the Imperial war-ships will be always secure of being able to coal, take refuge, and refit. Sir, I do not think I need say more now. The subject is an exceedingly tempting one, and if there were time I should like to enlarge on all these points; but as it is, I will simply say, in conclusion, that I do hope the House will see its way to assent to this Bill. It seems to me, as I said at the beginning, that the passing of this Bill would be the

first real step to drawing the bonds of union between the Mother-country and the colonies tighter. We cannot see that at the present time; we only see the money going out; but we do see that we get a fair equivalent for our money, because I suppose there are very few who would say that it is not our duty to protect ourselves to a reasonable extent by providing for outside defence for our commerce in conjunction with the Imperial Government in something like a fair proportion to the shipping we own and they own. I think there are very few in New Zealand who would not agree to that. I think if we do this it will be strongly felt, after a short time, that we are contributing taxation without representation. To my mind, that is of great importance; and I think, when that is recognised, men's minds will turn to the necessity of considering how it is possible we can get representation, and then I think it will be a very small step to the finding of means by which we shall have a controlling voice in this great question affecting us. It is impossible, to my mind, to escape the consequence of that. We are not a sovereign country ourselves, and it is impossible for a colony like this to be made so insignificant as to be allowed to remain neutral. I do not believe in the possibility of that at all. The whole tendency of all the nations of the earth is to draw together to form large nations; and if the English people are to remain, as I hope and believe they will remain, a very great power in the world, if not the predominating power, I say that, while we have an opportunity of laying the first stone of the edifice, of taking the first step towards drawing the bonds between the different parts of the Empire tighter, we should seize that opportunity. If we are not prepared to accept it the opportunity will pass away, and it may not recur; and then there may come to be possible what, to my mind, would be a terrible disaster—that is, the severance of the colonies, and the sinking in the scale of nations of that great nation of which we are all so proud.

Sir J. VOGEL. — I support this Bill; but I think the grounds on which the Premier primarily supports it are very much to be regretted. I share with the honourable member a desire to see the dominions of Great Britain federated, but I am unable to see that this Bill is likely to promote that end. I fear not. This is not a sudden desire on my part; it is an object for which I have worked many years. It is seventeen years since I first took up the question and published a long letter in the *Standard* in London; and since then I have continually read, written, and reflected on the subject of promoting the federation of the Empire of Great Britain. But, although I am able to recognise that a great deal has been done in the way of bringing the colonies and the Mother-country more into harmony with each other, yet I do not think a genuine approach has been made to anything in the shape of a substantial federation of the dominions of the Crown. On the contrary, I think the impulse is rather to federate different groups of the

colonies; and, in my opinion, the federation of these several groups will not lead towards federation of the whole Empire. When I went to England in 1870, at the time I first took up the subject publicly, the feeling was strong on the part of the Liberal party in Great Britain that the colonies were more likely to be a source of weakness to the Empire than of strength. The Goldwin Smith theories, in fact, were predominant. I remember that at the time there was a Bill being passed through the Imperial Parliament to give trustees the power of investing trust funds in British railway-stock; and, when I appealed to a Cabinet Minister to allow colonial Government bonds as a permissible investment, the reply he made was this: "How can you suppose that trustees in England will invest in colonial securities? I have resided a great part of my life in Russia, and do you think I would not prefer Russian to colonial bonds?" Well, Sir, time has worked out that problem, and we now know what colonial bonds are worth and what Russian bonds are worth! The first great step towards effecting a nearer connection between the Mother-country and the colonies was taken when Lord Beaconsfield—then Mr. Disraeli—at a great meeting of the Conservative party at the Crystal Palace, announced as one of the tenets of the party that no Minister of the Crown who had the welfare of the country at heart could be unmindful of the necessity of drawing into bonds of closer union the widespread dominions of the Crown. A great change took place after that, undoubtedly, and the Goldwin Smith theories are now scouted. But, while a conspicuous amount of attention has been shown to the colonies during the last two or three years, it seems to me that a line has been drawn. Some endeavours have been exerted to make the colonies more useful to the Mother-country, and to bring them into better terms; but a strong line has been drawn against their association into one federation. I ask myself, if there was a desire to associate the colonies and the Mother-country into a federation, why was that subject particularly and especially barred at the late Conference? That was the case; it was specially barred; it was specially prevented from being considered. I am of opinion—and I think most honourable members will be inclined to agree with me—that if there had been a disposition to federate the Empire the weak spot in Mr. Gladstone's proposal to establish Home Rule in Ireland would have been disposed of. I do not say it as regards all the so-called Unionists; but at any rate with that section of them following Mr. Chamberlain the objection was that the proposed Home Rule scheme shut out the Irish people from adequate representation in the Imperial Parliament, and it was an admitted fact that, whilst Home Rule was to be given to Ireland, Ireland was still to contribute to the Imperial revenues, and yet was not to have the same share in the control of Imperial affairs that she has now. Now, had the view been taken that it was desirable to establish a federal Parliament, that objection would have been sur-

mounted, and there would not have been that break-up of the Liberal party that there was. I may be wrong, but it appears to me that it will not be long before an opportunity will occur of testing the real feeling which exists. I do not think the Mother-country is far from the adoption of a system of a more or less protective character; and when that comes about, whether it is called protection or fair trade, or whatever name it may go under, it will be seen whether the feeling in the Mother-country towards the colonies is strong enough to cause a preference to be given to the colonies over foreign countries. We know that France and other countries show such a preference towards their colonies, besides that in other countries the colonies are represented in the central Legislature. There is no such system as ours anywhere but in our Empire; and the time will come—in my opinion it will not be very long hence—when the specific question will arise in England whether a larger duty shall be charged on foreign than on colonial produce. When that question is answered we shall know what is the disposition towards federating the Empire. I do not agree with the Premier that a contribution of the kind we are now asked to make will lead to federation. And why? I will say, shortly, it is because it is folly, both in public affairs and in private affairs, to give all your concessions away in the expectation that other concessions will be given in return. Why, the step that was taken in reducing the duty on Australian wines in this colony, in my opinion, has shut out for years and years the possibility of making favourable reciprocal arrangements. When the reduction was made the other colonies hardly said, "Thank you." Instead of making the reduction the basis of negotiations, it was apparently a concession made without any return whatever. And, truly, I am afraid it will be the same here with the proposed contribution to the cost of the naval forces of the Empire. The late Conference was forbidden to go into the question of Federation. It was allowed to go so far as to consider the question of joint contribution to the cost of naval defence, and no further, as the official papers show. Now I will say why I deeply regret the remarks the Premier has made. He discards altogether the principles on which the late Government consented to make this contribution. He has placed in the first, in fact, in the principal position the question of contributing towards the cost of the naval defence of the Empire, and says that he looks on it as a comparatively unimportant condition whether we are to have two ships stationed here. Now, the attitude taken up by the late Government was this: They found that, in what they had regarded as a mere friendly parley with the Admiral on the station when he happened to be here, he was really acting from well-considered instructions from Home, and that the object was not merely the providing, more or less temporarily, for sudden emergencies, but that he was acting on a deep-seated principle to endeavour to make the Australasian Colonies responsible for

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a portion of the cost of the defence of the Empire. And the view the late Government took was that, while they would be quite willing to entertain any proposal for a contribution by the colonies towards the defence of the Empire, they would not be willing that the Australasian group should be singled out for the purpose, but that it should be a policy and an arrangement common to all the colonies of the Empire. As a compromise they intimated they were willing to make an arrangement by which this colony would be made the naval station for at least two ships, but they were not willing to come into an undertaking to contribute towards the defence of the Empire generally unless all the Crown colonies and all the constitutional colonies were drawn into a like arrangement. I regret that the honourable gentleman has adopted a different tone, because I am convinced that he does not represent New-Zealand feeling in doing so. If I had more time I would read an extract from the memoranda which passed upon the subject; but I do not wish to speak at greater length than necessary. Therefore I simply say that the late Government kept, throughout the negotiations, to the point of their being willing to pay for making this colony the station for two vessels, but not being willing to enter into an arrangement which would not comprehend the whole Empire. It is necessary to say a few words as to the reasons which have led to the recognition of the necessity of increasing the naval forces on the Australasian station. It is because the Imperial Government have disregarded the advice given to them by the honourable member for Auckland Central many years ago, and, later, by various Governors, Governments, and public men, that powerful and conflicting interests have been allowed to grow up in the Pacific, and to come into competition with Australian and Imperial interests. And now, when the Imperial Government have become awake to the fact that the Australasian fleet is insufficient not for the defence of the Australasian Colonies, but insufficient for the defence of those colonies when considered in connection with the larger responsibilities forced upon the Imperial Government by reason of the new aspects and features which present themselves throughout the Pacific, they ask the colonies to become responsible. How far this measure lays down any such principle I am unable to say; but, in my opinion, the only thing which justifies our adopting the Act is that the colony is willing to make a certain contribution for a term of years on account of two vessels being stationed in the waters of the colony. The late Government expressly stated that they took exception to the fact that, while Admiral Tryon admitted that the defence of the Australian Colonies was insufficient, yet, instead of making that defence sufficient, as the Imperial Government were bound to do, they entered into the question of what monetary bargain they could make with the colonies. I hope the honourable gentleman will appreciate the exact point I raise. I think that all parts of the Empire—India,

Canada, and the Crown colonies, as well as the constitutional colonies—should contribute to the cost of the naval defence of the Empire, but that it is unfair that this portion of Her Majesty's dominions should be singled out for contribution—that the constitutional colonies in Australasia should be called on to pay when nothing is paid in respect of Fiji and other possessions, questions in connection with which form one of the prominent causes requiring the presence of a large fleet in these waters. I shall now come to the question of the Conference, and, first of all, may express regret that the Government has not laid upon the table the papers relating to the subject.

Major ATKINSON.—I think they are all laid on the table.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I have looked over my papers and I have not seen them: at any rate, they have not been distributed in printed form amongst honourable members. I should like to notice one point in connection with this matter at the outset. The honourable gentleman, in reply to a question put at an earlier period of the session, as to whether the gentlemen who represented New Zealand had made any report, replied in the negative. I think that the real fact of the matter was this: that, with a view of having something like a unanimous report, care was taken to send out a voluminous account of what took place at the Conference—of everything, in fact, short of allowing the publication of confidential particulars regarding the condition of Her Majesty's navy; and therefore the gentlemen who represented New Zealand, being parties to this report, satisfied all that could be asked of them in the way of giving full information to the colony of the proceedings of the Conference. And now, Sir, I wish to say a few words with regard to the action of the gentlemen who represented New Zealand. I may remark that the Premier omitted all reference to them in his speech, arising, perhaps, from the circumstance that he laid so little stress upon that particular point in the proceedings to which I am about to refer, and which, to me, seems to most signally merit the gratitude of the colony. When we agreed that our representatives should appear for us, it was on the distinct understanding that they would not assent to any arrangements under which Australasia would be called upon to contribute towards the cost of the Imperial fleet unless there was a specific provision that two vessels were to be located on the New Zealand coast; and I have to state that I think it due to the gentlemen who represented us—Sir F. Dillon Bell and Sir William Fitzherbert—to say that they showed great ability and very great skill in reconciling the other colonies to this condition being granted solely to New Zealand. I must confess that I was amazed they were able to do so; for, although we constantly insisted on this point, we received no sympathy worth mentioning from Admiral Tryon, and I had little hope that our representatives would be successful in carrying it. That they did so, and did it so well that we had several of the

other colonies very generously supporting the proposal instead of opposing it, is a proof of the admirable manner in which our representatives discharged their duty. I may add, from information I have received from our representatives, that several of the other colonies vied with each other in generously supporting the proposition, to which we might not unnaturally have expected their opposition. I mention this because I consider that the Commissioners who represented us at the Conference are entitled to be specially thanked for their services, both as regards the special point to which I have alluded and generally. We had only received intimation of the completion of the Conference just at the time when the Government were resigning, and we had not the opportunity of thanking our representatives; but I think it is a matter which devolves on the present Government, and I hope that it is only necessary for me to call attention to the matter to induce the Government to look into it and consider it. I should further observe this: that, although one gentleman who acted as a Commissioner for New Zealand went Home for the purpose of taking a holiday, instead of taking that holiday he devoted himself to the work of the Conference; and I have no doubt he was put to much additional expense, and that, having to return as he did at so short a notice, he did not have that time at his disposal it was his intention to have when he left New Zealand. And I think it would be a graceful act on the part of the Government to ascertain what additional expense that gentleman was put to and what loss he sustained, and to reimburse him accordingly. I shall now come to the point of the Bill itself. I am not satisfied with the way in which the Bill is drawn. I know that the Government have had some difficulty, because the Home Government wished the agreement to be embodied in a schedule to the Bill; yet the late Government laid particular stress, in fact, insisted, on this point: that the colony should not be responsible for the withdrawal of other colonies. But, as the Bill is now worded, its effect is to make it responsible. And I do hope—although I find it difficult to get the Government to listen to suggestions coming from me—that they will allow amendments to be made in clause 3 which will remove all doubt on the subject. The agreement is with a certain number of colonies—New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, New Zealand, Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia—and the proportion is only to be voted in the case of the others all agreeing to it. But the 3rd clause says,—

“In each of the ten years during which the said agreement shall be in force there shall be issued and paid to Her Majesty, out of the Consolidated Fund, for the purpose of the said agreement, a sum bearing the same proportion to the total amount payable under Article VII. of the said agreement as the population of New Zealand bears to the total population of the Australasian Colonies whose Governments are parties to the said agreement.”

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This will let in, in my opinion, only those Governments whose Parliaments ratify the agreement; for it is not sufficient for a Government to say that it is favourable: it requires to be ratified by Parliament; and we know that in one case—that of Queensland—the Parliament has refused to ratify the agreement. Now, Sir, I would ask the honourable gentleman—

Major ATKINSON.—Perhaps the honourable gentleman did not hear me state that I intend to propose an amendment in this direction, and that I have a clause ready which will make it perfectly clear.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I am obliged to the honourable gentleman. I am sorry I did not hear it. I am glad that will be the case. Then, I think we should adopt the Act as amended, but with this further point made clear. I have no doubt that when the honourable gentleman communicates the decision to the Imperial Government he will say something upon the question of the size of the vessels. I am not sure, under the agreement as it stands, whether the letter of the agreement would not be met by appointing small vessels here—two vessels as small as the one which lately visited here, perhaps smaller. But that is not the meaning of the clause; and I have no doubt that the honourable gentleman will think it desirable to point out that what is meant is that there should be placed in these waters two vessels of suitable character and tonnage. I have only to say, in conclusion, that, while I share with the honourable gentleman the hope that this measure will lead to federation—which, I agree with him, will be to the benefit not only of the Empire, but of the world in general—yet I fail to see any practical steps being taken in that direction; whilst, year after year, as these colonies improve in size and resources, they will be less inclined to abandon the independence which they now enjoy, and which undoubtedly, to a certain extent, they would have to abandon if they agreed to come into a common federation. Whilst the feeling towards the colonies is certainly becoming more favourable than it formerly was, yet the colonies have grown and are growing so rapidly that the difficulty will perhaps consist not of the Mother-country being reluctant to draw more closely the bonds of union between herself and her colonies, but of the colonies being unwilling to enter into an irrevocable federation: and unless it is irrevocable it is merely a passing agreement. However, Sir, perhaps neither the honourable member nor myself will live to know whose prophecy is correct. I will conclude by expressing the hope that this Bill will be passed as unanimously as possible.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—Both the leader of the House and the leader of the Opposition have agreed in describing this measure as a most important one, and surely it would be impossible to exaggerate the importance of it; but that is only, to my mind, an argument against proceeding with the measure at this stage of the session. It is not in any sense complimentary either to the Parliament of New Zealand or

to the Parliament of Great Britain that we should hurry over the consideration of this great measure. The subject is one which must affect the destinies of the colony in almost every conceivable way. Two-thirds of the members of this House have already left.

Major ATKINSON.—They have all paired one way or the other.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—I do not know that the mere pairing is in any sense in point. The fact of honourable members having paired is hardly a good reason for going on with the Bill, if this is in any sense a deliberative Assembly. If this is a mechanical House, to be worked by party or by private or concealed arrangement, then this pairing may be a very good answer to my objection; but if this House is, as an Assembly ought to be, a deliberative body, and one in which arguments are with care to be submitted and with care to be considered, then the Premier's rejoinder is no answer whatever to my objection that this is not a fitting time for this great measure to be passed. I say that two-thirds of the members have left without having considered this Bill; there is barely a quorum present here to-day to discuss this national question, and within a few hours it is desired to pass it into law. Of course the Premier deprecates discussion; but in doing so he pays no compliment whatever to this House. To pass this measure now would be to commit the colony to a very grave position, and I submit that it would be no mark of respect to Great Britain that we should lay at the foot of the Throne any tribute such as this, wrung from an exhausted minority. I have computed that from this time on Monday last the members of this House who have been attending to their duty as members of the House and to their duty as members of Committees have had, out of seventy-two hours, only some twelve hours to restore their exhausted energies by sleep. That means, Sir, that we have been working at high-pressure for the last three or four days; and you have only to look round this House to see honourable members trying to snatch sleep while attending to their duties. And it is under these circumstances that we are asked to pass a measure which will mould the destinies of this colony for many years to come. This reminds one almost irresistibly of the passage in English history which is recorded by Kinglake—how in June, 1854, the Duke of Newcastle went down to Richmond, and at Pembroke Lodge had a meeting of the Cabinet, at which he submitted the despatch that committed England to the Crimean war. The historian describes that it was evening, a summer evening, and the Duke began to read his despatch amid the nodding heads of his colleagues, who had—somewhat like the experience of honourable members here—been going through nights of wakeful hours in the session of Parliament which was then sitting; and the legend runs that the members of the Cabinet were soon lulled to sleep, and gave assent without hearing or, at any rate, appreciating the gravity of the despatch. He

records how, for a moment, the tumbling of a chair interrupted the reading. Here there is no such sound, unless it be that of honourable members audibly addressing themselves to sleep. The result of that despatch was to make history, one might say, to be almost written in blood for the next three years. No such consequence, it is to be hoped, will follow the passing of this measure, if it do pass; but, nevertheless, it must have a very serious effect upon the future of this colony. The Premier has given us details of the expenditure to which this Bill will commit New Zealand. The whole amount being, among the colonies, £126,000, our proportion will be about £21,000, and for that we are to get seven more vessels to the present squadron, which includes only one second-class armour-clad vessel, the others being mere sloops such as we have seen lately here; and there is the special provision, which the Premier referred to almost with an apology, that two of the vessels should lie, when not commissioned, in some one of the ports of New Zealand. But that is really no inducement whatever to reconcile us to this measure; it is a mere bagatelle. What does this Bill mean to us—the passing of this measure? The Premier has candidly admitted that we must at least fortify one port as a harbour of refuge into which these men-of-war may run. That, as it seems to me, means that the colony—for the purposes of this squadron—must incur an annual expense of a considerable amount beyond what, in ordinary circumstances, she would require to garrison the ports already partially fortified, if only for the purpose of preventing the ordnance and stores that are there from becoming deteriorated. That means a great deal, and it seems to me that it is to subordinate New Zealand to the fleet, instead of subordinating the fleet to New Zealand. Now, the Premier has, in his confident way, explained the necessity for some provision such as is indicated in the Bill. He has, curiously enough, asked us to unite with him in laying the first stone, which stone, Sir, is for the purpose of drawing closer the bonds—however that may be—which unite us with the Mother-country. It is a simile which fitly indicates the measure—it is a stone to draw closer the bonds that unite us with the Mother-country. But I have never known any stone which would have any such effect.

Major ATKINSON.—I did not use the word "stone."

Mr. HUTCHISON.—I took the words down. Sir, he invited us to unite in laying the first stone for the purpose of drawing closer the bonds that unite us with the Mother-country. It was a very curious but, as I think, a very apt illustration indeed. The Premier, inferentially, somewhat deprecated members of this House, who are inexperienced, discussing the details of this great scheme, and to that extent he perhaps seeks to awe the House with his military title. Although it is no disparagement to the gallant Premier that he won his spurs as a "bushranger,"—I have often thought the term was a very equivocal one,

but that is what I understand he was called, and there were corps other than the Taranaki Bushrangers which went under a similar designation,—although the gallant Premier may thus have an amplitude of military knowledge, still I believe it to be the duty of members of this House, according to their lights, to endeavour to obtain information bearing on any subject that comes before them, and, on their own responsibility, to endeavour to form an opinion upon it. On these lines, I should ask the assistance of the Admiral who lately commanded on the Australasian station—Admiral Tryon—to show that it is not enough, if we commit ourselves to this scheme, that we should fortify one port. It is necessary, according to the Admiral, that we should be equipped at all points to resist an attacking squadron. I would refer honourable members to the memorandum of Admiral Tryon, dated the 27th March, 1885, to be found in the Appendices to the Journals of last session, Vol. I., A.-6, page 15, where, referring to a hostile squadron approaching the coast, he says,—

“To render an attack from the first-named futile, and, if possible, to render the task so improbable of success that no one would contemplate the undertaking, a local defence is called into existence; but, while it was not very costly to protect our homes, they do not, and they could not, help to drive off cruisers such as could prey upon us. We must therefore provide the means whereby they may be captured, if possible; if not, at all events driven off our coast.”

That is the conclusion of the Admiral in discussing the question out of which this Bill has arisen; so that it is not enough that one port should be fortified for the purpose of repelling these vessels, but, according to the Admiral, the whole of the colony should be placed in a position of efficient defence. It is quite easy for Victoria, with its single port; it is easy for New South Wales with its two ports, Newcastle and Port Jackson; and it is easy for Tasmania, with her one or two ports, to defend themselves without very great expense; but what is the position of New Zealand, an isolated colony lying far away from communication other than the telegraph, which would be sure to be cut? We know that the fortifying of one port would not be sufficient for the purpose indicated by the Admiral. What would be the purpose of an attacking squadron or cruiser coming to these waters? It has been generally supposed that the mission would be plunder. Now, as it seems to me, that would be a very subordinate part of the mission, if it were a part at all. The object of an enemy of England in attacking any of her colonies would be to inflict a wound upon the honour of England, which would be far more valuable to the country than sent the cruiser or the squadron than any bullion that could be carried away. Consequently, if this colony is to commit itself to a scheme of naval defence, it must contemplate the defending of all its vulnerable harbours against predatory cruisers. In

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that sense, this question is a most momentous one, for it means not only a contribution of £21,000 a year to England, but it means, further, that the defences existing should be efficiently equipped and manned. Last year the manning of our defences cost the colony some £40,000, and, assuming that the greatest economy is to be exercised in the maintenance of these defences in the future, the cost cannot be much less than this contribution, or something like another £21,000 or £25,000 a year. But that is not all. Supposing war were declared, either by or against Great Britain, would that expenditure be sufficient for this colony? Not at all. The fact of having committed ourselves to this scheme would also commit us, as far as we could provide it, to the efficient defence and equipment of these fortifications; so that, if such another panic arose as occurred a few years ago, it would mean an extra expenditure of at least half a million from this impoverished country. It has been aptly said that this fleet, even when in existence, is not intended for the defence of the colonies; it is rather for the purpose of going afield and attacking the enemy. It is like the policeman patrolling the block, which is a very vain precaution unless the householder also secures his doors and windows, and that at some little expense. But New Zealand is different from the other colonies, and I am surprised that the Premier did not touch on that aspect of the question. New Zealand invites attack from all quarters. She is isolated, and, as I have said, the wounding of England's honour is of far more value to an enemy than any contribution he could draw from a colony. Therefore New Zealand is the very spot at which an attack would be directed; and I see no attempt in this Bill to give New Zealand that protection which, relatively to her defenceless position in the midst of the Pacific Ocean, she is entitled to. These vessels are to be away patrolling this large Australasian station, which stretches almost from the Equator to the Antarctic Circle. Then, in the event of any hostile vessel eluding the fleet, New Zealand would be open to attack by the enemy's cruisers, and the result might be most disastrous. It was only a few months ago that there were naval manoeuvres upon the coast of Great Britain; and it will be within the recollection of honourable members that the whole English Channel was, as it were, covered with armoured-clads and gunboats. But another fleet managed to dodge the defenders, and, by all sorts of disguises and manoeuvres, reached the Nore several hours before the very ships that were supposed to prevent such an occurrence. That is an indication of how futile the defence might be of a colony or colonies defended by seven or eight or even a dozen vessels. Every cruiser sent out by a nation at war with Great Britain would be equipped with all the latest scientific appliances, and would be, most likely, faster than any British ship on the station; for it is the fatality of the Admiralty at Home that it manages to be second to almost all other nations in respect of speed. However, that is

the position; and this view of the matter is borne out by Admiral Tryon, when he says,—

"History is apt to repeat itself: squadrons and fleets have escaped the most vigilant Admirals, and the most skilful strategists failed, in days of old, so to order our fleets as to prevent this. Since those days the composition of the navies of the world has greatly altered, and at this time it is far easier for an Admiral to avoid notice and conceal destination.

"It is possible that an attack may be delivered by a small squadron of ironclads of a type that does not entitle them to a place in the first rank—they would be very formidable if employed to attack our colonies; and, still more possibly, a hostile squadron might contain vessels of the fast, partially-armoured class that are now much in fashion, and the construction of them is on the increase. It is well to consider what such a squadron could do supposing it had arrived off our coast, having avoided detection, the Admiral in command, deceived by false reports, gone to New Zealand, with the telegraphs cut."

That is putting the case of Australia being left without the protection of the fleets of England, some false reports drawing the Admiral to New Zealand. But let us take the opposite case and suppose that, by some false report, the Admiral was called away to King George's Sound, what position should we be in, even if we had one of our ports sufficiently protected? The other four or five ports, left partially defended, would be where the enemy would make his attack, and so strive to wound the honour and lower the pride of Great Britain. Again, to indicate the manner in which this proposal has been introduced, and the careless or, rather, indifferent way in which the interests of this and other colonies have been left unprotected in matter of detail—and as to this, of course, it is no charge against the present Government, inasmuch as the articles appear to have been settled by the last Government, it making no difference in discussing the matter—here we have, for ten years, "Archers" and "Rattlesnakes," and no provision made for replacing them by more perfect vessels. I undertake to say that an "Archer," when launched with the most recent and perfect appliances, will in ten years, compared with the future implements of war, be as antiquated as the archer of old with his bow and arrows against the machine-gun of the present day. So much for the financial aspect of the question, which does not seem to be a very inviting one, being a contribution on our part without any adequate or sufficient return; and it commits us to an expenditure the magnitude of which it is difficult to exaggerate. Then, there is the political aspect of this question, which both the Premier and leader of the Opposition have touched upon. What is the object of this arrangement? It is, according to the preamble of the Bill, for the protection of trade; which means that, as trade is supposed to follow the flag, it is protection of English merchants' interests. And it is surely a great anachronism that in these modern days there

should be proposed by England such a scheme as is indicated in this Bill. A few years ago it would have been considered an insult upon her honour that she should have to bargain and chaffer for a contribution to protect her flag in distant parts of the world. Honourable gentlemen will remember the celebrated "Arrow" case, which called forth from Lord Palmerston, in 1857, that just and noble speech in which he used these words:—

"But will any one tell me that officers at the other extremity of the globe, when a violent outrage has been committed on the honour of their country, are to remain with their arms folded till they can send Home for orders and receive instructions? Why, months would elapse between insult and resentment, and the purpose for which redress had been demanded would have been forgotten in the apathy and want of exertion which would have ensued."

This also leads me to ask, what if New Zealand refuses to be a party to this arrangement—if she refuses, as Queensland has done, to enter into the bargain? A British ship, flying a British flag, is bound for New Zealand: if attacked by a hostile man-of-war, and overtaken by an "Archer" or a "Rattlesnake," would the captain of the English man-of-war first ask, "Where are you going? If to Victoria, we will protect you, and blow the enemy to pieces; but, if to New Zealand, oh, she does not contribute! the enemy can sink you if he chooses"? That is the logical conclusion of the lack of New Zealand being a party to this arrangement. Is the British flag to be insulted with impunity because a British vessel says her port of destination is in New Zealand instead of some colony which is a contributory? That, surely, would be against the honour of England, and an argument which should go very far in inducing this House not to consent to such an arrangement as this, which is derogatory to the honour of England, and unworthy of any of her colonies. It is, as indicated by the Premier, taxation, although he did not use the word, and preferred "tribute." Still, it is taxation, and in this sense: that unless we adopt this arrangement we shall not be protected. Then there is the inducement held out by the Premier and by the honourable member for Christchurch North. They urge, as an argument in favour of this proposal, that, if we contribute to the defence of Imperial interests in this part of the world, we shall be making a distinct step in advance towards Federation. I understood that a few years ago that question was practically settled in the negative. It is impossible that any definition in any Act of Parliament or convention will secure that Federation which can best be preserved by community of feeling and by common language. These bonds are likely to disappear if they are reduced to the form of a protocol. I think, therefore, that the inducement which those honourable gentlemen held out in favour of this proposal is one which cannot commend itself to this House. Supposing we had

representation, and that our Agent-General, for instance, was sworn as a member of the Privy Council, and had some voice in the deliberations of the Ministry at Home, do you mean to say that he or all the Agents-General could control in the slightest degree the intricacies of diplomacy on the Continent of Europe, or affect for a single moment popular feeling governed by the immense machinery and engine-power of the Press of Great Britain? It would be simply futile to suppose that the presence of Agents-General in the Privy Council or in some Board of advice or control would have the least power in shaping a question of peace or war, in which we should necessarily be involved without the least concern or wish at all. Then, Sir, there is another aspect of this important question scarcely considered by the public of England and the colonies which I should like to refer to as perhaps the most recent on the subject. It is indicated in the Imperial Blue Book which is on the table of the House, and which contains a report of the proceedings of the Conference which was held in London, I believe, early this year, at which we had two representatives, the Agent-General and Sir William Fitzherbert. At the meeting, on the 4th of January last, the Marquis of Salisbury, referring to what he called "Kriegsverein," said,—

"He had observed a tendency to the impression that the defence of the colonies ought to be entirely a matter for the Imperial Government, because any danger that the colonists might run was exclusively the result of Imperial action and policy."

After an illustration, he continued,—

"But these are not the only or the most important considerations which attach to this matter of Imperial and colonial defence. I do not think that, so long as the Empire hangs together, the colonies are in the least likely to be brought into any war."

Well, if there could be any good ground for that opinion, there can be no ground for these preparations. The whole drift of the argument is the other way. He continued,—

"Supposing the colonies were not part of the Empire, supposing that the colonies were independent, do you think they would be safe? I know that twenty or thirty years ago it was thought that they would be safe,—that their distance from Europe would make them practically safe. . . . I am very far from suspecting or believing that the rulers of the great countries of Europe are likely to commit any act of violence upon distant territories."

Then, after thus suggesting the contrary, he says,—

"Do not interpret my words as to imagine that I conceive any aggression likely or probable on the part of those who wield power in Europe; but the circumstances in which we live, and the tendencies of human nature as we know it in all times of history, teach us that where there is liability to attack, and defencelessness, attack will come."

Now, supposing that Lord Salisbury was right, although he is very vague and indefinite,

*Mr. Hutchison*

the question is this: Can any liability to attack be removed without severing our connection with the Mother-country? On the one hand, we have unlimited liability—for the alternative of the refusal of this is that we shall be left only partially protected—and on the other, as suggested by the Premier, there is independence. Now, it seems to me we are not shut up to such alternatives. It seems to me that security on the part of the colonies from attack may be obtained without either committing ourselves to ruinous expenditure or, on the other hand, cutting the painter; and the suggestion which I would make is that there can be a better and more enduring settlement of this important subject. It seems to me the interest of Great Britain in the matter of colonisation is not singular, as it was a few years ago; that the expectations and endeavours of great nations, such as France, Germany, and Italy, have all been directed in the way of extending their colonial possessions, and, although the colonies of England are more numerous and important than those of any other Power, still it must be a matter of concern to other great Powers that their colonies should not be subjected to the attack which, in the event of England being their enemy, would most surely follow; and it seems to me that it would be an Imperial act worthy of the palmiest days of England's fame if she were to approach the other great Powers of Europe with a proposition to meet in conference, and, considering the importance of their interests in these scattered colonies, enter upon some treaty which would restrict the consequences of their European quarrels from kindred people distant far across the world who have no voice, and perhaps no interest, in those quarrels. And I venture to think the subject is one deserving not only the consideration of this Ministry, but of the British Ministry. A conference should be held at which some treaty might be made under which the colonies should be held to be sacred from attack; that there should be a colonial flag, which, without indicating any severance from the Mother-country, would still give security in the event of wars in respect of which the colonies were not immediately concerned. That would preserve our relations under circumstances which would be much more agreeable to the feelings of colonists bound up with the Mother-country, without making it a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence, and leaving them, in case of inability to incur this expenditure, the only alternative of separation. Even under such circumstances of neutrality, events might arise when,

Casting cold, prudential thoughts aside, colonists might

Take some generous impulse for their guide, and, as in the case of New South Wales and the Soudan, colonies might voluntarily assist the Mother-country; and, if they did, it would be such a deliberate interference on their own part as would be equivalent to a declaration of war. That, however, would be almost impossible under the commercial con-

ditions presented in this Bill, and I am sure this House would unanimously regret that circumstances should render the alternative of complete separation necessary or desirable.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I can only reiterate the expression of opinion that has been advanced by the last speaker, that this House, at this stage of the session, ought not to discuss such an important measure as this. I think the foundation for our agreeing to the measure was the prospect that the whole of the Australasian Colonies would bind themselves together in providing a contribution towards the naval expenditure of the State. Now we find that one of these colonies has drawn back from that position; and I say that no Bill ought to pass this Legislature which would have the effect of coming into force immediately in the shape proposed by the present Government. I say, if the Bill is passed at all, it ought to be passed with a proviso limiting its operation, or providing for its coming into operation only when all the colonies interested have agreed to the proposal to contribute towards this scheme of naval defence. The time, I take it, as mentioned by the honourable member for Waitotara, is not opportune to discuss such an important measure as this, when we see in this House simply a bare quorum. I am told that there is not a quorum in the House now. That in itself is sufficient evidence that we—a fourth of the members of the whole Parliament—ought not to decide such an important measure as this, by which it is proposed to bind the colony to an annual contribution of something between £22,000 and £25,000. I ask, is it at all right that this Parliament, that has been elected by the electors at a general election—where the principal cry that was raised by those honourable gentlemen who are now holding office as the Government of the day, and who have been placed there by friends returned by a majority from the country, was that it was necessary to retrench in every possible direction—is it right, I ask, that Parliament should be asked to pass this Bill now? The Government say that they have retrenched in every way in order to save further taxation. How can they say that, while, on the other hand, they are bringing forward wild schemes for lavish expenditure? Is it a proper step to be taken, after being engaged for the last ten weeks in devising schemes and measures for retrenchment in every direction, that, at the last moment of this session, we are asked, so to speak, to reverse a great deal of what we have been doing, and, by a bare quorum, to pass such an important measure as this? I do hope that the House will not agree to pass this Bill at this time. I fail to see any absolute urgency or necessity to pass it this session. The next session of the House is one which is likely to take place within a very few months, and I fail to see why we are to pass a measure binding us to this contribution whether the other contracting parties are bound by it or not. We know the Queensland Legislature have refused to pass a similar Bill. Let us give them another opportunity of reconsidering

the matter after their general elections. Let us wait until that is done, or else, if there is a majority in this House determined to pass the measure this session, let us pass it with a condition attached that it shall not become law unless all the contracting parties agree to be bound to contribute—one and all.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I wish to put a question to the Government. A very important statement has been made by the Premier. He admits that nearly half if not quite half of the members are gone, but he tells us they are all paired. If that is so, it means that nearly half the House are against the measure, and I think it would be very important for us left here to be told exactly who have paired, and on which side. We have not their speeches to guide us to their opinions, as we have usually with those who pair; and I think honourable members should have that information from the list of pairs. Our opinions must be to a certain extent influenced by the votes of other honourable members, and, if what the Premier states is correct, the House must be pretty nearly divided on this question, and I think we should be in possession of the information I refer to before the debate proceeds. I ask the Premier if he will produce the list of pairs.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The House has never recognised pairing, unless an honourable member inadvertently votes after pairing. The House always religiously excludes the consideration of pairs—it is something outside the House, and a mere private arrangement between honourable members.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They are seen after the division has been taken.

Sir G. GREY.—Yes; that is after the votes have been given. We usually know perfectly well how members who have paired are going to vote, because they have usually expressed their views in speeches. But in this case a most important measure has been brought before the House after a number of honourable members have left Wellington; and yet we are told they have all paired on it. Now, that statement is either true or it is untrue. This is a thing absolutely unknown. A most important measure is brought before the House, and we find that a secret taking of votes upon it has been effected before the measure was brought in, and the Government are in possession of information which, if produced, would have a great effect on honourable members' minds. I think we should have that information given us, and I ask the Premier whether he will give us that information or not.

Major ATKINSON.—The Government have not got it at all.

Sir G. GREY.—The Premier stated that pairs had been given.

Major ATKINSON.—I have no doubt whatever that all honourable members who take an interest in the question, and are absent, have paired. The honourable gentleman is quite aware of the practice, and he knows as much about the pairs upon this measure as I do.

Sir G. GREY.—I do not know it at all.

Major ATKINSON.—The honourable gentleman knows the rule as to pairing, and he often pairs himself when he wishes to be absent.

Sir G. GREY.—I do not know what has been done in this case. I am entirely ignorant of it. I say this is information we ought to have; because, were the names made known, and the way they vote, it would have a great influence on us in coming to a decision. This is a question concerning the whole Empire. The Premier distinctly stated that all who have gone—more than half the House—have paired. Now, I ask that that information should be given to the House. Those gentlemen are not here to make their opinions known by their voices, and I say the colony and the House have a right to know what their opinions are, as shown by the way they have voted. I ask the Premier, will he give us that information?

Major ATKINSON.—Certainly I should not, if I had the power. It is a thing never heard of before. The pairs will be posted up in due time, as usual. The honourable gentleman's knowledge of parliamentary rules, if not very large, is quite sufficient to tell him that what he asks is an unheard-of thing.

Sir G. GREY.—The Premier is evading the real question. The pairs usually given are those of honourable members whose opinions are known from their speeches; but in this case honourable members have left Wellington before they could speak on the question. If the information is not given, I shall move the adjournment of the debate. I move that because it is not respectful to the other colonies or to Great Britain that a debate should take place under such circumstances as these. If the honourable gentleman misleads us into voting against the measure under the belief that we have nearly half the House to support us in certain views, and if he has betrayed us by that action into giving votes differently from what we might otherwise do on so great a subject as the defence of the Empire, I say he has acted traitorously to this House and to the country. There can be no doubt whatever that such is the case. I say that the common rules of honour on the part of the leader of the House require that he should not mislead the House on a question of this kind—that he should have recourse to no measure which will mislead us in the votes we give. We have a right to know what the opinion of the leading members of the House is on this question. Did I know how they have paired I could get some sort of clue to their views, and something to confirm myself in the resolution to which I might come on this subject. But, deprived of that information, I say we have no just means of forming an opinion of what our fellow-members—our colleagues—think on this subject. I hope the House will support me in demanding this information before we proceed further. I move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It will not be exceeding my duty to remind the honourable member that he loses the right to speak on the main

question if his motion for adjourning the debate should happen to be negatived.

Sir G. GREY.—Then, Sir, if I lose my right to speak by doing that, I say the Government have no right to put me in that position. It is a most unjust and tyrannical measure. I feel that, in connection with things done last night, the same kind of procedure has taken place this session on the part of the Premier, which is not consistent with the honour of the House or the line of conduct the Government ought to pursue.

Mr. TAIWHANGA.—I think to adjourn the debate would be merely wasting time, and I hope the proposal will be negatived.

The House divided on the question, "That the debate be adjourned."

#### AYES, 5.

Brown  
Grey  
Joyce.

*Tellers.*  
Blake  
Hutchison.

#### NOES, 31.

Atkinson  
Bruce  
Buchanan  
Carroll  
Fisher  
Fitzherbert  
Graham  
Hamlin  
Hislop  
Izard  
Jackson

Lance  
Lawry  
Macarthur  
McGregor  
Mitchelson  
Moat  
Newman  
O'Connor  
Peacock  
Pearson  
Perceval

Richardson, E.  
Richardson, G.  
S.-Menteath  
Taipua  
Taiwhanga  
Wilson  
Withy.

*Tellers.*  
Beetham  
Whyte.

#### PAIRS.

##### For.

Cadman  
Feldwick  
Fish  
Grimmond  
Guinness  
Marchant  
Reeves, R. H. J.  
Reeves, W. P.  
Samuel  
Ward.

##### Against.

Moss  
Hobbs  
Allen  
Loughrey  
Steward, W. J.  
Stewart, W. D.  
Fitchett  
Ormond  
Hall  
Russell.

Majority against, 26.

Adjournment of debate negatived.

Mr. TAIWHANGA.—I will not keep the House long, but I should like to say a few words upon this important measure. If the Government can afford it we ought to have six men-of-war, three for each Island; but I think that, instead of wasting time, we should leave it to the honourable member for Auckland Central to make a proposal next session so as to secure that honourable members who go away before the session is over should lose half pay, the amount so gained to be distributed among those who remain.

Bill read a second time.

On the motion for the committal of the Bill, Mr. HUTCHISON said,—Now that the second reading of the Bill has been agreed to, I would ask the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government whether he thinks he is justified in pushing on a Bill like this, affecting Imperial interests, under the circumstances



now existent. We see that two-thirds or more of the members are absent. A measure passed under these conditions must bear a somewhat equivocal appearance. I would ask the honourable gentleman, under these circumstances, whether he proposes to press the Bill further.

Major ATKINSON.—Replying to the honourable gentleman's question, I would say that I think our duty is plain. The Government think that not only are they justified in asking the House to pass the Bill this session, but that it is their duty to do so. They feel that very strongly.

Sir G. GREY.—I should like to remark that the excuse made about the Bill being passed in this manner, after long delay, was quite insufficient. The honourable gentleman said that the reason for insisting on the Bill passing this session is that it would be too late to leave it over until next session, and that it was necessary to come to a decision now. That, to my mind, is a reason why it should have been brought on at an earlier period of the session. I think it is very wrong that, with so small a portion of the Parliament present, we should come to a decision on a matter of this important character. There can be no fair and proper discussion of it. I myself am shut out from discussing it. The country will never know the reasons on which the measure is advocated. It will be impossible to say that the colony is bound by a proceeding of this kind. Unless we know who have paired there is no good reason for believing that honourable gentlemen are satisfied that the matter should be brought forward this session. I think it is our duty to do the best we can to secure a full discussion of the matter in the next session of Parliament, and I shall do my best to achieve that even now. Had the honourable gentleman fallen in with my wishes and let me know what was the opinion of the leading members of the House, I might have taken a totally different course. The Premier's colleague agreed to give me the information before he came into the House, and I think the Government were bound by that. The Premier stopped him—

Major ATKINSON.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—I simply repeat that.

Major ATKINSON.—And I simply deny it.

Sir G. GREY.—Well, let it be seen.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be committed."

#### AYES, 25.

Atkinson	Jackson	Richardson, G.
Beetham	Lance	Taiwhanga
Bruce	Lawry	Whyte
Buchanan	Moat	Wilson
Fisher	Newman	Withy.
Goldie	O'Connor	
Graham	Peacock	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hislop	Pearson	McGregor
Isard	Richardson, E.	Perceval.

#### NOES, 7.

Brown	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Grey	Taipua.	Hutchison
Joyce		Monk.

#### PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Allen	Fish
Fitchett	Reeves, R. H. J.
Hall	Samuel
Hobbs	Feldwick
Loughrey	Grimmond
Mitchelson	Blake
Moss	Cadman
Ormond	Reeves, W. P.
Russell	Ward
Steward, W. J.	Guinness
Stewart, W. D.	Marchant.

Majority for, 18.

Motion for committal agreed to.

Bill committed, and reported to the House.

On the question, That the Bill be read a third time,

Sir G. GREY said.—Sir, on the third reading of this measure I wish to place on record my regret that it was not brought forward at an earlier period of the session. I think it is a melancholy thing to say that the first great national measure ever passed by New Zealand has been submitted to so thin a House. I had hoped that this measure would be brought down when the House was full; that it would be thoroughly discussed, and all the reasons in favour of the measure would be stated at length, as well as the objections to it: in this way we should have produced a measure better than that which we shall now pass, and we should have produced one that would be an example to the Empire of what should be done under such circumstances. Then I cannot help thinking that it was unfair to bring it forward at this time, after so many honourable members had left—not only unfair to this Parliament, but unfair to Great Britain; for it never can be said that this measure is a reflex of, and truly represents, the minds of the people or the Parliament of New Zealand. At the present moment we are acting quite in contravention of all the customs of this House. We are kept in ignorance of the names of a large number of persons who we are told have paired either for or against this measure. Under ordinary circumstances these names would have been affixed to these curtains; but for some reason, of which no explanation has been given, they have been kept secret from us. I think a great wrong has been done to the honourable members present in being shut out from this information, as even a sight of the names might have been a guide to us as to the feeling of the majority of the Parliament on the measure before us. I wish to place these circumstances on record, that it may be known that this Bill was passed at so late a period of the session, with so small an attendance, that sometimes only just a quorum of members was present; that information was concealed from us which Ministers at one time offered to give up, and we are ignorant of the views of our colleagues in Parliament on this Bill; and that therefore very little weight indeed can be attributed to a measure which is passed under such circumstances. I believe it is, in its present form, a very futile measure. I feel certain

it will be the cause of frequent future discussion; that we have been led to embark on a new career altogether, the nature of which we cannot conjecture. We little know the path we are treading; and what might have been the occasion of rejoicing and of great national triumph if a proper measure had been passed, is to myself, as it will be to many others, a source of sadness and sorrow that so great an opportunity was lost, that the English people will be misled in thinking that this Bill represents the minds of New Zealand, and that it is obtained under circumstances which usually are not considered fair in Parliament. I believe the means resorted to to get the measure through are unfair, and it is with deep regret I hold these views.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—Sir, I rise to a point of order. I ask your ruling as to whether this is not a money Bill, and, as such, should not have gone through Committee of the Whole.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It has gone through that stage. It was sent down by message from His Excellency the Governor, and was considered in Committee of the Whole.

Sir G. GREY.—Not as a money Bill. We have never been told that the Governor has given his assent to its introduction.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It was sent down by message from the Governor, and referred to a Committee of the Whole.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—Could you inform the House what the expenditure of money under the Bill is—the sum which it appropriates to Her Majesty?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think that was stated by the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—Then, Sir, on the question of the third reading, I would repeat that the conditions under which this measure has been proceeded with give reason for concluding that it is not the deliberate will of Parliament; and, with the expression of this protest, I have no other remark to make.

Mr. FITZHERBERT.—I also wish to enter my protest against the amendment made in Committee. We heard a very able speech from the Premier when the Bill was introduced, and another from the leader of the Opposition; and they both concurred that this Bill was the first step towards federation, which both were anxious to see accomplished. The Premier dwelt on this subject, and said it was always a desire of his that we should federate with the other colonies, and that this was the thin end of the wedge for accomplishing that end. As a rule, I have been opposed to federation; but I am willing to waive this point, and now merely wish to show the Premier's inconsistency when he tells us that his desire is to have federation, and then, when we go into Committee, moves an amendment to this effect: that we shall not be bound jointly and severally. Now, if we were so bound there would be a certain amount of federation in the matter—there would be a common interest and a common liability: but what do we find? That, although the honourable member tells us

he is very anxious for federation, directly an opportunity occurs of testing this federation, of saying that we are prepared to become jointly and severally liable with the other colonies—he says, “We are not going to do that; we are only going to bind ourselves. We are selfish individuals, and we will only bind ourselves to our own share.” I say the amendment moved in Committee was entirely inconsistent with the speech of the Premier on the second reading. I pointed out that to the Premier, and I pointed out to the House now that it is a direct breach of faith with the Imperial Government. The distinct understanding with the other Australian Colonies was that when we got the concession of two ships in New Zealand we should all be bound jointly and severally; because the Imperial authorities say, “Supposing one colony is a defaulter, do you expect us to go and collect the amount from the colony or take proceedings against it? We do not want to be put in that position. We look to the colonies as a whole to enter into this matter, and we expect this amount every year from these colonies.” That was what they said at the time. Then, again, the Australian Colonies behaved very well to us. It was a very delicate operation trying to get these two ships for New Zealand, and our representatives had to approach the question very carefully; and all praise is due to them for conducting the matter as well as they did. As I say, the Australian Colonies behaved remarkably well to us on the direct understanding that there was to be a joint and several liability, and that there would be no such thing as one colony saying that it would only pay its share. The whole success of this scheme of naval defence depends upon the whole of the colonies adopting it; and I was in hope that we should adopt it by acclamation. We know very well that the force here, although a valuable one, is practically useless unless supported by ships of the kind proposed under this arrangement. We always saw the difficulty of obtaining such ships, and we knew that it would have cost us half a million of money to build them; whereas the Home Government says, “Here are ships. You can make what use you like of them, and all we ask is that you shall contribute towards the expenses the sum of £21,600 a year.” I thought this offer would be accepted by acclamation, because, although we have to pay £21,600 a year, these ships will bring far more to the place, for, as the Premier showed, each ship will spend on coal, provisions, and otherwise, £12,400 a year, or £24,800 for the two ships, besides the money which the sailors will receive, and which, I understand, amounts to about £50 a year each, which they will spend here. Besides this there are other enormous advantages; so that we should have jumped at this arrangement and taken the Bill as it stood, so as not to imperil this great boon. But I fear we are now prejudicing the scheme by the insertion of the Premier's amendment. I hope it will not be so. I think the Premier should, as the honourable member for Auckland Central stated, have brought this Bill

*Sir G. Grey*

down at an earlier period, and not when there were only some thirty-six members present. It could then have been thoroughly discussed in all its branches before it was passed or rejected. I suppose it will be passed now, but it will be passed in such a shape that we shall not be bound except for our paltry £21,600 a year. That is the position which the Premier takes up with regard to this important measure. I felt bound to enter my protest against this amendment; and I fear that when we send over to the other Parliaments, and inform them of what we have done, we shall find there will be a great difficulty in getting this scheme agreed to. I hope it will not be so, but I fear it will.

Bill read a third time.

### EDUCATION.

Mr. BROWN desired to speak on a matter personal to himself, which had been before the House on the previous day. On Monday evening his vote was challenged on the educational question by the Government Whip, the honourable member for Ashley. Yesterday that honourable gentleman gave as his authority for his pairing the honourable member for Dunedin South. That honourable gentleman was at the time on his way, as it was understood, to Dunedin. The "Takapuna" was expected to leave Wellington at four o'clock yesterday afternoon, but was afterwards detained to a later period. When this matter came on the honourable gentleman had left the chamber, and he (Mr. Brown) did not expect him to return. In order to verify what he had stated previously, the honourable member for Ashley had stated that the honourable member for Dunedin South was present with him when he (Mr. Brown) gave a pair on that question, and that he had broken it. He himself was quite surprised at this statement, knowing, as he knew at the time, there was no reason for it; and, when he saw the honourable member for Dunedin South later on, he (Mr. Brown) put the question to that gentleman whether such was the truth, that he had, in that gentleman's presence, with the Government whip, given a pair, or whether he knew personally that he gave a pair on that occasion. The honourable member for Dunedin South said the statement was not correct, and that if he (Mr. Brown) desired it he would in writing refute it. He wrote to the honourable member for Dunedin South the following letter:—

"House of Representatives,  
"21st December, 1887.

"MY DEAR MR. FISH,—Mr. Pearson, the Government whip, gave your name to the House this afternoon as a witness that I had given a pair in his presence on Monday with Mr. O'Connor on the education votes, and that you were present when I specified on which items my pair was given. Kindly say if Mr. Pearson's statement is true or otherwise. — I have, &c.,

"J. C. BROWN.

"H. S. Fish, Esq., M.H.R., Wellington."

The honourable member for Dunedin South replied as follows:—

"Wellington, 21st December, 1887.

"DEAR BROWN,—In reply to your note of this day's date, I desire to say that Mr. Pearson is in error in thinking that I saw you authorise him to pair you as stated. We had a conversation as to you being paired with Mr. O'Connor, and it must have been that we mutually misunderstood each other. — I am, &c.,

"H. S. FISH."

The honourable member for Dunedin South told him that he had communicated his answer to the Government whip, and he (Mr. Brown) expected that the honourable member for Ashley would have risen, as he might have done on several occasions last evening, and given some explanation to the House. He not doing so, he (Mr. Brown) that morning wrote the following letter to him:—

"House of Representatives,  
"22nd December, 1887.

"SIR,—In reference to your statement in the House yesterday, that the member for Dunedin South was present with you when I arranged a pair on the education-vote estimates, Mr. Fish has informed me that he has told you you were in error in making such an assertion, and if he had been in the House at the time he would have contradicted. Need I say that I am surprised you have not had the courtesy to withdraw the statement made in the House by you to my prejudice?

"I propose bringing the matter before the House to-day, hoping you will be present.—I am, &c.,

"J. C. BROWN.

"W. F. Pearson, Esq., M.H.R."

He need not say anything further, because it was a matter in which the honour of the House was involved, as it concerned the veracity of honourable members,—the statement, he might say, especially, of a Government whip.

Mr. PEARSON said the honourable member for Tuapeka was so well known in the House — especially in regard to pairing — that he should not go into particulars about the matter; but he would say this: that the honourable member for Tuapeka was paired, and that his name was on his (Mr. Pearson's) pair-book; and the honourable member for the Buller could testify to that fact. And he (Mr. Pearson) would go further and say this: that, if the question of personal honour came before the House as between himself and the honourable member for Tuapeka, he had no doubt what the verdict of the House would be in the matter.

Mr. O'CONOR said it seemed to him a very extraordinary thing that this pair was disputed now. The honourable member for Tuapeka was in the House, and he surely must have been under the conviction that he was paired when he voted. He (Mr. O'Connor) would like to know how it was that if the honourable member for Tuapeka thought he was not paired he voted against his own conviction.

Mr. BROWN said he need not say a word in explanation. He held in his hand a letter denying the honourable member for Ashley's

assertion, and stating that it was untrue. The honourable member for the Buller had several times followed him about the lobbies requesting him not to bring this matter forward—

Mr. O'CONOR.—For your own sake.

Mr. BROWN said he had told the honourable member for the Buller that he did not want to have anything to say to him, and that, if he was giving him friendly advice, he did not wish him to proceed further in the matter.

#### LOAN BILL.

A message was received from His Excellency the Governor, recommending the House to make an appropriation in the Loan Bill for £70,000 and £9,000 unallotted.

Major ATKINSON moved, That the message be referred to the Committee on the Loan Bill.

Mr. GUINNESS would like to know from the Premier whether he intended to attempt to reverse the vote of the House given on the previous night. The £9,000 was absolutely struck out.

Major ATKINSON said that when the vote of £70,000 for immigration was struck out that morning it was understood generally that the Government would replace it as unappropriated. Then, as to the £9,000 struck out in the Second Schedule, the Government thought it would be better to reinstate it as unallotted, because it would be a stupid thing to do to go into the money-market for a loan of £991,000.

Mr. PERCEVAL said, that with regard to the £9,000, he took it as an expression of opinion on the part of the Committee that the amount referred to should not be proceeded with.

Motion agreed to.

Major ATKINSON moved, That the Bill be recommitted, with a view to inserting the two items referred to in His Excellency's message, and a new clause which was given notice of in Committee.

Mr. SMITH suggested to the Premier that the £9,000 should be set down for the purchase of Native land. He hoped the honourable gentleman would take that into consideration, as it was a great and important object.

Major ATKINSON said the Government would make proposals as to the purchase of Native land next session which he believed would meet with the approval of the House.

A message was received from the Governor transmitting a new clause declaring that the colony should not go on the London market for a further loan before the 31st March, 1891.

The clause having been referred to the Committee on the Bill,

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be added to the Bill."

#### AYES, 27.

Atkinson	Graham	Lawry
Buchanan	Guinness	McGregor
Cadman	Hislop	Mitchelson
Fergus	Isard	Monk
Fisher	Jackson	Peaseock
Goldie	Lance	Pearson

Mr. Brown

Richardson, G. Taiwhanga  
Ross Whyte  
S.-Menteath Withy.  
Taipua

NOES, 17.

Beetham	Hutchison	Richardson, E.
Blake	Joyce	Smith
Brown	Kelly	Vogel.
Bruce	Marchant	Tellers.
Fitzherbert	Parata	Fraser
Grey	Perceval	Reeves, R. H. J.

Majority for, 10.

Clause agreed to.

Bill reported.

On the question, That the amendments be agreed to,

Sir J. VOGEL said,—I desire to raise a point of order. The Governor has sent a message down authorising the substitution of certain items in the schedule for others, or, rather, the substitution of certain items mentioned in the message for others which do not appear in the schedule now. If these items were in the schedule it would be competent for the Governor to recommend others to be substituted for them; but it so happens that the items referred to in the message were struck out by the Committee, and that therefore they no longer exist. I contend, therefore, Sir, that you cannot substitute a thing for a thing which has no longer an existence. The Governor's message should have proposed the addition of these items to the schedule, and not their substitution; therefore they are not properly before the Committee or the House, and the provisions which allow votes of this kind to be sent down by message have not been properly respected. I ask your ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER.—As I read the message, it appeared to me that the items were recommended in substitution for items that were struck out; which appeared to me to be the regular course to adopt.

Amendments agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, I submit that your ruling is a mistake, and I warn the Government that I shall take an opinion upon it; and I consider the matter of so much importance that, if I find I am right, I shall raise the question in the Supreme Court. I think it also of the utmost importance not to allow the Government to adopt the very loose system which they have adopted of dealing with measures of this kind. Here we have a clause in this Bill which talks of the General Government.

Major ATKINSON.—So does the Constitution Act.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Yes; but in the Constitution Act it does not say the General Government shall borrow money. The Governor in Council is not the General Government, and "the General Government" was a term in distinction to the Provincial Governments, which no longer exist. And now we find the substitution of items for items that have already been struck out by the Committee. With regard to

the Bill itself, it is one which will cause the colony to be laughed at. It has a clause containing a prohibition of borrowing, or, rather, an undertaking not to borrow for three years and a half. And, as regards the measure itself, it provides for a loan which is unnecessarily large, and which, as I said yesterday, I do not oppose more actively because I understood the honourable gentleman did not propose to raise it before October next. I am unwilling to delay the House at this stage, but I may say a more ridiculous clause could not have been put in any Act than the one which refers to the borrowing. Look at the position. Here is a clause which requires that every prospectus and every newspaper-advertisement shall have put in it that the Government will only borrow for the next three years under the Westport Harbour Act, the Greymouth Harbour Act, "The Public Revenues Act, 1887," and "The North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Act, 1884." Why, Sir, what ordinary investor would invest with such an avalanche of loans apparently in contemplation? And the ordinary small investor throughout the country who wants to invest in New Zealand securities will shun doing so. I am afraid, Sir, there is not a House.

The House was called, and a quorum attended.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, I say that it will make small investors shun doing so. I am afraid I must call your attention to the House again: Ministers are leaving the House.

The House was called again, and a quorum attended.

Sir J. VOGEL.—It is very disorderly conduct, it seems to me, that Ministers of the Crown should be going in and out of the doors, disturbing people who are naturally nervous. I may say, in repeating these remarks, that I do so because we are not reported in Committee, and it is essential, therefore, that I should put the matter before the House in order to be reported. I object, therefore, to the absurdity of putting in a clause, and causing it to appear in the prospectus and in the advertisements, which will deter a vast number of small investors from applying for the loan. Next, I object to the clause because it would be quite sufficient for the Government to intimate, as has been done twice before—indeed, several times before—that the Government did not intend to borrow: once it was put down at three years, another time for three years, and another time for one year; and an intimation to the banks was sufficient, or a paragraph in the City Article of the *Times*. Putting the notice in the way proposed would have such a grotesque appearance, and be so evidently an admission that the colony cannot trust itself, that it would be exceedingly injurious, besides being treated as a great joke. Therefore it is that I object to this clause going in. And it is worded in such a manner that it shows it is done by a 'prentice-hand, and that it is a mere concession of the Government to the fears of its own supporters that the Government is not likely to be true to the pledges it has given regarding borrowing.

Why, Sir, if the Government were to look on this matter from a point of view which would be consistent with their own self-respect, they would say to their followers, "We have told you what our proposals are; and our word is as good as our bond. Why ask us to put this into the Act? Is it not sufficient that we have said in the Financial Statement or the Public Works Statement that it is our intention?" I do not wish to detain the House any longer, and I shall not oppose the third reading of the Bill, because the House has already expressed its opinion in favour of it.

Bill read a third time.

On the question, That the title be agreed to, Mr. HUTCHISON said,—The words "Immigration and for" are now utterly unnecessary, and I move the excision of those words, as the purposes of the Bill as indicated in the first instance have been altered.

Major ATKINSON.—I am not prepared to agree to that. The House may yet decide that the £70,000 shall be applied to the purposes of immigration.

Mr. HUTCHISON.—Under this Act?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes. The money will be borrowed, and, I hope, applied to that purpose. The short title is "The New Zealand Loan Act." I cannot accept the amendment, for these reasons.

Sir J. VOGEL.—If the alteration proposed is made, will it be competent for me to move an addition to the title?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Provided it conform with the title.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The title should describe the purpose of the Bill, and it is not right that this title should stand as it does without the addition of the words "and for the purpose of stopping Future Borrowing." The Bill has become a Loan Bill and also a Bill for the purpose of stopping further borrowing, and I think, Sir, that should be a part of the title. May I move that, after this is settled?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think so.

The House divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

AYES, 27.

Atkinson	Jackson	Pearson
Beetham	Lance	Richardson, G.
Buchanan	Lawry	Ross
Carroll	McGregor	S. Menteth
Fergus	Mitchelson	Taiwhanga
Fisher	Monk	Whyte.
Goldie	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	O'Connor	Bruce
Hamlin	Peacock	Macarthur.
Hislop		

NOES, 12.

Brown	Kelly	Vogel.
Fitzherbert	Moss	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	Parata	Hutchison
Grey	Reeves, R. H. J.	Perceval.
Joyce		

Majority for, 15.

Amendment negatived.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I wish to point out to honourable members that it has become a dis-

tinctive feature of the Bill to stop further borrowing; and I think it would therefore be right to add to the title the words "and for stopping Borrowing in Future." I would propose to those honourable gentlemen who are so eager to advertise to the world that general amount of virtue and abstinence in which the colony has indulged that they should support this addition.

Amendment not seconded.

Sir G. GREY.—I could not quite agree with the honourable member for Christchurch North, because the words proposed would be foreign to the whole scope and title of the Bill. It is quite clear that we are about to put into the title something not contemplated by the Bill. Although immigration is not permitted by the wording of the Bill, you put that into the title. The title expresses that which the Bill does not provide. It is quite clear that there is a contradiction in terms. It would be best to leave that out, because it would convey a false impression.

Title agreed to.

#### SUPPLY.

A message was received from the Governor, transmitting the supplementary estimates, which were ordered to be referred to the Committee of Supply.

On the question, That Mr. Speaker do leave the chair, in order that the House may resolve itself into Committee of Supply,

Sir J. VOGEL said,—I wish only to make a very brief reference to the supplementary estimates. I must say I think a great injustice has been done to honourable members who have gone away, who were not aware that such proposals as these would be brought down. The first item I take is, "Contribution in aid of the Imperial Institute, £1,000." I presume that is on account of the £1,000 a year for ten years. The late Government asked the Agent-General whether it would be acceptable to those who have charge of the Imperial Institute that the colony should make a contribution in that way, supposing Parliament were inclined to agree to it. I say, then, that this matter should have been brought down by resolution, and the views of Parliament taken upon it; and not that, on the night when it is proposed to prorogue, this item of £1,000 should be brought down, without the question having been raised whether the colony is or is not inclined to make the contribution. I shall vote for the amount, because I believe in the purpose for which it is intended; but I say neither the House nor the country will be satisfied with the manner in which this vote is brought forward. Then, with regard to the votes generally, I find that they are simply and virtually, and effectively, an entire reversal of the alleged savings which the Government were to make in the several departments. Take, for example, the Land Department. We were told that the Government would make a saving of £15,000; and their plea of retrenchment was that they would make that saving in three months, and that it would represent

£60,000 of the saving of £300,000 which they were to make in the next year: but now we find that this £15,000 is counteracted by a vote for £17,800. Then I take the four departments of Justice, Mines, Defence, and Lands, and I find that, although the Government stated their intention of making a saving of £71,000 for the remainder of this year, and on these four items an amount of £32,200, they now come down and ask for additional estimates to the extent of £32,976 on those items. It shows that, as I have said all along, their retrenchment is a sham. Take the Mines Department, in which they were to make a saving of £8,000, and yet now they come down and ask for £4,660 additional. I dare say the honourable gentlemen will say they propose to make reductions in one item and these increases in another; but they know that all through the public service, year after year, there are large savings on the votes taken by classes, and that to add this £4,660 and say at the same time that they are saving £8,000 is simply an absurdity. Now, Sir, we were led to believe that £32,200 was the saving this year in Justice, Mines, Defence, and Land Fund; and that was to be the basis of four times the amount of saving next year. Well, the supplementary estimates come down and propose £700 more than the alleged savings. I cannot understand what is the meaning of proposing £20,000 for the Wellington Post Office. In the first instance, there is some dodge about it. Supposing a thousand men were put upon the works, it would be impossible to spend £20,000 before the 31st of March next. I suspect that it is meant to put the whole of this £20,000 as a deficiency of the year, so as to swell the deficiency. If they can spend a couple of thousand before the 31st of March it is as much as can be done. What I want to know is, how are they going to contrive to spend £20,000? Is the dial to be set round with diamonds, and costly sculpture to be added to the building? All I know is that, with additional partition-walls from east to west and north to south, so as to strengthen the building to be proof against anything in the shape of an ordinary calamity, the amount we were told would be required would be something like £18,000. What is the other £7,000 required for? Perhaps before I go on the honourable gentleman will tell me. Is it proposed to have a clock-tower?

Major ATKINSON.—I would prefer the honourable gentleman to go on before answering him.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Does he propose to construct the tower at once, or does he not? If he means to have a clock-tower, of course that will account for some few thousands extra. If the clock-tower is not to be erected, as we were informed, £13,000 would be sufficient for the main building itself; and, supposing the clock-tower is to be erected, £3,000 additional would be required. How is it that £20,000 is put down, unless it is proposed to introduce into the building some rare work of art?—and we are not in a position to do anything of the kind at the present time.

*Sir J. Vogel*

The late Government proposed that the tower should not be erected now, but that the building should be constructed in such a manner as to allow the tower to be erected at a future time, when the colony had funds at its disposal for beautifying the architecture of the chief cities of the colony; but that in the meantime sufficient authority should be taken to build the post-office without the expensive addition of a tower. As I am informed, even with a tower £20,000 was not the amount that would be required.

Major ATKINSON.—I do not propose to follow the honourable gentleman. I think the exhibition to-night is something childish, and the honourable gentleman has wasted hour after hour in the merest talk: not with reference to business at all, but joking as to titles. That has been going on for some time.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The honourable gentleman is referring to a former debate.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think he is.

Sir J. VOGEL.—He is referring to a former debate, and you, Sir, have not allowed me to refer to a former debate.

Major ATKINSON.—I want to tell the Committee about one or two of these items. The honourable gentleman was very great in regard to defence. I will tell the Committee how it was we were out to this amount as to defence, and then honourable members will see the difference. These items have come in without our knowledge. We knew nothing about them when we made our Statement. The late Government took £5,000 for ammunition, and they spent £13,000; and now we have got to put it upon the estimates, and have got to stand the accusations which the honourable gentleman has hurled against us. Let me read two or three of these items. There is an amount here for Remington rifles: there was no authority for ordering these at all. They have come, and we have to pay for them. Then, we have just discovered an amount due for fifteen hundred Snider rifles, £2,000. Those and other items make up a total of £8,000 over and above the vote that we knew nothing at all about. That is the sort of thing the honourable gentleman has been doing with his Government. Almost every vote is run over, without the slightest authority of the House. All these things will be dealt with in Committee. I wish to say a word about the Imperial Institute. I hope the Committee will exercise its discretion in voting the amount set down for the Institute or not. I was doubtful about putting it on. The late Government had apparently determined to pay £1,000 a year for ten years. The arrangements of the late Government seemed to make it necessary that this should be submitted to the House in some form. Honourable gentlemen know it was impossible to deal with this payment. We had no opportunity of dealing with it. We have done more in the short time this session than we have done in any Parliament before; but we felt it right to give the Committee an opportunity of voting the amount if it thought it desirable to do so. I am not prepared, with the knowledge

I possess, to recommend it. I do not say I may not propose it next year.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Strike it off now, and take the sense of the House next year upon it.

Major ATKINSON.—I do not want the honourable gentleman's advice. His friendliness is nothing but a pretence—nothing but a wasting of time. A very large number of honourable members now cannot spend Christmas at home with their families. It is all very well with the honourable gentleman, who is comfortably at home in Wellington: but the honourable gentleman's action to-night has been, not to do the business of the country, but to waste time.

Motion agreed to.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

#### PUBLIC WORKS FUND.—PART I.

#### CLASS I.

Vote, Immigration, £10,000, agreed to.

#### CONSOLIDATED FUND, ORDINARY REVENUE ACCOUNT.

#### CLASS I.—COLONIAL SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.

Colonial Secretary, £7,723.

Sir J. VOGEL asked what was the arrangement about the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition.

Major ATKINSON said the Government intended to apply for the space offered, and had already appointed a Commission for the Exhibition, and intended to get up as good a show as possible for New Zealand. The amount, £3,500, was estimated to cover the whole cost, as far as could be judged. The Government had requested Sir James Hector to make a report on the subject, which he had done. They were informed the cost would be about £3,000; but they had put on an extra £500, and expected that would be the outside sum.

Mr. MONK moved, That the item "Contribution in aid of the Imperial Institute, £1,000," be struck out, as the Premier had said it was not necessary to pass this session.

Mr. BRUCE asked for an explanation of the item, "Compensation to Dr. Hacon, late Superintendent, Sunnyside Asylum, for loss of office, £338." There was a rumour that he had left through insubordination, and, if so, it was hardly right he should get this amount; and, if it was not true, the Minister should contradict it. It was stated that the insubordination was refusal to obey the instructions of Dr. Macgregor.

Mr. HISLOP believed there was some truth in the rumour that Dr. Hacon had disobeyed the instructions of Dr. Macgregor; but the circumstances were somewhat peculiar. Dr. Hacon was appointed to the Christchurch Asylum, and it was not very definitely understood as to whether he could or could not be removed from such a position. It was proposed that he should be transferred to Wellington, but he preferred leaving the service to doing so. It was determined by the late Government to put this item on the estimates; and the present Government, not having had sufficient time to consider the subject, yet

thought a *prima facie* case existed, and so proposed the item in the meantime, and would look further into the question.

Mr. BRUCE understood from the Minister's explanation that it was not definitely decided to pay this compensation.

Dr. NEWMAN thought the explanation hardly gave the exact circumstances of the case. Exchanges were being made in the service, and it was proposed that Dr. Hacon should go where he would get £150 a year less salary, or he had the option of retiring. He thought Dr. Hacon had been exceedingly badly treated, and, as the late Government had put the item on the estimates, and it was recommended by Dr. Macgregor, it should be passed, and the compensation should be paid, as it was not a case of mere insubordination.

Mr. BRUCE said there was an item, "A. T. Campbell, compensation for land taken at Wanganui, £80." That case came last year before the Waste Lands Committee, of which he was a member. He did not recollect the facts sufficiently to go into the details of the case; but he recollected that the Committee unanimously recommended that Mr. Campbell should get £200. Why was he to get only £80?

Mr. HISLOP said Mr. Campbell had caused to be sold, under a provincial ordinance, a piece of land adjoining his own which belonged to an absentee, and in respect of which he was unable to get a fencing contribution. Mr. Campbell himself bought a piece of the land for £87. Afterwards it was ascertained that the owner had died in England and left the property to another person, under will. The representative of this person brought an action against Mr. Campbell to eject him from the property; but the parties afterwards came to some arrangement, and the property was resold to Mr. Campbell. The latter did not fight the case, because it was doubtful whether the ordinance under which the property was sold really gave the power which it was intended to give. It thus became a question whether the colony ought to compensate Mr. Campbell, for, though he had set the law in motion himself, a doubtful title had been given him by the Government under the ordinance. Mr. Campbell had chosen to take title under this ordinance, and, although he (Mr. Hislop) had given very careful consideration to the Committee's report, he did not think it right that £200 should be granted, because that would be equal to guaranteeing that the colony should give the full present value of land as to which a possible error had been made by Government officials owing to ambiguous legislation; but, as Mr. Campbell had afterwards paid for the property on the second sale, and had paid £77 for it previously, he might fairly be refunded that sum perhaps. The Committee thought Mr. Campbell ought to get the full present value of the property; but if such a principle were admitted it would probably lead to other such demands on the Treasury on account of errors of officials and doubtful legislation: it would be equal to the Government giving a guarantee against errors of this kind. He thought, therefore, the

Mr. Hislop

colony was only entitled to pay to Mr. Campbell the amount he paid into the Colonial Treasury in the first instance on account of the land when the owner could not be found.

Mr. BRUCE was glad to hear the Minister had given so much consideration to the question; but, at the same time, he might remark that Mr. Campbell's petition was presented by the late member for Waitotara, Mr. Bryce, who appeared in support of it, and Mr. Ballance, then Minister of Lands, was on the Committee, and fully concurred in the unanimous recommendation of the Committee that Mr. Campbell should get the £200. Some thought he was entitled to even more. Though he (Mr. Bruce) had not a clear recollection of all the facts, he did not think the Colonial Secretary had made a quite accurate statement of the circumstances of the case. However, he would not dwell on the matter.

Mr. HISLOP said no injustice would be done to any one by passing this amount. The decision of the Committee was very much founded on the belief that Mr. Davy had wrongly issued a Crown grant to the original owner of the land; but, on inquiry, he (Mr. Hislop) had found that that officer had only done what he ought to have done; and, instead of Mr. Campbell's title being weak on account of anything done by the department, it was weak on account of the proceedings originally taken by himself for his own protection.

Sir J. VOGEL said there was an item, "Expenses of Waitotara and Eastern Maori election petitions, £143." How was that divided between the two cases?

Mr. HISLOP said the amount for the Eastern Maori one, which was only an estimate, was about £55; but in the other case the amount was £84 14s. 4d., made up as follows: For travelling allowance and expenses—Chief Justice, £26 5s.; Justice Williams, £26 5s.; Deputy Registrar, £12 1s.; Secretary to Chief Justice, £10 1s. 8d.; Secretary to Justice Williams, £10 1s. 8d.

Sir J. VOGEL inquired whether there was a sum to be put on for the two special trains run to collect evidence, or whether that would be charged against the Public Works Fund.

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that no special trains were run at all.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES asked if the country would always have to pay expenses in connection with the hearing of election petitions.

Major ATKINSON replied Yes.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES thought it a very pernicious system.

Sir J. VOGEL asked if the Premier would undertake to submit the item "Imperial Institute, £1,000," next year.

Major ATKINSON replied that he would not pledge himself. He had not yet mastered the subject. If on inquiry Ministers thought it should be granted they would place the sum on the estimates.

Sir J. VOGEL understood, then, that they were not to regard their method of dealing with the question that night as a test question.

Major ATKINSON.—No.



Item, £1,000, struck out.

Vote, as reduced, £6,723, agreed to.

**CLASS II.—COLONIAL TREASURER.**  
Miscellaneous, £3,065.

Dr. NEWMAN called attention to the item, "Exchange and commission, additional, £3,000," and said he thought that this work was done in a very expensive manner, and that it was time the Premier looked into it to see if the work could not be done more cheaply. He thought any private firm with a similar amount of business to offer would get it done on more favourable terms.

Major ATKINSON said he would look into the matter; but he might say the colony now got its work done at less than market rates.

Vote, £3,065, agreed to.

**CLASS IV.—MINISTER OF JUSTICE.**  
Vote, Amounts under-estimated on votes, £2,716, agreed to.

**CLASS V.—POSTMASTER-GENERAL.**  
Vote, Miscellaneous, £250, agreed to.

**CLASS VI.—COMMISSIONER OF CUSTOMS.**  
Vote, Miscellaneous, £388, agreed to.

**CLASS VII.—COMMISSIONER OF STAMPS.**  
Vote, Miscellaneous, £130, agreed to.

**CLASS VIII.—MINISTER OF EDUCATION.**  
Vote, School for deaf-mutes, £92, agreed to.

**CLASS IX.—MINISTER FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS.**  
Miscellaneous, £200.

In reply to Mr. R. H. J. REEVES,

Mr. MITCHELSON said that this was a vote to Mr. G. M. Park, who entered the service of the Telegraph Department in 1869, and was stationed at Taupo during the time of the Te Kooti outbreak, and rendered valuable service to the colony during that time by supplying military officers in the district with information, which he gathered at considerable expense to himself. Sir Donald McLean recognised the value of his services, and promised that they should be rewarded; but nothing was done. Mr. Park presented several petitions, and in 1886 the Committee strongly recommended his claim. The late Government proposed to put a sum on the supplementary estimates; but, owing to the occurrences of last session, no such estimates were brought down. After inquiry and consultation with the Chairman of the Public Petitions Committee that dealt with the question last session, the Government had put this sum on, believing that it would settle the claim equitably.

Vote, £200, agreed to.

**CLASS X.—MINISTER OF MINES.**  
Miscellaneous, £4,600.

Mr. MONK asked for an explanation of what seemed a large item.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said that half of it was for a reward for goldfield discoveries. The vote seemed large, but he did not think it would be expended.

Mr. MONK asked what was the use of putting on votes for such a purpose when they were not likely to be expended.

Major ATKINSON said it did not much matter whether the money was voted or not. He was inclined to think it was not of much use to put such votes on the estimates.

Vote, £4,600, agreed to.

**CLASS XI.—WORKING RAILWAYS DEPARTMENT.**  
Working railways, £1,117.

Dr. NEWMAN said there was an amount set down for compensation for injuries, and for compassionate allowances to widows, and he thought some system or plan should be adopted with regard to these. Those who had influence might get a great deal, while those without it might receive very little. The Minister would do good work if he would look into this matter. He thought also that such work as crossing-keeping should be given to men who had received injuries in the public service.

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that there was a standard for compassionate allowances. If a man in the department lost his life through an accident, his widow received six months' pay. He quite agreed with the other suggestion, and had no doubt that the Railway Commissioners, when appointed, would take the matter into consideration.

Mr. GOLDIE asked for what the gratuities were given—if they were for long service.

Mr. MITCHELSON explained that they were for long services. In one case a man who had been in the service eighteen years, on being discharged because of his inability through age, received twelve months' pay, and another man who had been twenty-two years in the service received a similar allowance.

Vote agreed to.

**CLASS XII.—MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS.**

Public Buildings—Restoration of General Post Office, Wellington, £20,000.

Sir J. VOGEL would like an explanation of this vote. Was it intended to put up a tower on the post-office?

Mr. MITCHELSON had not had time to consider the question of a tower, but had come to the conclusion that the specifications that had been prepared were not suitable. In fact, he thought the building, if re-erected in accordance with them, would be unsafe.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON wished to know why there was an increase on the estimated cost, which was £13,500.

Mr. MITCHELSON replied that money would have to be provided for the internal fittings of the building.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES thought they might be sure the Minister would not spend more than was required. He thought it very necessary that the building should be erected.

Sir J. VOGEL moved, That the vote be reduced by £6,500. He did not know why more than that should be required, and did not think that more should be voted than was wanted. He was decidedly adverse to putting up a clock-tower, as the money could be saved at a time when, throughout the country, there

was a want of small buildings for public purposes. It would be entirely impossible before next session to supply the internal fittings, and the votes should be taken separately. He knew from information that came before him before he left office that the building could be restored for £13,500.

Mr. GUINNESS supported the amendment. While public offices were required throughout the colony it seemed to him they were not in a position to spend money on a clock-tower: that should be deferred until they could afford to do liberal justice all round.

Mr. PEACOCK wished to know if the Minister intended to call for tenders for the fittings as well as for the restoration of the building.

Mr. MITCHELSON did not intend to call for tenders for both the building and the fittings at the same time. He hoped the vote would be left as it stood, and he would assure honourable members that no greater expense than was absolutely necessary would be incurred.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote be reduced by £6,500."

#### AYES, 9.

Fraser	Richardson, E.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Goldie	Smith	Guinness
Grey	Vogel.	Hutchison.
Kelly		

#### NOES, 29.

Atkinson	Izard	Ross
Beetham	Jackson	S.-Menteath
Blake	Joyce	Taipua
Bruce	Lawry	Taiwhanga
Buchanan	Macarthur	Whyte
Fergus	Mitchelson	Wilson
Fisher	Newman	Withy.
Fitzherbert	O'Connor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Graham	Peacock	McGregor
Hislop	Richardson, G.	Reeves, R.H.J.

Majority against, 20.

Amendment negatived.

Sir J. VOGEL said the retrenchment sham had burst, and they now knew that it was nothing more than an instrument for party purposes. How the Government could reconcile to themselves to talk of cutting down salaries in all directions, and refuse to carry on works of absolute necessity, on the plea that there was no money, and at the same time bring down such an extravagant vote as this, was past his understanding. If he were a younger and a stronger man he would stone-wall this vote for twenty-four hours, until honourable members could be brought back, as he felt sure they would vote against it. As, however, opposition appeared to be ineffective, he would ask the honourable member in charge of the department, while asking for authority for this amount in the Appropriation Act, to put in a provision that not more than £2,000 should be expended during the three months to the 31st March.

Mr. MITCHELSON said it was his intention to have a provision to that effect inserted in the Appropriation Act.

Vote, £20,000, agreed to.

*Sir J. Vogel*

#### CLASS XIII.—MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

Defence, £7,884.

Sir J. VOGEL said the Premier had made a charge against the late Minister of Defence of ordering rifles from Home without leaving any record in the office. He (Sir J. Vogel) was sorry that his late colleague was prevented, through illness, from being present; but he imagined it was not the fault of that honourable gentleman, but of some officer of the department, that a sufficient record was not placed before the new Ministry. The complaint was, that the Minister, when he tried to estimate the requirements of the year, was not informed of these rifles and arms which had unexpectedly arrived; but he would ask the Committee to suspend its judgment until it could hear what Mr. Ballance had to say in reply. Unfortunately that gentleman was at present too ill to be troubled by asking for information on the subject. This showed, however, that the so-called reductions only amounted to the ordinary saving between the amounts voted and those actually expended.

Mr. FERGUS said that, as a matter of fact, the appropriation last year was £5,000 and the expenditure £13,000.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES thought the amount of £50 put down for repairs to the graves at Te Awamutu ought to be at least £100; and also that the compassionate allowance to the widow of the late Colonel Lyon was very small, and ought to be £500 instead of £100.

Mr. GOLDIE said that Colonel Lyon got £900 the year before he died, and he (Mr. Goldie) thought the amount now given to his widow was quite sufficient.

Major JACKSON said Colonel Lyon got two years' pay on retiring, which he was entitled to, and he had worked for two years at £50 a year, and had done better service than those who were receiving far larger salaries. He had done good service in times past to the country, and had never spared himself; and it was only a nice tribute to his memory to give this small amount to his widow.

Vote, £7,884, agreed to.

#### LAND FUND ACCOUNT.

##### CLASS XIV.

Minister of Lands, £17,900.

Mr. MONK would like to know how it was there was so much under-estimated in regard to salaries as £15,000.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said there had been a mistake made in not looking into the figures more carefully. One or two of the items covered the amount voted on the general estimates *plus* the amount that was required in excess. He would ask the Committee to reduce the vote by £5,000, and he begged to move a motion to that effect.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES would like to know how it was that £1,000 was under-estimated for expenses under the Thermal Springs Act.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said on the general estimates £500 was voted. It was found that the service at the close of the year would require a total expenditure of nearly £1,000.

Sir J. VOGEL said this was one of the alleged savings which he spoke of during the session as having no other basis than the good intentions of the Minister in charge—merely the sanguine expectations of what new Ministers would do when, as they said, they turned that big building upside-down. Instead of a saving of £15,000, which was to form the basis of £60,000 saving next year, honourable members found there was a demand for £17,800 on the supplementary estimates.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said the proposed savings were based on a conclusion that the reductions would take place on the 1st of January, and these estimates now were based on the belief that the expenditure must go on till pretty near the end of the financial year. The retrenchment proposed also included the abolition of the Land Boards and the dispensing with the services of officers who would have gone with the Land Boards.

Mr. MONK asked if he was to conclude that the reductions or savings were not likely to eventuate.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said the whole of them could not eventuate. The Government were continually springing surprises of expenditure that were never thought of.

Motion to reduce the vote by £5,000 agreed to.

Vote, as reduced, £12,800, agreed to.

#### PUBLIC WORKS FUND.—PART I.

##### CLASS II.

Public Works Department, £532.

Mr. MONK inquired how it was there was such a large amount as £532 as compensation to Mr. W. Dartnall for loss of office.

Mr. MITCHELSON explained that this gentleman had been for many years Engineer in Southland, and had been in the service of the Government since 1874; and the sum set down was the sum he was entitled to receive for loss of office, according to the minute of the late Government. The present Government had a doubt whether officers in the Public Works Department were really entitled to compensation, as the works upon which they were engaged were generally of a temporary character; but they found a minute of the late Public Works Minister recommending the payment of this amount to Mr. Dartnall, and this minute had received the approval of the late Cabinet. It was brought before the present Cabinet; and, although they placed this amount on the estimates, the Government did not intend to pay it until they had considered the question as to whether Mr. Dartnall was legally entitled to receive this sum.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES reminded honourable members that Mr. Dartnall had been in the provincial service before he joined the General Government service.

Vote, £532, agreed to.

#### PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE ACCOUNT.

Public Trust Office, £5,330.

Mr. HUTCHISON said the evidence taken on a petition before the Native Affairs Com-

mittee showed there was very great dissatisfaction among those most directly interested in the management of the leaseholds under the West Coast Settlement Reserves Act. There was great complaint as to the way the work of collecting and distributing the rents had been performed. There was great dissatisfaction now among the Natives interested in these leases, and, as there would be much additional work under the Act just passed, he hoped the Colonial Treasurer would make inquiry, with a view to efficiency being secured.

Major ATKINSON said he would take an opportunity of looking into the matter.

Sir J. VOGEL said he had come to the conclusion—although the custom had existed while he was in office—that charging against departments like the Public Trust Office and the Government Insurance Office the cost of their own audit was not a good system, because it made the audit officer of either of those departments a mere member of that department, which meant a loss of independence on the part of those responsible for the audit. The official was under the head of his own department, and should not have to look to another department on such a question as a rise of salary. Of course the object was to show the cost of the Audit Department to be as small as possible; but it was a merely fictitious way of showing the cost of the Audit Department. The Audit Department was sufficiently valuable in itself to bear the necessary cost. He thought the cost of audit of the Public Trust Office and the Government Insurance Office should be charged along with the rest of the Audit Department, and that the audit of both should be made quite independent. He thought it was a vicious principle to have officers in the immediate pay of the departments they were auditing.

Major ATKINSON said he should be glad to consider the matter.

Vote, £5,330, agreed to.

#### GOVERNMENT INSURANCE ACCOUNT.

Vote, Government Insurance Department, £48,418, agreed to.

#### UNAUTHORISED EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT.

Vote, Consolidated Fund—For services not provided for, £53,685 15s. 8d., agreed to.

Vote, Public Works Fund—For services not provided for, and services in excess of votes, £28,693 10s. 8d., agreed to.

Vote, Government Life Insurance Department—For services in excess of item, £4,982 13s. 11d., agreed to.

Vote, Sums irrecoverable by the Crown required to be written off departmental accounts, £30 18s. 2d., agreed to.

On the resolutions being reported, Mr. PEACOCK asked whether the Premier was prepared to give effect to the suggestion he (Mr. Peacock) had made in a motion he had put on the Order Paper, but which had not been reached, setting forth that rewards should be offered on certain conditions for the discovery of new goldfields.

Major ATKINSON said he would give effect to that suggestion of the honourable gentleman's.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Before you put the question that the resolutions be agreed to, Sir, I wish to state, lest my remarks in Committee of Supply were not taken down, that I very much regret that the amount of £20,000 voted for the Wellington Post-office was passed. I am of opinion that had there been a fuller House it would not have been passed; and I should have felt myself justified in delaying its passage, only that I have not physical strength to do so by those means which are popularly termed "stonewalling." Similarly so in reference to the charge of wasting time made against me by the Premier earlier this evening: I should have felt myself justified in adopting a like course, if I had been strong enough, with regard to the clause introduced into the Loan Bill after the departure of so large a number of members. But, Sir, I am of opinion that the loan—

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must remind the honourable member that the Loan Bill is passed, and, being passed, he cannot debate it.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I believe, on this question I can speak to anything.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Not to a past debate. Past debates are not allowed to be referred to.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I can move that the votes be recommitted.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Not the Loan Bill. The Loan Bill is passed, and disposed of. You can move that these resolutions be recommitted, of course, but not the Loan Bill.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Well, Sir, I must adopt once more those means by which one can express his meaning at greater length. I was about to say that the House has decided by its votes not to continue immigration—not to borrow for the purpose of immigration; and it will be misleading should we suppose that the votes which we have now passed, which comprise the amount of £10,000 for immigration, were other than an amount to meet engagements already contracted for. As regards future immigration, the Government have no authority from the House to enter into any arrangement beyond the present liabilities. I believe, Sir, that, were a well-considered scheme brought before the House, it might be otherwise. I shall not prolong my remarks, but only wish to place these remarks on record in *Hansard*.

Resolutions agreed to.

#### SAN FRANCISCO MAIL SERVICE.

Major ATKINSON.—I now, with the leave of the House, will move a resolution with regard to the San Francisco mail service. The Government had originally intended to ask the House for authority to enter into negotiations for a further contract; but, looking at the responsibility of getting a fair time for its consideration during the present session, they have now come to the conclusion that it would be better to ask the House to grant authority to renew the present service for one year with the present contractors. By that means we shall have plenty of time for the

discussion of this question during next session, and the two contracts will expire within a month of each other. They will both expire in the same year—one in November and the other in December—when we shall, I hope, be able to enter into fresh arrangements for both these services. I do not propose to make a speech upon the subject, but I will move this resolution: That, in view of the contract for the San Francisco mail service terminating in November next year, and of the impossibility of giving the question of renewal full consideration this session, the Government be authorised to arrange with the present contractors for an extension of the contract for twelve months, and to submit to the House next session definite proposals for the continuance of the service.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I should like to ask the honourable gentleman, does he mean to give the Government unlimited power as to the expense, or does he mean that it should be done on the same terms as at present?

Major ATKINSON.—On the same terms as at present.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Nor does it say that it shall be with the concurrence of the New South Wales Government. But if the honourable gentleman assures us that this is the intention of merely continuing the contract on the same terms as at present, of course we shall accept the assurance. But I wish to say this: that I think this is a course which the honourable gentleman has been forced into not because of there not being time, but because it is the only course that is really open to him. But he lost sight of a matter which I may point out to him—that the key to the whole position is this: Whether the English Government are willing to concede the carriage of mails between San Francisco and England, and England and San Francisco, as they hitherto have done; and the communications with the Agent-General on the subject for many months past are decidedly discouraging in this respect. The position is one of a very critical and dangerous nature. The Canadian Government is pressing the English Government very strongly to adopt and subsidise the route between Canada and the Australian Colonies, and it is also pressing upon the Australian Colonies to encourage such a route. Now, I believe, though I am not sure, that the English Government, after a good deal of consideration, is assisting the Canadian Government with regard to subsidising the line to Japan or China, but it has shown no disposition to subsidise or help to subsidise the line to Australia. On the other hand the Canadian Government will probably look upon it as such an unfriendly thing on the part of the English Government to help the service by San Francisco to the Australasian Colonies that I am afraid it is very doubtful if the English Government will be persuaded to continue the arrangement after November next. I point out this difficulty to the honourable gentleman because, if he considers himself bound by the assurance he has given that he will not pay more for the service than he is

paying now, his first point will be to ascertain whether the English Government will continue to carry the mails after twelve months. I communicated with the Agent-General, asking him to arrange, if possible, for carrying the mails between England and San Francisco, and San Francisco and England, for three years; but he gave me no encouragement to suppose that it would be done. I think it is wise, therefore, that the Government should try to extend the time now for one year. I do not believe the English Government would object to that, although I do not feel at all sure upon the subject, and I cannot help thinking that at the expiration of that year there is very little chance of the English Government assisting a line so opposed to the wishes of Canada. Therefore the colony will then have to face the question of carrying the mails between England and San Francisco, and San Francisco and England, at possibly considerably increased expense. In my opinion the permanent continuance of the San Francisco service really depends upon the United States Legislature. It depends upon their reducing the duty on wool. If such a course were adopted it would lead to a large trade between the Australian Colonies and the United States. But in the absence of such an inducement there would be a great obstacle to continuing the San Francisco service, and overlooking the Canadian line. There is another question to be borne in mind, and that is the completion of the Panama Canal. If it should be the case that the duty on Australian wool is reduced, in my opinion the colonies would be glad to obtain a good and perhaps expensive service with San Francisco. If such a change does not take place I am not hopeful that an arrangement can be made for continuing the San Francisco service beyond the year's extension now asked for, and I am not even confident that we shall be able to get that year's extension.

Major ATKINSON.—The subjects to which the honourable gentleman has referred have not escaped my attention, and I should not have thought that the honourable gentleman could have conceived it possible that I had not looked into my business. I have been in communication with Canada on the subject, and also with the authorities at Home, and there is some reason, I believe, for hoping that the Imperial Government will extend the service. That point is not settled yet, but I think it is possible they will be disposed to continue the arrangement, at all events for one year. As I have mentioned, it is quite possible that we may have to give up this route; but I do not want to go into these matters now, when nobody is listening, and it is only taking up time to no purpose. It is quite clear that we cannot have full information as to what we can do by way of Canada or by San Francisco, or even, possibly, by the more southern route; and, of course, it depends very much upon Sydney. The American Government are ready to advance their contribution by £30,000. Of course that is not nearly sufficient. The Government intend to give full information to the House next session

on the subject, and in the meantime I hope we shall be able to extend the service for another year.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I did not attribute any want of attention to the honourable gentleman; I simply said the matter might have escaped his attention.

Resolution agreed to.

#### MASTERTON-MANGAMAHOE BLOCK.

Mr. BEETHAM said it had been reported in the Wairarapa District and Woodville that the Government intended to resume possession of the Masterton-Mangamahoe Special-settlement Block. He wished to ask the Minister of Lands if such was the case.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON replied that the Government had no such intention; but there had been some difficulty with regard to payment on the part of the selectors. At present only a portion of the money for the rural lands had been paid, but none with regard to the township.

#### REEFTON TOWN-SECTIONS.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES asked the Minister of Lands, if he can devise some means by which the town-sections unsold in the Town of Reefton may be disposed of, and the proceeds of sale placed in a suspense account, pending final settlement of contract between the Midland Railway Company and the Government? He understood that Mr. Alan Scott, the colonial manager of the company, was quite ready to agree to the course suggested, and such a course would give general satisfaction if by some means or other it could be adopted. He believed there were several people who had expended considerable sums in improving land in that neighbourhood; but the whole of the land was locked up at the present time, and, though in some cases people were living on sections, the county authorities could not rate them, on account of the land not having been made freehold. He hoped the Minister would be able to do something in the matter, which was one of very considerable local importance. Only that morning he had received a letter from a settler at Tadmor in which the writer said,—

"We very much feel the want of being able to get a title to land in this district. Cannot some arrangement be made similar to that suggested by you, and let the people have the land to settle on, instead of being, as it is, useless to the railway company and the colony?"

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said the Government could not interfere at the present time, because the land was within the authorised area, and the negotiations with the company were not yet complete. The Government had taken power, however, under the resolutions which had been passed by the House, to deal with the lands within the company's area on the company's assent being obtained, and when the present negotiations were completed probably the honourable gentleman's sugges-

tion would be given effect to. In the meantime, however, nothing could be done.

#### BAY OF PLENTY NATIVES.

Mr. CARROLL asked the Government if they would during the recess take into consideration the position of the Natives in the Bay of Plenty rendered landless, as it were, by the late eruptions. A number of them were in a very poor state, and their case required immediate consideration. He had recently been there himself, and he knew the state they were in. It was most desirable that some measure of relief should be adopted. There were large blocks of Crown land in the district that were not worth anything to Europeans for the purposes of settlement, but which would be very beneficial to the Natives if the Government could see their way to provide for these poor people by allowing them to have some of those lands. He was sorry the Native Minister was not present, and would ask the question of the Premier.

Major ATKINSON said the Government would look into the matter. He was sure the honourable gentleman would not expect him to give a pledge, but he should be very glad to inquire into the matter and consider it, and if he could do anything properly to afford relief he should be very glad to do it.

#### GREYMOUTH HARBOUR.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I understand it is not the intention of the Government to bring in a Bill this session with regard to dissolving the Greymouth Harbour Board; but I will ask the Premier whether, under section 9 of the Greymouth Harbour Act, the Government are prepared to get a resolution passed sanctioning the guarantee of a further loan of £50,000, that being the balance of the amount authorised by Act to be borrowed. I know what information the Premier has given me privately, but, in the interests of my constituents, knowing that this matter is agitating the public mind, I wish the Premier to publicly state whether the Government intend to propose such a resolution, or what course they intend to adopt.

Major ATKINSON.—We were inclined to introduce a Bill, according to the recommendation of the Committee which sat on the Westport Harbour, to take over that harbour at once, and we should have proposed in the same Bill that the Government should take power to inquire into the working of the Greymouth Harbour, with a view, if necessary, of taking that over also; but, as the honourable gentleman is aware from the information I have given him, the Government does not think there is time to consider those measures this session, but the Government will make inquiry and take such action as may be necessary. With reference to money for carrying out the work, the Government are of opinion that the work should be pushed on with vigour, for it is a most important work. The Government do not propose to pass any resolution of the sort mentioned in the Acts, but it is their intention to find the necessary moneys on the security of

*Mr. G. F. Richardson*

debentures they hold, pending the decision of Parliament upon the whole question next session.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL.

This Bill was introduced, and read a first time.

On the question, That the Bill be read a second time,

Mr. TAIPUA said,—Sir, I only desire to ask the Government if they will endeavour to circulate their proposed Native Land Bills as soon as possible during the recess, so that the Maoris may have the opportunity of studying them. I intend to visit my constituents, and should like to consult with them.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—It is the intention of the Government to circulate the Native Land Bills as soon as they are prepared. The Government will during the recess take every possible care to make the Bills acceptable to both races, and as soon as they are prepared they will be circulated amongst the Maori chiefs.

Mr. R. H. J. REEVES.—I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without entering my protest against the Government not having taken into consideration the desirability of putting money on the estimates for the greater development of the gold-mining industry in New Zealand, and more particularly for the construction of roads and for the completion of bridges on the main line of road from Nelson to Westport and Reefton. It is well known that that district has been for years one of the most important gold-producing parts of the whole colony, and I can safely say that no part of the colony has been more neglected in the matter of roads and bridges than that has been. Any honourable gentlemen who take an interest in the development of mining resources must know that, as far as the West Coast is concerned, it can safely be said that our district is *par excellence* the most prosperous in the whole of the colony; and what we do want is a little more encouragement and more money spent amongst us for the purpose of fostering mining industries. I do not blame the Government on this occasion, because, as honourable members are aware, it has not very much money to give. But I think there might have been an attempt made to place that part of the colony which I represent in a rather better position in regard to public works. I find, on looking over the estimates, that we have hardly a single shilling put down for our district. I trust that during the recess the Minister of Lands and Mines, and also the Minister for Public Works, if they can find it convenient to do so, will visit our district. For I am certain, if they do, they will return to Wellington so impressed with the importance of the district that they will come before the House to conscientiously ask for a considerable sum of money to be devoted in opening up the land, and possibly in aiding the industries, on the West Coast. The Government, as I said before, I am well aware, have not very much money to spare. They have adopted a system of retrenchment that I hope they will carry

on; and I trust that when we meet again, whenever that may be—either in April or in May, I suppose—the Government will bring down to the House such a scheme of retrenchment as we can approve of; and, for my own part, I can say that if they do that I shall be one of their supporters.

Mr. MARCHANT.—I wish to bring officially under the notice of the Government the matter of the Ngaire Swamp. A few hours ago I saw in the newspapers that the Taranaki Land Board proposed to lease twelve hundred acres of the swamp-land to Messrs. Campbell Brothers, who live near there. Now, I think it desirable the Government should, before this matter is finally accomplished, know the history of the swamp. There is about seven thousand acres of it altogether, and that block was leased six or seven years ago to Mr. Caverhill for a term of twenty-one years. He was to pay £200 a year for the first seven years, £400 for the second seven years, and £800 for the third term of seven years. But a swamp, of course, requires draining, and for some cause or other he was unable or unwilling to drain it, but just let it lie on his hands. The Government thought it desirable to acquire this block of land for settlement, and they paid Mr. Caverhill £1,000 about eighteen months ago, I think, to extinguish his rights. That was clearly done with the object of acquiring the freehold of the land. That must, of necessity, have been so, because there could have been no other object in paying Mr. Caverhill £1,000; but now it is proposed by the Land Board to lease twelve hundred acres of the very best part of this land to Messrs. Campbell. It is not going to be given away; it is going to be put up to auction, but at the very low upset rental of £35 a year for the twelve hundred acres. The lessees are expected to spend £100 during the first year in drainage, and £50 for a year or two after, I understand. But I hold it is improper that such a valuable property as the Ngaire Swamp should be dealt with in such a manner. It is eminently suited to be divided into small farms of one hundred or one hundred and fifty acres. The land is not wet—you can walk across it at almost any time of the year; and it is within a mile and a half of the railway-station. All the conditions point to this being one of the most suitable blocks possible for locating farmers of moderate means upon. I have already mentioned the matter to the Minister, but I wish officially to draw the attention of the Government to it, with the object of their inquiring carefully into the matter, to see whether it may not be possible to acquire the freehold. I understand there is every probability of the freehold being acquired before very long; but if large sums of money are spent on this property the Native owners will not be disposed to part with the freehold. Let us acquire that first, then drain it, and settle a large body of prosperous farmers upon it.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I desire to say a few words to the House on a matter I think of very considerable importance. It is very well known that for some years past I have given a very large amount of my time to pushing forward the coal industry; and I desire to say now that, as far as my convictions go, there is nothing of greater importance to the colony at the present juncture. To show that, I need only refer to the results that are taking place alongside of us, and I think they are well worth the attention of honourable members. At the present time this is the state of the trade at Newcastle, New South Wales: The export of coal thence has been,—

Year.	Tons.		
1882	..	..	1,415,990
1883	..	..	1,463,280
1884	..	..	1,616,730
1885	..	..	1,652,136
1886	..	..	2,172,835

At the time when I visited Newcastle, for the purpose of seeing how trade was going there, they had inferior ports and inferior coal to ours, and now they have arrived at the result that over a million of money is paid in the employment of labour there for the output of coal. To achieve a result anything like equal to that would be of the greatest possible advantage to New Zealand, for it would give as much employment as the loans we are now tapering off. A million of money expended in labour in this country would give us an enormous result, not only in the employment of our people and in the consumption of our products, but in giving us an article of export which would counter-balance the great waste the colony is now undergoing in sending so much capital away to meet our engagements at Home. We have now advanced the Westport Harbour so much that a very marked improvement has been made. Another year of energetic progress would see us in a position to export our coal. For two years I have been struggling; for two years I have been constantly complaining to the late Government and asking them to have inquiries made, so that a stop might be put to the waste of time and of money which was going on there; but I could get nothing done. I want honourable members to understand distinctly that I do not wish my strictures to apply in the slightest degree to the present Harbour Board, and for this reason: that the results of the last four months' operations—since they have taken office—have to me been most satisfactory. In order to show that, I have had a return made out by the Secretary and Treasurer of the Board, showing the work which has been done. That return shows the output of stone on the breakwater from the commencement of the undertaking up to the present time. I will read the table, in order that honourable members may clearly understand what the results have been.

## "WESTPORT HARBOUR BOARD.

"Statement showing Output and Cost of Stone delivered in Breakwater.

By whom delivered.	Lime- stone.	Cost per Ton.	Granite.	Cost per Ton.	Remarks.
	Tons.	s. d.	Tons.	s. d.	
Price and Clark ..	..	..	1,864	3 6	Contract, April, 1886.
Blakeley and Savage	10,325	8 8½	6,336·7	3 8½	May to October, 1886.
Day-labour ..	273	15 1	..	..	Fortnight ending 27th Oct., 1886.
" ..	750	12 2	176	12 2	" 10th Nov., 1886.
" ..	1,055	6 10½	703	6 10½	" 24th Nov., 1886.
" ..	2,143	4 6½	725	4 6½	" 8th Dec., 1886.
" ..	1,597	5 1	783	5 4	" 22nd Dec., 1886.
" ..	1,894	6 1	690	7 7½	Period ending 12th Jan., 1887.
" ..	2,090	4 6½	750	6 3½	Fortnight ending 28th Jan., 1887.
" ..	1,907	4 9½	836	5 3½	" 9th Feb., 1887.
" ..	2,536	3 11	1,440	3 8	" 23rd Feb., 1887.
" ..	2,572	3 11½	2,177	3 5½	" 9th March, 1887.
" ..	2,226	3 7½	2,213	2 5½	" 23rd March, 1887.
" ..	2,443	3 7	2,511	3 7½	" 6th April, 1887.
" ..	2,819	3 2½	2,914	3 0½	" 20th April, 1887.
" ..	2,782	2 11½	3,123	2 10½	" 4th May, 1887.
" ..	2,619	3 2	3,359	2 10	" 18th May, 1887.
" ..	2,086	3 4½	2,434	3 4½	" 1st June, 1887.
" ..	2,276	3 1½	3,476	2 11½	" 15th June, 1887.
" ..	2,117	3 1½	2,488	3 10	" 29th June, 1887.
" ..	1,818	3 4½	2,907	3 6	" 18th July, 1887.
" ..	2,315	3 8½	2,631	4 1	" 27th July, 1887.
" ..	2,538	2 10½	3,314	3 2	" 10th Aug., 1887.
" ..	3,399	3 8	3,264	3 3½	" 24th Aug., 1887.
" ..	3,385	3 3½	4,237	2 11½	" 7th Sept., 1887.
" ..	3,444	3 8½	4,337	2 10½	" 21st Sept., 1887.
" ..	2,722	3 11½	3,848	3 6½	" 5th Oct., 1887.
" ..	3,489	3 8½	5,444	2 10½	" 19th Oct., 1887.
" ..	3,764	3 1½	5,877	2 9½	" 2nd Nov., 1887.
	73,384		74,857·7		

## "Recapitulation.

"73,384 tons of limestone delivered in breakwater.

74,857 tons of granite delivered in breakwater.

148,241 tons in all.

"The items charged against the cost of stone as above are stripping, quarrying, and loading stone, haulage to breakwater, tipping, and maintenance of line. At the present output of stone 1s. per ton should be added for the following: Interest and sinking fund, 7d. per ton; fuel, explosives, &c., 5d. per ton; making the total cost per ton 8s. 1½d. + 2s. 9½d. ÷ 2 = 2s. 11·87d. + 12d. = 3s. 11·87d. The Cape Foulwind Railway is at the present time also returning a revenue for passenger and goods traffic of about £20 per week.

"CHAS. A. GREENLAND, Secretary and Treasurer.

"8th November, 1887."

## Supplementary Statement.

By whom delivered.	Lime- stone.	Cost per Ton.	Granite.	Cost per Ton.	Remarks.
	Tons.	s. d.	Tons.	s. d.	
Day-labour ..	3,533	3 0	4,294	3 5½	Fortnight ending 16th Nov., 1887.
" ..	3,810	3 1½	6,007	2 11	" 30th Nov., 1887.
" ..	4,328	3 1½	7,225	2 7	" 14th Dec., 1887.
" ..	1,299	2 6½	2,315	1 11½	15th, 16th, and 17th Dec., 1887.

Mr. O'Connor



APPROXIMATE estimated Cost of Stone, charging £500 per Fortnight for Interest, Sinking-fund, Explosives, &c.

	Output. Tons.	Average Cost per Ton.
27th October, 1886 ..	273 ..	£2 8 0
14th November, 1886 ..	1,758 ..	0 11 4
23rd February, 1887 ..	3,976 ..	0 5 10½
1st June, 1887 ..	6,600 ..	0 4 11½
2nd November, 1887 ..	9,640 ..	0 3 11
15th, 16th, and 17th Dec.	3,614 ..	0 3 0½

When the present Board took office the cost of the stone was 4s. 1d. per ton, and the output was 5,000 tons a fortnight. The cost has diminished from 4s. 1d. until now the cost of the stone has come down to 1s. 11d., and, adding to that the cost of management and interest of money, the whole cost is 8s. 6d. a ton, and the output for the last four days was equal to the whole output for the fortnight, under the previous management, before the present Board came into office. That shows that, while the Board have reduced the cost of the stone by more than one-half, and at the same time reduced the general expenditure by over one-sixth, they have increased the amount of work done by more than double. I consider these results speak for themselves with regard to the difference in the system of working, and it would be very wrong of me under the circumstances to allow it to be thought that my condemnation, which is amply borne out by the verdict of the Committee, applies in any way to those who have been so successful in bringing about this change. There is another small matter to which I should like to refer, and which I had intended to go into more at length, expecting that there would be a debate on the Bill which it was rumoured would be brought down. The matter is the occurrence which took place between myself and the late Minister of Mines. It was represented that I was in some way importuning the Minister, and I desire to give an emphatic denial to that.

Mr. SPEAKER. — The honourable gentleman must not refer to a previous debate of the present session.

Mr. O'CONOR. — Without referring to a past debate, I wish to say that I had an interview with the late Minister of Mines, and on that occasion I reproached the honourable gentleman with the action he had taken in burking the inquiry.

Mr. SPEAKER. — The honourable gentleman is out of order if he is referring to a matter of debate this session.

Mr. O'CONOR. — Sir, I am referring to a personal matter.

Mr. SPEAKER. — You must not refer to a past debate under cover of a personal matter. There is a proper time for personal explanation, but this is not that time.

Mr. O'CONOR. — I am not referring to a past debate, but to an occurrence that took place.

Mr. SPEAKER. — Is not that a matter which was referred to in a previous debate?

Mr. O'CONOR. — I do not know.

Mr. SPEAKER. — It is my duty to know, and

I hope it is unnecessary to remind you that you must obey the order of the Chair.

Mr. O'CONOR. — If you rule that I am out of order I shall, of course, say no more.

Mr. SPEAKER. — I consider you are out of order.

Major ATKINSON. — Might I ask the honourable gentleman to allow us to pass these Bills through, as we are keeping the other Chamber waiting?—and then he can make any statement he wishes on a motion for the adjournment of the House.

Dr. NEWMAN. — I wish to ask the honourable gentleman a question with regard to the Hospitals and Charitable Aid Act of 1884. Under that Act 264,000 acres were set apart as reserves for the purposes of the Act. For three years nothing has been done with regard to that reserve, and I should like the Premier to take the matter into consideration.

Major ATKINSON. — I will certainly take it into consideration, but I cannot state that the Government will be prepared to do anything in the matter until they have looked into the whole case.

Mr. PEARSON. — I should like to ask the Premier whether there is any necessity for raising the taxation for the purposes of charitable aid on personal property as well as on real property.

Major ATKINSON. — I think, myself, it should be levied on all property, and I do not at all agree with the present mode of levying it. Whether we can make any proposal which will have the effect the honourable gentleman refers to I cannot say; but the matter shall have careful consideration.

Mr. GUINNESS. — Will the honourable gentleman also bear in mind, when considering the question raised by the honourable member for Thorndon, that the House the other evening negatived a proposal of mine to set apart endowments for Charitable Aid Boards, and the honourable member for Thorndon was one of those who voted against that proposition?

Major ATKINSON. — The endowment is already set apart by the Act.

Mr. GUINNESS. — That is so; but what I desired was a further extension of the endowment: and that was negatived. I also wish to ask the Minister of Mines whether the Government intend to give effect to the report of the Goldfields and Mines Committee, which recommends that no action should be taken by the Minister in regard to closing any of the schools of mines that have been established throughout the colony. That Committee, as the honourable gentleman will no doubt recollect, reported that owing to the lateness of the session there was no time to make the necessary exhaustive inquiries before they could decide what schools should be continued. In many districts on the West Coast schools of mines have been established. At Greymouth there is a school with a very large number of members, and in a flourishing condition. The people there have learned with alarm that it is not the intention of the Government to continue the allowance to these schools of mines.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—I think I have expressed myself sufficiently plainly in this House already on that subject—to the effect that the Cabinet, whilst they would recognise any existing liabilities in this direction, only intended to retain the schools of mines at Reefton and the Thames.

Mr. GUINNESS.—And in regard to all other schools?

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—We will carry out engagements only.

Mr. MONK.—I think the sooner Mr. Speaker leaves the chair the better, because the honourable member for Taranaki has been trying to shove the public treasury into the Ngaire Swamp.

Major ATKINSON.—I should like to make a short statement in regard to the Ngaire Swamp. The matter is receiving the careful attention of the Government, and if it is found not to be advisable to let it in the way proposed the Waste Lands Board will be consulted before anything further is done.

Bill read a second and a third time.

#### AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND CABLE.

Major ATKINSON.—Sir, I have also to make a statement with regard to the cable question.

[The reporter who had notes of this statement was unfortunately killed by a fall before he had written them out.]

#### SUPPLY BILLS.

Mr. SPEAKER announced that he had in person presented to His Excellency the Governor the Appropriation Bill and the Public Works Appropriation Bill, which His Excellency had assented to on behalf of Her Majesty.

#### BUSINESS OF THE SESSION.

Mr. SPEAKER laid on the table the following schedule of the business transacted during the session:—

<b>1. SELECT COMMITTEES—</b>	
On public matters ... ..	7
On private Bills... ..	9
<b>2. STANDING COMMITTEES...</b>	<b>11</b>
Ditto on private Bills... ..	3
	14
<b>3. PUBLIC BILLS—</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>Originated in the House—</i>	
Received the Royal assent ...	43
Reserved for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure ...	1
Dropped or otherwise disposed of	73
	123
<i>Brought from the Council—</i>	
Received the Royal assent ...	6
Reserved for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure ...	0
Dropped or otherwise disposed of	4
	10
<b>4. PRIVATE BILLS—</b>	
Received the Royal assent ...	3
Dropped ... ..	1
	4

<b>5. PETITIONS PRESENTED—</b>	
From Europeans ... ..	429
From Maoris ... ..	58
	511
<b>6. DIVISIONS—</b>	
In the whole House ... ..	59
In Committee ... ..	150
	209
<b>7. SITTINGS—</b>	
Days of meeting ... ..	44
Hours of sitting—	
Before midnight ... 27th. 0m.	
After midnight ... 56th. 30m.	
	333h. 30m.
Daily average ... ..	7h. 34m.
<b>8. VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS—</b>	
Questions asked of Ministers ...	470
Entries in Journals ... ..	580
	1,300
Daily average ... ..	29
<b>9. ORDERS FOR PAPERS ... ..</b>	
	56
<b>10. PAPERS LAID UPON THE TABLE—</b>	
By command ... ..	48
In return to orders ... ..	73
In return to addresses ... ..	0
By message ... ..	0
By Act ... ..	29
By leave ... ..	8
Papers ordered to be printed ...	63
Papers not ordered to be printed ...	75
	158
<b>11. REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES—</b>	
From the Public Petitions A to L Committee ... ..	118
From the Public Petitions M to Z Committee ... ..	103
From the Native Affairs Committee ...	64
From the Waste Lands Committee ...	28
From the Goldfields and Mines Committee ...	20
From the Local Bills Committee ...	10
From other Committees ... ..	26
	306

#### ADJOURNMENT.

Major ATKINSON informed the House that Parliament would be prorogued by Proclamation, and moved, That the House at its rising adjourn to Tuesday at half-past two o'clock p.m.

Motion agreed to.

The House divided on the question, "That the House do now adjourn."

#### AYES, 21.

Atkinson	Macarthur	Ross
Beetham	Marchant	S.-Menteath
Buchanan	McGregor	Taipua
Fergus	Mitchelson	Withy.
Graham	Moat	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hamlin	Monk	Carroll
Joyce	Richardson, G.	Jackson.
Lawry		

#### NOES, 11.

Bruce	Hislop	Taiwhanga.
Fisher	O'Connor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fitzherbert	Parata	Brown
Guinness	Pearson	Reeves, R. H. J.

Majority for, 10.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to five o'clock a.m.

END OF FIFTY-NINTH VOLUME.







